

Memory Verse

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
God desires for us to offer ourselves to His work and to pastor His sheep.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God is a comforter who uses His workers to build others up. 2. God is a Spirit who guides and leads His workers to accomplish His work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exhibit the qualities of a good person each day. 2. Seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit and remain convicted in our faith. 3. Encourage and comfort others through the word of God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Barnabas
 1. Background
 2. A Good Man, Full of the Holy Spirit and of Faith (Acts 11:24)
- B. Mark
 1. Background
 2. A Good Helper

Life Application

1. Be a good person
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit
3. Be full of faith
4. Learn to encourage and comfort others

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Strive to be a good person who encourages and comforts others in wisdom while doing God’s work.

Introduction

Barnabas and Mark, cousins (Col 4:10), were both important workers of God during the apostolic period, and each contributed to the work of the Lord in their own way. Barnabas' love for God manifested in his care and concern for the members. Mark wrote one of the four gospels, chronicling many important events in the life of Jesus Christ, and assisted Paul during his ministry.

First, let's begin by studying Barnabas.

A. Barnabas

1. Background

The Bible records that Barnabas was one of the apostles (Acts 14:14). He was descended from the tribe of Levi and born on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. His original name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas (*Βαρνάβας*), meaning "son of consolation" or "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36).

2. A Good Man, Full of the Holy Spirit and of Faith (Acts 11:24)

The Bible describes Barnabas as a man of sound morals, trustworthy and guided by the Holy Spirit. His actions showed his great faith and reliance on God, allowing God to use him mightily for many great works.

a. A Good Man

Barnabas was concerned for the welfare of the church (Acts 4:36–37)

As the church increased, so did the number of members in need. But miraculously, none lacked for anything, as Barnabas was one of many who decided to share his possessions. He sold his land and gave the proceeds of the sale to the apostles. Barnabas' generous gesture exemplified his great faith and love for the Lord. He wholeheartedly lived for God and sacrificed much to serve the church.

Barnabas showed care and concern (Acts 11:27–30)

When a prophet announced that there would be "a great famine throughout the world, [...] the disciples [...] determined to send relief" to the members in Judea (vv. 28–29). The disciples entrusted Barnabas and Saul with the important task of transporting the gathered donations to the elders. In undertaking this task, Barnabas showed that he understood the importance of unity and of helping one another in difficult times.

b. Full of the Holy Spirit

"Son of Encouragement" (Acts 11:19–26)

When Stephen was martyred, the believers scattered, bringing the gospel with them to Antioch. Many there came to believe, prompting the Jerusalem church to send Barnabas to pastor these new believers. When he arrived in Antioch, upon seeing evidence of the grace of God, he "was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (v. 23). True to his name, he used positive words to remind the congregation to stand firm and keep their faith in the Lord.

One Who Pastors (Acts 11:25–26)

Barnabas' encouragement of the Antioch members did not stop there. Likely under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit, Barnabas thought of Saul and asked for his help (vv. 25–26). Together, they spent a whole year teaching and training the people of the Antioch church in the doctrine and the truth.

A Prophet and a Teacher

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas [...] and Saul” (Acts 13:1). Barnabas held two important roles: a messenger of God and a teacher gifted in instructing others in God’s word. The Bible records how the Holy Spirit instructed the Antioch believers to separate Barnabas and Saul for His cause (Acts 13:2–3). Thus, the two, accompanied by Mark, were “sent out by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:4) on their first missionary journey.

c. Full of Faith

Barnabas and Saul

After Saul’s conversion, “he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26). But Barnabas chose to have faith in God’s power; he saw Saul not as a persecutor, but as someone who had truly seen Jesus. He brought Saul to the apostles, allowing Saul to explain his conversion (Acts 9:27). Barnabas’ faith built a bridge between Saul and the disciples.

Barnabas and Mark

During their first missionary journey with Paul, Mark, “departing from them, returned to Jerusalem” (Acts 13:13). Barnabas later wanted to take Mark with them again on their second journey, but Paul was adamant against the idea. Instead of making an issue of the matter, Barnabas and Paul went their separate ways (Acts 15:36–40), and Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus. Barnabas did not give up on Mark but chose to encourage him and continue working with him. Barnabas’ faith in God allowed him to see past the faults of men and trust in God’s transformative power.

