



## BIBLE TEXT | ACTS 13:1-12

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**1** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” **3** Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

**4** So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. **5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. **6** When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. **7** He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. **8** But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. **9** But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him **10** and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? **11** And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. **12** Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

## DEVOTIONAL FOR ACTS 13:1-12

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With the heat of the sun on my shoulders, a cool breeze from the north on my face, and the grumble of my stomach. I had made it to a good stopping point for a lunch break. I had been stretching a new barbed-wire fence in March of 2015 in rural Van Zandt County on my day off. The Lord had provided some extra work for me, and it was a huge blessing given the fact that the owner loved Jesus and **encouraged** me greatly any chance he had. Please keep that



word “**encouraged**” in your mind and heart for the rest of this devotional. Ever since I trusted in Christ in September of 2011, I have had so many men **encourage** me and help keep me in a fixed direction to trust and follow Christ faithfully.

You see, in this season of my life, I was in a pickle, as some would call it. I was wrestling with the question and thought of how the Lord wanted to use me. Yes, use me; a big deal, I know. I knew I was being led by God to somehow get more involved in ministry at Stonepoint but was not sure exactly how. I knew it might be that I would have to leave the only job I'd had for 15 years to be obedient to this call.

So I had another good friend who loves the Lord **encourage** me to fast and pray so I could hear God's voice. Sounds really familiar to verse 2 of our text today. So, I was **encouraged** to do the Daniel fast and to pray, “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears,” from 1 Samuel 3. I wanted to make sure I heard God's call in my life, not anything else. So, with many days of fasting, praying, **encouragement** from my wife and **encouragement** from many faithful men, the Lord spoke to me. The moment I sat in my truck to leave for my lunch meeting, the Lord laid four specific things on my mind. When I met with Brandon for lunch, he shared the exact four things in the same order. After many tears of joy and praise, I was **encouraged** to follow God's call of ministry. I say all that to say this: If my heart was not in a place of fasting, worship, and prayer. I do not believe I would have heard the call of God on my life. I also am reminded of the strength of God working through different people due to the gifts God gives them to **encourage** me in seasons of my life.

We see in the Bible that Joseph is known for being an encourager and is called Barnabas, which means “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36). Barnabas was the one who, while everyone else was scared of Paul after his conversion, believed in Paul and brought him to the apostles (Acts 9:26-27). Barnabas also helped Paul find his real calling: To help lead and **encourage** churches that blended Jewish and Gentile Christians. And in our text today, we see God hand-select the two of them to leave Antioch on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

The Lord has reminded me in the text of an extremely important thing to always remember. When we face big decisions in life, our hearts need to be in a place of worship. Fasting and prayer should always be at the forefront of what we do. That way, we can hear the voice of the Spirit leading us and not be led by anything else. I don't know about you, but I want to be able to discern the voice of God over the voice of my flesh and the chaos around me. I want to be led by and sent out by the Holy Spirit daily. That starts with my abiding with the Lord, staying in constant prayer, and even fasting. Friends, I hope this **encourages** your hearts today and draws you closer to Christ and His Spirit.



**Questions:**

1. When you face big decisions in life, are you seeking the Lord in prayer and fasting? For questions about fasting, please reach out to [pastor@stonepointchurch.com](mailto:pastor@stonepointchurch.com).
2. How often do you act like Barnabas and encourage others around you? I challenge you to encourage three people a day via texting, calling or in person. This will feed their spirits and motivate them to keep doing good.
3. Please read Hebrews 4:15-16. Do you draw near to the throne of grace with confidence?