

# INVESTING IN OTHERS

Barnabas and Paul // Acts 9:26-28; 11:22-26; 15:36-40

## THE POINT

Expect mentoring relationships to change over time.

When they began their ministry together, Barnabas had the reputation of acting as a mentor to new believers, and Paul was relatively young in his faith. As they worked together, Paul became the one who led and spoke boldly of Jesus to those they encountered. At times, we might be tempted to think that older believers should always be in positions of leadership and authority. However, this isn't a matter of age, or even maturity, but of the ways the Spirit would work through given individuals according to their gifts. As Paul matured, it became clear that his relationship with Barnabas must change.

### ➤ Key Question

**Why is it important for new believers to have someone who encourages them in their faith?**

We live in a time and place where people simply search the internet for the answer to any question. This is certainly easier than in the past, but discipleship doesn't work this way. We can learn a lot about matters of faith from podcasts and online sermons. However, these fall short of truly accomplishing what God desires from relationships within the church. Barnabas means "son of encouragement," and Paul needed more than just information about how to follow Jesus. He needed a friend and co-laborer to encourage him continually in living the right ways. We also need someone to encourage us as we follow Jesus.

### ➤ Keep in Mind

Many are tempted to believe that there's no room for disagreement or differences in the church. However, we must understand that unity does not mean uniformity. All people are uniquely made and have different experiences and pasts, so the perspectives and values of the people within the church will be incredibly diverse. Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement, and it was so serious that they could no longer work together in the same way they had before. But they handled it with humility, grace, and respect. We will all likely face disagreements with people we love, but it's important to learn (and choose) to respect others' views and treat them with respect.

### ➤ Application

What practical steps can you take to grow from learner to leader?

### ➤ The Win

When students consider their futures, they want to accomplish big things. In the same spirit, most Christians dream of accomplishing big things for God. We need to understand that before we can be influential leaders with the capacity to bear the weight of a large influence, we must first grow in Christlikeness and maturity. To grow into influential Christian leaders, we must choose every day to put ourselves in the position that God would be at work in our lives, shaping us in ways that He could work through us.

STUDENTS ➤

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