

**Bible Study Outline**  
**PROFILE OF A MISSIONARY**  
**Acts 4:36-37; 13:2-4**

## **1. BARNABAS THE MAN**

- (A) Barnabas was not a member of the “twelve,” but he was a “prominent disciple.”<sup>1</sup>
- (B) He was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (Acts 11:24).
- (C) Barnabas, a Levite and a priest by occupation, and was known as an “encourager.”<sup>2</sup>
- (D) A generous man who sold a piece real estate and gave the proceeds to the work (Acts 4:36-37).
- (E) Barnabas lived out his faith in the context (koininia) of the apostolic community.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. BARNABAS THE MISSIONARY**

- (A) Paul’s call to ministry was dramatic (Acts 9:3-19), but evidently that was not the case with Barnabas.<sup>4</sup>
- (B) Barnabas received a “call” to serve as a missionary *with* Paul (Acts 13:2) but without fanfare.
- (C) Barnabas continued in ministry even after he and Paul disagreed and separated (Acts 15:36-41).
- (D) Barnabas, the consummate team player, accepted his diminished role as Paul emerged as the leader.<sup>5</sup>
- (E) Barnabas understood that the advancement of the kingdom took precedence over personal advancement.
- (F) By attitude/conduct Barnabas demonstrates difference in ministry as a “career” or based on a divine “call.”

## **3. BARNABAS THE MENTOR**

- (A) Paul was a newcomer to the apostolic enclave and Barnabas befriended him (Acts 9:27).
- (B) Beyond friendship Barnabas was a mentor and teacher to the recently-converted Saul (Acts 11:25).
- (C) This mentor had the attitude of a servant even when Paul later corrected him (Galatians 2:13).
- (D) Paul, a “chosen” instrument for a unique ministry (Acts 9:15), became increasingly visible.
- (E) Barnabas accepted his role a missionary mentor, perhaps his best work.
- (F) Barnabas understood teamwork and how the “body” of Christ functions (1 Corinthians 12:12, 14, 20).
- (G) This first-century apostle reminds us that the work is always bigger than any one individual.
- (H) Self-promotion, self-interest, and should be supplanted by focusing on Christ (I Corinthians 12: 23-26).
- (I) It’s not what the individual can do, but what can be done by working together (I Corinthians 3:8-9).

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 474. Barnabas is mentioned some 24 times in the Lukan narrative, and 5 times in the epistles. (See footnote 2)

<sup>2</sup> Paul Kalfa, *Barnabas and Paul*. Online. <http://www.thirdmill.org/Paul2/Paul-Barnabas.asp> Kalfa references 14 passages in the book of Acts that underscore major events in the life of Barnabas: Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22-29; 12:25; 13:1-3; 13:7; 13:42-50; 14:1-3; 14:14-20; 14:23; 15:2-3; 15:12; 15:22-35; and 15:36-41.

<sup>3</sup> Fitzmyer, 315-316. Fitzmyer says his commitment was evident by the fact that even though he was a well-to-do landowner he was willing to sell his farm to benefit the ecclesial community.

<sup>4</sup> Specific details are not given in Scripture regarding his call to ministry.

<sup>5</sup> The Acts narrative indicates that over time Paul became more prominent than his missionary colleague Barnabas. (See footnote 2)