B. Mark

1. Background

The Bible records that Mark had two names: “John whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:12). Mark was his Roman name, while John was his Jewish name. Mark lived in Jerusalem, in a house where many came together to pray.

2. A Good Helper

a. Preaching the gospel

Mark traveled with Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey to preach the gospel to other regions. However, when they came to Perga in Pamphylia, Mark left the group and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Because of this, Paul refused to bring Mark along on their second journey to revisit their brethren in regions they had preached before. Due to this strong difference of opinion, Barnabas and Paul parted ways. Paul took Silas with him, while Barnabas brought Mark.

Through this experience and training, combined with Barnabas’ patience, Mark was strengthened. Despite their differences, Mark and Paul later reconciled, and Mark became a good helper to Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Phm 1:24; 2 Tim 4:11; Col 4:10).

b. The Gospel of Mark

Peter called Mark a son (1 Pet 5:13), and Mark was edified greatly by the Lord's teachings given by Peter. It is clear that Mark closely followed the older workers and learned a great deal from them, enabling him to write down the life of Jesus and His teachings. We should learn from Mark's example and keep the teachings of Christ in our hearts in all wisdom (Col 3:16). Not only will we edify ourselves spiritually, but we will also be able to preach the gospel so that many will come to believe.

Barnabas and Mark labored in one mind for the work of the Lord. They fought a good battle for the truth, and their feet were "beautiful" as they "preach[ed] the gospel of peace" (Rom 10:15). Barnabas had a generous spirit for the Lord's work, and after his conversion, he dedicated his whole life to serving God. If not for Barnabas, Mark might have decided to give up and Paul might never have been accepted in the Jerusalem church. But both Mark and Paul were used greatly by God because of Barnabas.

Check for Understanding

- 1. How did Barnabas exhibit the qualities of a good man?**
 - a. He showed care and concern for others: When the churches in Judea needed provisions during the famine, he helped bring donations to them.
 - b. He was genuinely concerned for the welfare of the church: When he converted to Christianity, he sold all his property and gave his money to the apostles for the development of the church.
- 2. Who did Barnabas encourage and how?**
 - a. Mark – When Paul refused to bring Mark on his second missionary trip after Barnabas recommended bringing him, Barnabas did not give up on Mark. Rather, he departed together with Mark on their own missionary trip.
 - b. Saul – When Saul was a new convert to Christianity, many of the apostles were afraid of him and did not accept him as one of their own. So, Barnabas brought Saul before them and even vouched for him. Saul, later Paul, became a great worker for God.
 - c. Members in Antioch – When new members joined the church in Antioch, Barnabas was sent there to pastor them. He encouraged them to remain steadfast in their faith to the Lord.
- 3. Why did Paul refuse to allow Mark to join him on his second missionary trip?** Mark departed from Paul during the first missionary journey and returned to Jerusalem.
- 4. How did Mark work mightily for God?**
 - a. Joined Paul on his first missionary trip to preach the gospel (but departed before the trip ended)
 - b. Joined Barnabas on a missionary trip to pastor the members
 - c. Served Paul, including during his imprisonment in Rome
 - d. Learned from more experienced members and wrote the Gospel of Mark

Life Application

"For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." (Acts 11:24)

1. Be a good person

A man of sound morals, Barnabas demonstrated great character—not only was he generous, but he was also respectable. It may be difficult, but we should do our best to follow his example. The Bible reminds us that no matter how great the gifts bestowed us, without love, they profit us nothing. On

the other hand, if we have love in our hearts, we can work towards being a good person, just as Barnabas was.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Corinthians 13:4–7)

As we can see, biblical love is comprehensive and perfect; we should all work towards this kind of love so that we can be a good person in God’s eyes.

2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit

Barnabas led a Spirit-filled life. God filled him with the Spirit to strengthen and guide him as he served the church and witnessed for Jesus Christ. In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must first empty ourselves and welcome Him into our hearts. By submitting our will to Him and obeying His guidance, we will act according to God’s will and express the love of God within us. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the truth (Jn 16:13). Thus, we will be able to preach the truth, just as Barnabas and the other apostles did.

