

Barnabas

“Loyal Followers”



“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.”

Acts 9:27

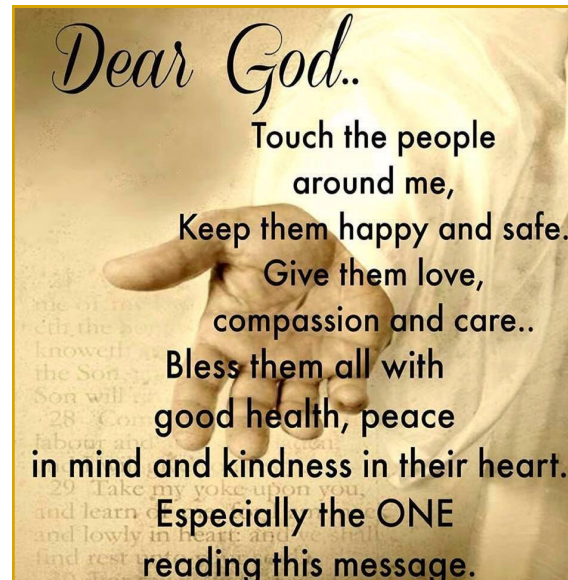
Many of us would like a friend like Barnabas. He was kind; a man of his word; and he dared to stand up for someone when others didn't want to get involved. He traveled with Paul as an apostle. He was not one of the original disciples. His belief was strong and he helped to convert many people to Jesus.

But the story of Barnabas and his faithfulness begins before he had ever actually met the Paul we respect today and certainly before he traveled with Paul.

We know a lot about him from just one incident. When Saul, later to become

Paul, was blinded on the road to Damascus, it was Barnabus that took this man who had hurt so many people and took care of him because he believed that he had been converted. Saul was not well liked; the disciples knew well that he had been involved in the stoning of Stephen. Many people would probably have been very satisfied to allow Saul to stay in darkness for the rest of his life. But, Barnabus had faith that he was changed and stood up to the crowd. Barnabus told them that Paul was a new person who could be trusted. He saw a new man; and told the disciples he believed Saul's conversion and trusted him to be a leader. At Saul's conversion, he was renamed Paul.

Paul and Barnabus, apostles or messengers, were designated according to God's purpose at a given time. Barnabas was known as “son of encouragement.”



Barnabas realized the apostles needed some financial support and even before his encounter with Saul, he sold some of his property and gave the money to the apostles. He was a man who practiced what he preached.

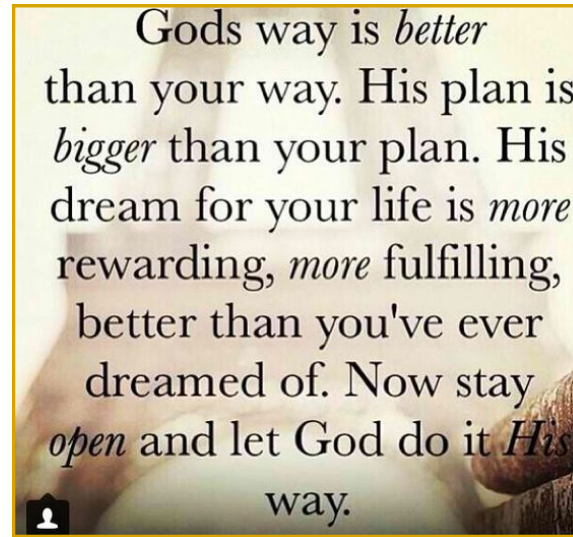
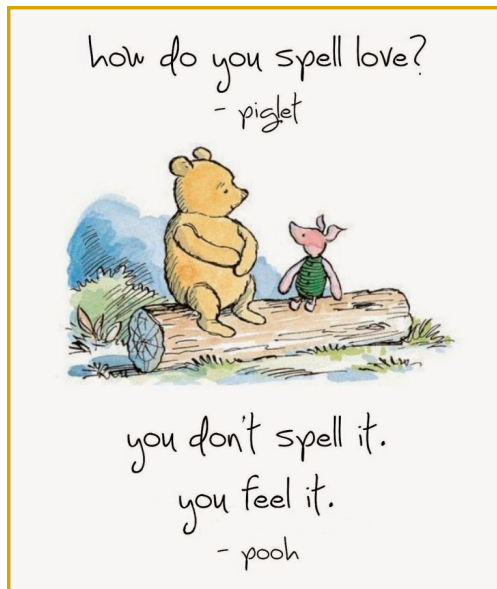
As the apostles traveled to different areas to preach, Barnabus was also involved. He sometimes went with Paul. Sometimes he would take another one of the younger men with him. Paul and Barnabus faced many difficult times, but never lost their focus on spreading the word of God. Barnabus was the one that thought they should give Mark a second chance when Paul was upset with Mark's youthful presence on a former trip.

We can look to Barnabus as an example of a good Christian life. People of his day admired him for his work. Unlike many of the original disciples, he never experienced violence or stoning while ministering to others.

When we moved to the area where we now live, the church had a woman who helped in the infant nursery named Mary Lou. After approximately 50 years in the position, she retired. During that entire time, she helped with children, their children, and eventually their grandchildren. She was amazing; everyone loved her – regardless of age. She was always sincerely pleasant and thoughtful. I think Barnabus was this kind of person. If he saw someone who needed

help, he helped. These people are hard to find. They are a real jewel to count among our friends. Yes, sometimes people take advantage of them, but I feel sure that Barnabas and Mary Lou never held a grudge, but always prayed to help in any way they could.

Several hymns come to mind when I think of our dearest friend, Christ. There is no better friend. One of our choir members, who has now passed on to his eternal reward, and whose name was Andy used to often sing “Andy walks with Me, Andy talks with Me, and he tells Me I am his own.” We all knew the song he was paraphrasing, but we also knew that Andy had a very close friendship with his Lord. To this day and forever, I will think of Andy when I hear that song. If you would say anything about it to him, he would always reply. “He does walk and talk with me everyday.”



Another well-known song about our friendship with Christ was written in the 1800's. Some phrases from the lyrics give us many reasons to love Him.

“I’ve found a Friend, oh, such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
He bled, He died to save me;
And not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me.
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
Are His, and His forever.
So kind, and true, and tender,
So wise a Counsellor and Guide,
So mighty a Defender!
From Him who loves me now so well,
What power my soul can sever?
Shall life or death, or earth or hell?
No? I am His forever.”

Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank you for the many gifts which we never take time to list. Among those, we count your love and friendship as a given. Help us to be compassionate to people in their grief and tell them about your love. Help us to live our lives so that others will know we are their friend and we will be faithful to you. Amen.

1. Are we able to be a friend to someone like Barnabas was?
2. How can we know when we have a real friend?
3. What sometimes stands in our way of being a true friend to others?
4. There is an old song that says “What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief’s to bear” Do you know that friend?
5. How can we become a friend to others?

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