

Disciple Series Week 8 Readings

Day 1

This week our daily devotions are taken from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: The Believers Share Their Possessions (Acts 4:32-37)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Reflect: What can we learn about Barnabas from this passage?

Do: Find 3 people that you can encourage when you are at school or work tomorrow and also ask God if there is something that he wants you to give away.

Pray: Ask God to help you become more like Barnabas.

Day 2

Here is today's devotion from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: Barnabas Speaks Up For Paul (Acts 9:26-31)

When Paul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Reflect: What role did Barnabas play in Paul's life in this passage?

Do: Spend the next day working on putting the needs of other people before your own and look for practical ways to help them.

Pray: Ask God to help you humble yourself so you can serve others.

Day 3

Here is today's devotion from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: The Church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-25)

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news

about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Reflect: What can we learn about Barnabas from this passage? List all the qualities he revealed.

Do: Look through the list of qualities that you discovered as you reflected and give yourself a score out of 10 for each quality and think about one thing you can do to grow in each quality.

Pray: Ask God to help you to grow in each quality to become more like Barnabas.

Day 4

Read: Worship and Missions (Acts 13:1-5)

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

Reflect: Why, according to this passage, is it important for us to gather to worship together?

Do: Make a decision to attend church as often as possible so that you can be a part of what God is doing.

Pray: Ask God to help you be committed to your local church.

Day 5

Here is today's devotion from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: Paul and Barnabas In Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the gospel.

Reflect: Would you have continued speaking for Jesus if you had nearly lost your life?

Do: Think about what you are willing to risk for God and remind yourself of all that he went through on the cross so that you could be saved.

Pray: Thank God for all that he did for you and ask him to help you risk more for him.

Day 6

Here is today's devotion from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-21)

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up. "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

Reflect: How did Barnabas and Paul help resolve the dispute that was happening in the church?

Do: Think about what you would do if there were people at church who were in conflict with each other? Would you take sides? What would you do to help? Make it your aim to be a peace-maker!

Pray: Ask God to help you resolve conflicts like Barnabas did.

Day 7

Here is today's devotion from the life of Barnabas. Read the passage, reflect, do the exercise and end your time of devotions in prayer.

Read: Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41)

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. At the end of Paul's life, he wrote to Timothy: Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. (2 Timothy 4:11)

Reflect: What do you think we can learn about handling conflict from this passage?

Do: Think of some area in your life where you are in conflict with someone. Ask God to give you wisdom so you can go and deal with the issue directly.

Pray: Ask God to help you resolve conflicts like Barnabas did and thank him for all that you have learnt in the Disciple series and through your daily devotions this past term.