3. Be full of faith

Because of his great faith, Barnabas fully relied on God and trusted in Him for all matters, so God was able to use him for His purpose. Faith does not develop overnight. It takes time to cultivate. Abraham, whom the Bible refers to as the father of faith, laughed in disbelief when the Lord told him that he would have a son in a year’s time (Gen 17:15–17, 21). Even at his advanced age, Abraham’s imperfect faith caused him to doubt God’s promise. However, several years later, when the Lord asked Abraham to offer his only son as a sacrifice, he did not hesitate to do so, stopping only when an angel stayed his hand. Abraham was full of faith; he believed that even if Isaac died, God would be able to resurrect him (Heb 11:17–19).

It is normal for our faith to be like Abraham’s; strong at one time, but unstable at another. Therefore, it is important that we ask God to help us so that we can become full of faith (Mk 9:24).

4. Learn to encourage and comfort others

We should learn to use God’s word with wisdom in a manner that edifies others. Often, in response to members who express distress, others respond with, “You need to have faith!”, “You must not have prayed enough!”, or similar responses. These responses originate from the assumption that the member in distress is suffering due to his or her own sins or doubts. However, tribulations do not always occur due to a lack of faith, lack of prayer, or past sins.

Job, a righteous man whom even God was proud of (Job 1:8), endured excruciating tribulation, both physically and emotionally (Job 1:13–19; 2:7). Job’s three friends wrongfully accused Job of bringing the suffering upon himself, saying that he must have committed some evil. In the end, God asked Job to pray for them because they had wrongly judged him (Job 42:7–8).

As children of God, we must learn to speak words of comfort to those who suffer and feel rejected. God has His will for each of us, but it is not our place to interpret His will for others. So, instead of judging, we should practice being good listeners and learn how to pray for those in need. If we do

not feel that our faith is stable enough to take up the role of encourager, we can ask those who are spiritually stronger, such as preachers, deacons or elders, for help in encouraging members in need.

Memory Verse

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Meaning

The original Greek word used for “edify” means “to build a house” or more specifically, “to build up from the foundation.” As members of the same body of Christ, we should comfort one another by speaking kind and caring words to those burdened with worries, trials, or pain. But more importantly, we need to build each other up in Christ so that we can help each other overcome these trials and draw closer to God. Ephesians 4:29 teaches us: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” When we see or know about others experiencing difficult times, we must take the initiative to comfort and help them build up their spirituality and faith in God.

Conclusion

Many times, we speak what is on our minds without considering how our words will affect others. Sometimes, our words of “encouragement” cause the other person to feel as if we are judging them. Thus, we need to learn from Barnabas to be skillful in encouraging other members so that everyone’s faith can grow together. Perhaps some of us have not encountered great persecution or suffering in our lifetime. However, in order to do God’s work, we must be prepared to face such difficulties. We need to build ourselves up so that we can become good people, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, so that we will be able to endure the hardships that may arise in our lives. Then, God can use us mightily for His purpose.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to edify others?
To edify others means to build each other up in Christ so that we can help each other overcome our trials and draw closer to God. When we see or know about others experiencing difficult times, we must take the initiative to comfort and help them build up their spirituality and faith in God.
2. How did Barnabas exhibit the qualities of a good man?
*He was concerned for the welfare of the church: He sold his land and gave the proceeds to the apostles for the church.
He showed care and concern: Barnabas was entrusted with the important task of transporting the gathered donations to the elders. In undertaking this task, Barnabas showed that he understood the importance of unity and of helping one another in difficult times.*
3. How did Barnabas encourage the members in Antioch?
Upon seeing evidence of God's grace, he "was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (Acts 11:23). He used positive words to remind the congregation to stand firm and keep their faith in the Lord.
4. How did Barnabas treat Saul differently from the other disciples?
Barnabas chose to have faith in God's power and saw Saul not as a persecutor, but as someone who had truly seen Jesus. He brought Saul to the apostles, allowing Saul to explain his conversion. Barnabas' faith built a bridge between Saul and the disciples.
5. How do we become like Barnabas—a good person, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith?
To be a good person, we need to have love in our hearts. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must first empty ourselves and welcome Him into our hearts. To be filled with faith, we need to devote time to cultivate it.
6. Is there anyone you know who is undergoing trials or tribulations? How can you comfort or encourage them?
Personal answers.