



# CHILDREN OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Becoming Effective in the Work of Encouragement

# A Pattern of Comfort and Encouragement

- Paul repeatedly describes God and His word as comforting (2 Corinthians 1.3-7).
  - Comfort = Gr. *paraklesis* = comfort, encouragement, consolation (NASEC)
- John describes the Holy Spirit as our *parakletos*.
  - Through His word, the Holy Spirit is our helper — our sustainer, comforter, and encourager.
- Godliness demands that we become sources of comfort and encouragement, like the God we serve.
  - OT saints were to be encouraging — Isaiah 35.1-6
  - Barnabas is the preeminent NT example of encouragement — Acts 4.34ff

# Encouraging Through Sharing the Gospel - Acts 11

- The Gospel was taken to the Gentiles by Peter.
  - The Jews were initially concerned but eventually came to the correct conclusion — 11.18
  - Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem church, either to encourage or report on the situation — 11.22
- Note Barnabas' behavior:
  - He did not give in to traditionalism or fear — 11.23f
  - He displayed a love for God's people and an appreciation for God's grace (pre-requisites for encouraging others).
  - He was willing to work in difficult situations.
    - Acts 13.2-3 — missionary journey and mixed ethnicities

# Bringing Others Along

## Acts 9,11

- **Supporting the Marginalized**
  - Following Saul's conversion, it was Barnabas who stood up on Paul's behalf (9.26,27).
    - If not for Barnabas, what might have happened to Paul?
- **Sharing the Work**
  - When the work in Antioch became too much for one person, note what Barnabas did (11.25,26).
    - Think about what this mean for Paul - wat can I learn?
  - Consider the selflessness of Barnabas (13.2,7; 13.13+14.12).

# Compassion and Patience

## Acts 15.36-40

- Encouraging and developing those who fail
  - John Mark abandoned the work in Acts 13.13.
  - Paul and Barnabas divided before their second journey because of John Mark (15.36-40).
  - Whatever the reason, and however valid, John Mark continued to serve God — later, he would be reunited to Paul (2 Timothy 4.11; Colossians 4.10).
  - We must not *leave* anyone behind — we can each play an important role.

# A Cautionary Tale

## Galatians 2.11-13

- A man full of faith, but not perfect
- Barnabas was caught up in Peter's error in Galatians 2.
  - Is it likely the Barnabas did not know the truth? Is it more likely that Barnabas' compassion and generosity made it difficult to question Peter's motivation?
- Contrast Barnabas with Paul in this episode:
  - Paul's more analytical mind led him to make an assessment of the situation without concern for personalities.
  - We need both people in the church — and we need to strive to be both Paul and Barnabas in our own lives!

# Being Encouragers:

Share the Gospel  
Bring Others Along  
Practice Compassion and Patience  
Don't Compromise the Gospel

