

WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES  
STUDY THIRTEEN

## Encouraging Others

*Acts 4:32–37*

*Remember this: No matter how high you may climb in life, no matter how great the promotion or important the title, it is always appropriate that you take time to encourage.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**I**F you have been looking for a timely, thematic goal to govern your next season of life, consider this one: *I will be an encourager.*

What force, what energy, what influence can flow from just a few words or a simple act of encouragement. Encouragement can change the whole course of a person's life. Who can harness such power? *Anyone!* No one must complete a rite of passage or ace a lengthy exam or wait for the pastor's orders. God has endowed everyone with the ability to encourage.

But to resist the temptation to leave the encourager's hat on the rack, we all need reminders about the importance of encouragement and the ways to develop this habit. We'll do that in this last study of *Wise Counsel for Troubled Times* as we explore four scenes from a thoughtful and inspiring churchman named Joseph—also known as Barnabas, “Son of Encouragement.”



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Encouraging Others

*Acts 4:32–37*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Use the space below to write a prayer and open your heart to Jesus, who is your encourager. Ask Him to reveal His heart as He speaks to you through the Scriptures, which “give us hope and encouragement” (Romans 15:4). How do you need encouragement today? Ask the Lord to encourage you and help you turn His kindness toward you into a blessing for others.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Before we explore the life of Barnabas, let’s review this passage in the book of Hebrews.

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24–25)*

Encouragement plays a major part in God’s mission for the church. The author of Hebrews knew this. So he fleshed out the meaning of encouragement and tied its importance to perseverance.

How did the author of Hebrews define *encouragement*?



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What connection does encouragement have with regular spiritual meetings? And how does encouragement relate to spiritual perseverance?

In the following charts, we combine three phases of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method: observation, interpretation, and application.<sup>1</sup> As you fill in the charts, keep in mind the names of people you know who may need the encouragement of Barnabas. You can become a “Barnabas” starting today . . . and here’s how!

*We examine the life of Barnabas because I want you to become an encourager. I don’t want you to merely be able to point out how Barnabas encouraged others. Barnabas has become a model of encouragement for us to emulate in our walk with Christ. —Chuck Swindoll*





**Encouraging Others**


*Acts 4:32–37*

**Encourage One Another with Your Finances**

**Acts 4:32–37**

Once Pentecost arrived, God’s Spirit rushed upon 120 of Jesus’ disciples who had gathered in a room to pray. Just days afterward, the Spirit had touched thousands, growing the church from a small flicker into a great conflagration. Visitors to Jerusalem grew so excited about Jesus they didn’t want to leave. As they all devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, needs arose. It’s in the context of these needs that we become acquainted with Barnabas.

 <b>Observation</b>	 <b>Interpretation</b>
Summarize the actions and probable motivation of Barnabas in <i>Acts 4:32–37</i> .	How did God use Barnabas to encourage the church? What was the impact of his actions?

 **Application: Releasing Your Grip on Money**

First, pause and give God thanks for those who have financially encouraged you. Even let your encouragers know how thankful you are for them. Has God, through this passage, inspired you to encourage someone financially? If so, whom? How?





**Encouraging Others**

*Acts 4:32–37*

**Encourage One Another through Personal Endorsements**

**Acts 9:19–27**

With blood on his hands, the zealous Pharisee Saul journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus to imprison those agitators heralding Christian teaching. Then a flash of heavenly light stopped him on the road as the thunderous voice of Christ struck his ears and his heart. Saul the Pharisee became Paul the Christian. Because many Christians looked with skepticism on the post-conversion Paul, he needed a credible endorsement to prove his newfound faith. One man took it upon himself to do just that.

 <b>Observation</b>	 <b>Interpretation</b>
Summarize the actions and probable motivation of Barnabas in <a href="#">Acts 9:19–27</a> .	How did God use Barnabas to encourage Paul? What was the outcome of his actions?

 **Application: Using a Kind Word to Create Connections**

Relationships often determine one’s direction and success. Think about where you are because of who you know. Next consider just one person you could bless by putting in a good word for him or her, then do so. Let it be a pleasant surprise.





**Encouraging Others**


*Acts 4:32–37*

**Encourage One Another with Selfless Acts of Service**

**Acts 11:19–26**

Notoriety and honor clothed the leaders of the early church. New converts not only gave these teachers and leaders food and clothes, silver and gold, but also time and attention. How pride must have tempted these leaders! But far be it from Barnabas. He did not hoard what honor he received. As his influence grew, so did his character. He became an exemplar of Christ’s words, “Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant” (Mark 10:43 NASB).

 <b>Observation</b>	 <b>Interpretation</b>
Summarize Barnabas’ actions and probable motivation as recorded in <i>Acts 11:19–26</i> .	How did God use Barnabas to encourage the church? What was the impact of his actions?

 **Application: Sharing the Responsibility, Sharing the Excitement**

Sharing responsibility encourages others by helping them grow, increasing their confidence, and giving them purpose. How can you put into practice this important form of encouragement?





**Encouraging Others**

*Acts 4:32–37*

**Encourage One Another by Giving Second Chances**

**Acts 15:36–41**

Like any organization, like any movement, like any relationship—conflicts arose in the early church. Paul and Barnabas, the best of friends, collided over John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. Paul chose one way. Barnabas another. The event in this scene, Barnabas’ encouragement, might be the very act that spurred John Mark to persevere in God’s mission. Mark would go on to write that cherished, ancient text which we call “The Gospel According to Mark.”

 <b>Observation</b>	 <b>Interpretation</b>
Summarize the actions and probable motivation of Barnabas in <i>Acts 15:36–41</i> .	How did God use Barnabas to encourage the church? What was the impact of his actions?

 **Application: Restoring a Relationship with Forgiveness and Trust**

Too many relationships sever due to one member’s unwillingness to extend forgiveness and trust. Not all people deserve such gifts. But more do than we would care to imagine. If anyone in your life comes to mind, make it a resolution to reconnect and extend the healing power of forgiveness. Give him or her a second chance as God has given you such chances.



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*Acts 4:32–37*

God did not design us to operate independent of Himself. He longs to abide with us, the most special of His creation. God directs all of His dealings within humanity throughout history toward this end, namely, that we accomplish His will as people who worship Christ in our hearts and follow Christ in our ways.

In this series, we have examined such people as models for us to emulate. The author of Hebrews urges:

*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.* (Hebrews 13:7 NASB)

As one of many saints from the past, Barnabas walked with God and shared His love with others through his kind words and actions. Let's imitate his faith as we encourage others like he did.



### A FINAL PRAYER

Use these final moments to reflect on becoming a “Barnabas” in your circle of friends and family members. Commit a plan of action to the Lord and ask for His grace to see it fulfilled through you.

#### ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”





Encouraging Others

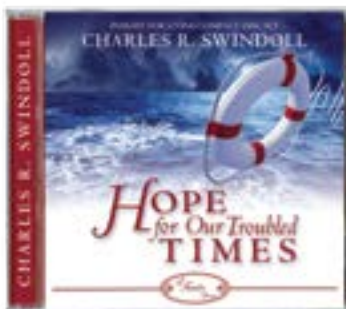
Acts 4:32–37



Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2020 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

