

Encouragement

Acts 4:32-37, 9:26-30, 11:21-24

OPEN

How has encouragement from others (friend, parent, coach, boss...) been a catalyst in your life?

Would you say you are an *encourager*? Why or why not?

DISCUSS

Through the life of Barnabas, we see the value of encouragement in action in the early church. Barnabas means *Son of Encouragement*.

What do you learn about Barnabas in the following verses:

- Acts 4:32-37
- Acts 9:26-30
- Acts 11:21-24

How do you see Barnabas influencing (1) the church and (2) the relationships around him? Do you think Barnabas was more than *just a really good guy*? Explain.

Where was Barnabas from? Would this background have been helpful or a challenge for him? If you were Barnabas, do you think it would have been challenging to be such an encourager?

Discuss the quote by John Ortberg. How have you experienced each kind of person?

"You have a fuel tank, and there are some people who fill your tank. There are some people who breathe life into you. They remind you of how good God is. They call you to live up to the best you can be. When you're with them, you find your anxiety going down, and your hope and sense of trust and faith just go up...Then you have other people in your life, who—when you're not looking—stick a hose in your tank, take a deep breath, and start siphoning the fuel out. They drain you of life. They are basement people, because they bring you down. These are the people who are joy challenged, dream squashing, and fault finding—slow leaks in the hot air balloon of your life."¹

As you observe life around you (church, neighborhood, youth sports/activities, school...) do you see an abundance of encouragement or is encouragement lacking? Explain your observations.

How does the gospel and our witness of the gospel's reality in our life connected to encouragement?

How are you challenged to respond to this study and discussion? What intentional step can you take in growing in encouragement?

YOUR NEXT STEP...

- Who can you intentionally encourage this week? Being an encourager will involve several things: Being Patient...Being Honest...and Being Along-side Others (vs. Competing with them).
- Report back to the group how your week went of encouraging others (and hopefully being encouraged yourself).

Note: Next Week we wrap up the Come in Third (Holy Spirit) series. *Next week will be the last written study for the summer.* If your group will continue to meet, you may create your own study discussion based on the sermons, explore resources in our Small Groups section at the Christ Church bookstore, or study a resource of your own choosing. If you need help, do not hesitate to contact Eric Camfield or Randi Lundgren.

¹ From sermon by John Ortberg, *Balcony People*, located at www.preachingtoday.com

