

LEADERSHIP

AT THE RIDGE

Coach Module 5– Encourage Someone In a Way That Shapes His or Her Soul

Core Competency 5

Encourage someone in a way that shapes his or her soul.

Objective

1. To be challenged and inspired by Barnabas, the son of encouragement.
2. To practice sincere, specific, and strengths-focused ways to encourage others.

Assignments Overview

Assignment 1 | Reflect on Proverbs 16:24 and the article on the effects of encouragement on the brain. Answer the questions below.

- [Why Positive Encouragement Works Better Than Criticism, According to Science](#)

Assignment 2 | Read and respond to the biblical case study: *Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader*, adapted from Robin Gallher Branch, and answer the questions below.

- o [Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader](#)
- o [Part II - Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader](#)

Assignment 3 | Read the article The Anatomy of Encouragement by Mac Lake (@maclakeonline.com), and answer the questions below.

- o [The Anatomy of Encouragement](#)

Assignment 1

Reflect on Proverbs 16:24 and the article on the effects of encouragement on the brain. Answer the questions below.

- [Why Positive Encouragement Works Better Than Criticism, According to Science](#)

Questions

1. How would you rate yourself as an encourager? Why?
(1 = Poor / 3 = Average / 5 = A model for others to learn from)
2. Solomon indicates that words can provide “healing to the bones.” What impact have encouraging words had on you?
3. Considering the findings referred to in the article, what might team members look like/accomplish if their team leader were to create a culture of encouragement? What might a team member look like/accomplish within a culture of criticism?

Assignment 2

Read and respond to the biblical case study: *Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader*, adapted from Robin Gallher Branch, and answer the questions below.

- [Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader](#)
- [Part II - Barnabas: An Encouraging Early Church Leader](#)

What Barnabas Did

Acts presents the church leader Barnabas as a model of integrity and character. Calling him a *good man* (Acts 11:24), a prophet and teacher (13:1), an apostle (14:14) and

one through whom God worked miracles (15:12), Acts loads him with accolades. Acts recounts the times Barnabus faced persecution (13:45; 14:19) and risked his life for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (15:26). Barnabas believed Saul truly had been converted (9:27), saw the potential of his cousin John Mark (12:25), and championed them both at different times (11:25-26; 15:36-41). 1 Corinthians 9:6 affirms Barnabus’ character by noting he worked while serving congregations in order not to burden them. The apostles nicknamed him Barnabas, *Son of Encouragement* (4:36), and he lived up to his namesake!

According to early traditions, Barnabas was taught by Gamaliel and became a follower of Jesus. Among his first converts was Mary, his relative and John Mark’s mother (Acts 12:12). Barnabas accompanied Jesus during his travels in Galilee, and Jesus chose him as one of the 70 apostles. Evidently he tried to convert Saul, also Gamaliel’s pupil, but Saul rejected his teaching and chose instead to persecute the new believers.

Acts introduces Barnabas as Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, with a story about money and giving (Acts 4:36–37). In this first mention of Barnabas, Luke, traditionally regarded as the writer of both Luke and Acts, recounts his generosity: Barnabas sells a field and places the money at the apostles’ feet. This public gesture and his humbleness stand in sharp contrast to the

subsequent example regarding money: the conspiring, lying, self-serving attitude of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11). Their actions cost them their lives.

Who Barnabas Was

A noticeable trait of Barnabas is that he seeks out and assists others. The Biblical text highlights this twice with Saul/Paul (9:26-28; 11:25–26); once concerning the vibrant church in Antioch, Syria (11:19–30) and once in connection with his younger relative, John Mark (15:36–41). Often these other individuals and groups are believers in Jesus who, for whatever reason, run a bit against the grain of mainstream thought and action. Instead of ostracizing them, Barnabas not only deliberately encounters them, but also listens to them and welcomes them.

First, Barnabas befriends Saul. Acts introduces Saul as a persecutor of believers in what was then known as the Way (Acts 7:58; 8:1–3; 9:2). Saul obtains letters from the high priest in Jerusalem to officials in Damascus synagogues; authorizing him to bind new believers and bring them to Jerusalem. On the road to Damascus, he has a literally blinding conversion experience with the risen Lord Jesus, becomes a believer himself and starts preaching that Jesus is the Son of God in the Damascus synagogues (9:1–20)!

Saul's sudden change of character and bold preaching leads the Jews to conspire to kill him. Saul travels to Jerusalem after being lowered from the walls of Damascus in a basket to escape the city by night (9:21–26). The disciples in Jerusalem fearfully avoid him, not believing he really is a believer (9:26). Luke writes: "But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus" (9:27).

This verse merits scrutiny, for it illustrates leadership in action. Barnabas seeks out Saul, and thus Barnabas exhibits personal courage, for he risks his life and reputation. Barnabas brings Saul to the apostles. His ethical attitude of listening, testing what he hears Saul say, and then acting with courage and nobility is consistent in what is known about him.

Some time later, the Jerusalem Council sends Barnabas to Antioch, Syria, to investigate something new: believing Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) worshipping Jesus together! Believing Jews had been scattered as a result of persecution, with some settling in their new exiled homes (Acts 11:19–30). These scattered believers evidently talked to their neighbors, many of them Greeks, telling them news of the risen Lord Jesus (11:20). Luke writes that "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord" (11:21).

Luke portrays Barnabas's mission as fact-finding rather than as hostile. When Barnabas arrives in Antioch, he displays the same characteristics he exhibited in earlier stories: he acts openly, listens, and makes ethical decisions. The text says that when he "saw the grace of God, he rejoiced" (Acts 11:23). Typical of a man of honorable character, Barnabas's mind looks at the facts: these people—some of them uncircumcised Gentiles - really are new converts! Barnabas sees that they, like he and other Jewish converts, believed in this radical new faith; he sees this as evidence of the work and grace of God. He tells the Antioch believers "to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion" (11:23).

Barnabas pastors the church, but its demands are too many for one. So he seeks out Saul—yet again—and journeys to Tarsus to find him (Acts 11:25–26). Barnabas's action shows his humility and discernment. The text indicates that Barnabas's overriding concerns were the needs of the people and the furtherance of the gospel. Yet he must have realized that Saul's skill in debate and Saul's incredible mind might overshadow his own qualities. Luke, however, gives no

4. Barnabas cared for the soul of the believers in Antioch, for Paul's soul, and for John Mark's. What step will you take to care for the soul of someone specific under your care in the coming days?

Assignment 3

Read the article *The Anatomy of Encouragement* by Mac Lake (@maclakeonline.com), and answer the questions below.

- [The Anatomy of Encouragement](#)

Proverbs 10:11 - The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.

Questions

1. The author gives three ways to provide encouragement. Which are you the best at? Which do you need to improve in the most?
2. Why is it difficult for some leaders to give this type of encouragement?
3. In this module, what strength was affirmed? What is an area of weakness that was brought to your attention?
4. Who do you know that best exemplifies the principles in this article? What makes them such a great encourager?

Leadership Takeaways

What are at least two LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAYS from this module? Be prepared to discuss with your group.

- 1.
- 2.