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ON THE AIR



A Biblical Vision for Encouraging Others

For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

(Acts 4:36–37)

BY CHARLES R. SWINDOLL

The office hallway was dark. I roamed it that night to see if I could talk with a professor to lift my spirits. I was as drained and destitute as I had ever been. Car problems. Child-injury problems. Money problems. My mother-in-law’s cancer problems. Cynthia’s pregnancy problems. It was my last year of seminary, and it seemed as though all was lost.

Then I saw light shining beneath a door. My knock was followed by a stern look and an abrupt, “What do you want?” Tears filled my eyes. As I opened my mouth, he repeated, “What do you want? I’m busy preparing for tomorrow.” I stopped, looked down, sighed, and mumbled, “Nothing.” I walked away. He meant no harm, but he missed a divine appointment to elevate a dragging soul.

Thankfully, the sting of that memory is eclipsed by the joy of many fond ones like when Professor Howard Hendricks and I would sit on a campus bench, our special meeting spot, to talk about life and ministry.

My time in seminary deeply impressed upon me the value of having a Barnabas in our lives—one who encourages us. Such people can help you take one more step when you feel like collapsing. Likewise, such people can help you win a race you never thought you’d even enter. May God bless each one of them!

But there’s one thing even more rewarding than having a Barnabas in your life . . . it’s being a Barnabas in the lives of others! My friend, Jonathan Murphy, has written an excellent book to that effect, so we wanted to send out an excerpt to inspire you to be a Barnabas for those God has put in your circle. After all, you’ll never know who’ll come knocking on your door one day!

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— Pastor Charles R. Swindoll



INSIGHT FOR LIVING
MINISTRIES

Authentic Influencer

*The Barnabas Way
of Shaping Lives
for Jesus*



by Jonathan Murphy

“A godly influencer saturates any and every environment for God.”

God has a vision for His world. He dreams of what will be. The story of the Scriptures shows us where God’s been heading all along. The Bible articulates not only God’s dream but also His doings that guarantee its reality, and this despite Satan’s hijacking maneuver. Of course, the only way of catching God’s vision is if you read His version of life. The Bible is not just a map of history but also a compass for navigating life well. It steers our lives according to God’s vision of the good life for the sake of the world around us.

Barnabas caught this vision.

Barnabas saw the world as God wants to make it. He saw where God is heading in history. In light of that, he made God’s vision of the good life his personal dream to pursue.

Every follower of Jesus must do the same. Influence in your little corner of the world begins there. This is precisely why Barnabas’s account is given to us in the book of Acts—he is a role model for followers of Jesus.

Barnabas showed us three accessible and hands-on ways you can express God’s heart toward those around you.

First, Barnabas was generous with his words. This is perhaps what he is best known for today—words of encouragement. The name we know him by, Barnabas, is a nickname, not his birth name. And while nicknames then, like today, could be cruel, they could also be complimentary. Barnabas is a nickname of high praise; it is a compliment—son of encouragement. Here is one

whose words put a spring in another's step, a smile on a face, and hope in others' hearts.

Second, Barnabas was generous with his wallet. Of the many things that could be said of Barnabas, God wants the record to show that our role model was generous with his stuff. That's as practical as it gets: sacrificial giving. He owns a piece of farmland—presumably on the island of Cyprus—and he sold it. He didn't just think of selling it. He didn't just plan to sell it one day or leave it as part of his estate. He actually sold it. Why? Because there were needs in the lives of those around him. That's the context of this section of Acts. Who knows, perhaps all those kids in Sunday school causing a ruckus are noisy because they're hungry. "Let's go buy some food," Barnabas would say. The proceeds from the sale of his land may have eased the burdens of those around him. After all, God's people were his family.



Jonathan Murphy is a gifted and passionate communicator of God's Word. He wrote *Authentic Influencer* to help Christians fulfill God's purpose for their lives as the world's salt and light.

Third, Barnabas was generous in his walk. Barnabas pursued a walk of humility, selflessness, and self-abandon. He gave of himself, not just of his stuff. I'm talking about status. Barnabas gave up his high standing in the structures of that culture. He didn't climb up the ladder of perceived importance; he chose to climb down.

Authentic Christian influence flows from you when humility is evident in you; it is an attractive trait—a Christlike quality. A godly influencer serves as God's hands. Generosity of words, wallet, and walk follows those who catch God's vision.



About Jonathan Murphy

Jonathan Murphy chairs the Pastoral Ministries department of Dallas Theological Seminary and serves on the board of directors for Insight for Living Ministries. He is a frequent guest preacher for Pastor Chuck Swindoll at Stonebriar Community Church. Jonathan is from Northern Ireland. As a child of missionary parents, he was raised in the Canary Islands and Spain. When he is not teaching, writing, or preaching, you will find him with his wife keeping up with their four lively children!



Order your copy of *Authentic Influencer* to dig deeper into the life of Barnabas and learn 15 principles for becoming the godly encourager Christ has called you to be.

Excerpt taken from Authentic Influencer: The Barnabas Way of Shaping Lives for Jesus by Jonathan Murphy. Copyright 2023 by Jonathan Murphy. Used with permission from Thomas Nelson.

Our Barnabas Efforts at Insight for Living Ministries

Encouraging Our Community through The Book Shoppe & Coffee

From the beginning, Pastor Chuck and Cynthia envisioned our international headquarters offering a local, face-to-face presence of our global ministry, so we might be a “Barnabas” where God planted us. In 2019, that vision became a reality as we launched The Book Shoppe & Coffee!



We prioritized having staff that extend the warmth of Christ to our guests as well as providing trustworthy resources to support others in their spiritual walk. Our team—some of whom are, in fact, pastors—do more than stock books and serve coffee. Each member aims to foster meaningful conversations and speak words of encouragement.

Most months, The Book Shoppe & Coffee hosts a Bible-journaling class teaching hand-lettering to help participants enrich their devotional times with



God. This year, we’ve also launched our *Searching the Scriptures* workshop that instructs how to study God’s Word using the same method Pastor Chuck has used for more than sixty years of ministry!

Next time you’re in Frisco, Texas, be sure to stop by. You’ll find a friendly smile to welcome you—ready for a chat. Hope to see you soon!

Encouraging Our Listeners through Biblical Counseling

IFLM’s pastoral team provides personalized, prayer-filled, Bible-based counseling through e-mails, letters, and phone calls to those seeking a deeper understanding of God’s Word as well as biblical support and encouragement tailored to their specific situation.

Encouraging Our Donors through the Advancement Team

IFLM often takes the first step to reach out with a fresh word of inspiration. Our Advancement team connects with listeners to pray for them and uplift them with the truth of God’s Word. Sometimes, it takes one Barnabas to keep another Barnabas going. So, it’s our privilege to be Christ’s hands and feet for others engaged in the same mission.



Encouragement for You Right at Your Fingertips

Check out our free Insight for Living Ministries mobile app where you can listen to sermons, follow a Scripture-reading plan, access our *Searching the Scriptures* studies, and read our daily devotionals! Visit [Insight.org/app](https://www.insightforliving.org/app)