

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PRAY TOGETHER

Father God, open our hearts and minds as we discuss what it means to be people of encouragement, like Barnabas, who build others up through generosity, trustworthiness, and seeing the best in them. Show us where discouragement has taken root in our own lives, and remind us of the truth that we are loved and valued by You. Help us to take a clear action step this week—to encourage and come alongside someone who needs hope. May our words and actions reflect Jesus and help others experience Your love. Amen.

ICE BREAKER

Share a moment when someone believed in you and encouraged you when you struggled to believe in yourself. Was it a parent, coach, teacher, pastor, or another leader? What impact did their encouragement have on you?

SERMON OVERVIEW



SCAN FOR
SERMON CLIP



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Drawing from the life of Barnabas, a man whose real name was Joseph but who earned a nickname that defined his entire legacy, Son of Encouragement, Pastor Steve Poe explores the transformative power of encouragement and its essential role in the life of the church and individual believers. Through his story in the book of Acts, we discover that encouragement is not a passive sentiment but an active, life-changing force. We see how Barnabas stood beside Saul of Tarsus (Paul) when no one else would, vouching for a man whose past made him a threat in the eyes of the early church. We see how he refused to give up on a young, unproven John Mark when others had written him off. Discouragement is one of the enemy's most effective weapons, and God-centered encouragement — expressed through generosity, trustworthiness, and seeing the best in others — can change the course of a person's life. Just as Barnabas came alongside Paul and John Mark at critical moments, every believer is called to be an encourager to those around them. The spiritual lesson here is profound: when we choose to see people the way God sees them, rather than through the lens of their failures or reputation, we participate in something eternal. We become instruments of redemption.

READ SCRIPTURE

**ACTS 4:36-37, 9:26-28, 11:22-24, 15:36-41, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11,
JAMES 2:15-16, 2 TIMOTHY 4:11**

CONNECT RELATIONALLY

- 1) Pastor Steve shared how a businessman named Mr. Hunt saw leadership potential in him when he was just 16 years old. The man's encouragement helped change the course of his life. Why do you think a few words of encouragement can have such a lasting impact? What makes encouragement especially meaningful when you're struggling to believe in yourself?
- 2) How do you personally recognize when discouragement is influencing your spiritual life, and what steps do you take to counter it?
- 3) Pastor Poe argues that generosity is often a tangible expression of encouragement, not just a financial act. In what ways have you experienced generosity that went beyond giving and genuinely lifted someone's spirit?

**GROW
SPIRITUALLY**

4) In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul urges believers to continue to encourage one another and build each other up. What does it reveal about the early church that such a command was necessary, and how does that same need show up in your faith community today?

5) The sermon points out that John Mark, once considered unreliable by Paul, eventually became so valued that Paul specifically requested his presence in 2 Timothy 4:11. How does this arc challenge the way you view people who have failed or disappointed you in the past?

**LIVE
GENEROUSLY**

6) Pastor Steve emphasized that “character always comes before competence.” Barnabas was trusted because his fellow believers knew they could depend on him. What is one way you can strengthen the trust others place in you through your words, choices, or follow-through?

7) Barnabas was someone who saw the best in others, even when others didn’t (Paul had given up on John Mark). Who in your life might you be writing off prematurely, and what would it look like to offer them this kind of grace?

8) Pastor Steve challenged everyone to identify one person who needs encouragement and come alongside that person during the week. He also reminded those who are discouraged that their story isn't over and that God is present even in their darkest moments. Who is one person you sense may need encouragement from you this week, and what is one specific thing you could do? If you're the one who needs encouragement, what might it look like to let others know and allow them to come alongside you?

**TAKE
ACTION**

Based on our conversation today, how do you sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to take a next step in practical application? Please complete this statement, I am feeling convicted to take the following action (keep it simple):

Please invite each group member to share their action step, if they have one.

**PRAY
TOGETHER**

Take a few minutes for each person to share a recent joy or praise, as well as something that’s weighing on their heart and in need of intercession. Invite someone to pray over these requests. Be sure to share them with everyone in the group so you can continue praying for one another throughout the week.

**ENGAGE
TOGETHER**

Go Trips! - Global mission trips are a big way we make Jesus known at Northview. When we go, we have an opportunity to serve others and share the Gospel, but God also does something in us. Serving alongside other believers, depending on one another, praying together, and experiencing another culture creates a bond that is difficult to replicate anywhere else. What would it look like for your group to take the next step in your discipleship journey and serve globally? Our global missions team is here to come alongside you and plan a trip that fits your group's schedule and season of life. Reach out today!

