

## Lessons in Leadership: Barnabas

This is the first installment in a series entitled, "Lessons in Leadership".

Over the next few weeks, we will be looking at various characters in the bible for the purpose of learning some valuable leadership lessons from what is written about them. Read this Monday Meditations with your bible in hand so you can reference some of the many scriptures that will be included.

### Lessons in Leadership: Barnabas

As a Christian business leader, I find inspiration in the life of Barnabas; a remarkable figure in the Bible known for his encouraging spirit and some rather exemplary leadership qualities.

Let's explore six valuable lessons we can learn from his life and how they can be applied to our roles as leaders.

#### Lesson 1: Encouragement and Support

One of the defining characteristics of Barnabas was his ability to encourage and support others. In **Acts 4:36-37**, we learn that he sold a field and brought the money to the apostles to support the early Christian community. This act of generosity and selflessness demonstrates his heart for others and his willingness to sacrificially invest in their well-being.

**Q:** How can I actively encourage and support those around me, both within my organization and in the broader community?

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#### Lesson 2: Seeing Potential in Others

Barnabas had a unique gift for recognizing and nurturing the potential in others. When Saul (later known as the apostle Paul) encountered skepticism from the disciples in Jerusalem, it was Barnabas who vouched for him, affirming his conversion and ministry (**Acts 9:26-27**). Barnabas saw beyond Saul's past and recognized the transformation that had taken place in his life.

**Q:** Am I intentional about identifying and developing the potential of those I lead? Do I create an environment for people to grow and thrive in their roles?

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**Lesson 3: Humility and Servant Leadership**

Despite his significant contributions and leadership role within the early church, Barnabas remained humble and servant-hearted. In **Acts 13**, when the Holy Spirit called for Barnabas and Saul to be set apart for missionary work, Barnabas is mentioned first, indicating his prominence. However, throughout their ministry together, Barnabas consistently supported and uplifted Saul, even to the point of allowing him to take the lead (**Acts 13:2, 14; 14:12**).

**Q:** How can I cultivate a spirit of humility and servant leadership within my organization? Am I willing to step back and empower others to lead, even if it means taking a subordinate role myself?

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**Lesson 4: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion**

Barnabas was known as the "Son of Encouragement" (**Acts 4:36**), a title that reflects his commitment to fostering unity and inclusion within the early church. When the church in Antioch became increasingly diverse, Barnabas welcomed Gentile believers into fellowship without discrimination (**Acts 11:19-26**). He recognized the value of diversity and embraced it as a strength rather than a source of division.

**Q:** How am I actively promoting diversity and inclusion within my organization? Am I creating a culture where everyone feels valued and included, regardless of their background or differences?

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**Lesson 5: Resilience in the Face of Setbacks**

Barnabas experienced his share of setbacks and challenges, but he remained steadfast in his faith and commitment to his calling. When he and Paul faced opposition and persecution during their missionary journeys, Barnabas persevered, trusting in God's strength and provision (**Acts 13-14**). Even when he and Paul parted ways due to a disagreement, Barnabas continued his ministry, taking Mark under his wing and investing in his growth as a disciple (**Acts 15:36-41**).

**Q:** How do I respond to setbacks and challenges in my leadership journey? Am I able to maintain resilience and trust in God's faithfulness, even in difficult times?

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### Lesson 6: Investing in Mentorship and Discipleship

Barnabas understood the importance of investing in the next generation of leaders. He took Mark under his wing and mentored him, despite Mark's past failures (**Acts 15:37-39**). Barnabas saw the potential in Mark and was willing to give him a second chance, demonstrating grace and forgiveness in action.

**Q:** Am I intentional about mentoring and discipling others in my organization? Do I provide opportunities for growth and development, even to those who may have made mistakes in the past?

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The life of Barnabas offers valuable insights into what it means to be a Christian business leader. By embodying qualities such as encouragement, humility, resilience, and inclusivity, we can follow in his footsteps and make a positive impact in our workplaces and communities. Let us strive to emulate Barnabas's example as we seek to lead with integrity and grace.

### My Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of leadership and the opportunity to serve others in my role. As I navigate the challenges and responsibilities of leading in the world around me, I pray for Your wisdom and guidance to make decisions that honour You and benefit those under my care.

Grant me the spirit of Barnabas - one of encouragement, humility, and resilience. Help me to see the potential in others, to embrace diversity, and to invest in mentorship and discipleship within my organization.

May Your presence be felt in every meeting, every decision, and every interaction, as I seek to lead with integrity and grace. Give me the strength to persevere through setbacks and the humility to acknowledge my dependence on You.

Bless my endeavors, Lord, and use them for Your glory and the good of those around me.

In Jesus' name, I pray.

Amen.



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