

Visualizing Potential

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Encouragement

Using words to build others up in the faith.

*Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for **building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

As we visualize potential in others' lives, there is power in the act of encouragement, challenging them to take the next step in leadership for Christ.

Paul – The Intimidator

Acts 9:26–27 (ESV)

And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

Paul was a radical, headstrong individual, who intimidated everyone. Barnabas picked him up anyway.

Barnabas – the Encourager

Acts 11:22-26 Barnabas went after Saul and partnered with him in ministry.

Acts 13:1 (ESV)

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.

Saul (Paul) is the guy listed indicating that he was considered least in authority.

Acts 13:13 (ESV)

Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And

John left them and returned to Jerusalem,

The focus changed from Barnabas and Saul to Paul and his company! We see a change in authority.

Barnabas picked up the young man, John Mark along the way as well. (Acts 12:25)

Read Acts 15:36-41 Barnabas and Paul had a major conflict over the potential of John Mark. They had it out! It wasn't pretty and Barnabas and Paul parted ways over John Mark.

Later we see Paul's attitude toward John Mark has changed and he sees the benefits of having John Mark along. Most likely it was because of Barnabas' equipping efforts in John Mark's life, that Paul saw the renewed "usefulness" of this young man.

2 Timothy 4:11 (ESV)

Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

Lesson: Don't determine success or failure too soon! Paul was only a diamond in the rough until Barnabas invested in him. Short term, Paul was a wreck, but in the long haul, God used him to change the world.

❖ Imagine what it was like for Barnabas to carry along Paul & John Mark at the same time.

Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators discipleship ministry, died in Schroon Lake, New York. The boat he was in hit a wave and Trotman and a young lady were tossed overboard. The boat circled around as Trotman held the young lady up as she couldn't swim. He saved her life, but slipped under the surface of the water himself. The next week, TIME Magazine ran an article on Trotman's life. The caption that ran beneath his picture read, "Always Holding Someone Up." In one phrase, that was Trotman's life!

Barnabas, "son of encouragement" was that kind of man, always equipping others, holding them up.

I.C.N.U.

I.C.N.U. – stands for "I see in you." Barnabas saw something in Paul and John Mark that they couldn't see in themselves. He invested in them and God did the work of developing these men, who were so different.

Pastor Neil Johnson trained for ministry with me and I asked him about his first steps of getting involved. He said, "you saw something in me that I didn't see in myself." There is something powerful about seeing the potential in another's life and speaking into them, "I see in you something God wants to do through you to impact others for Christ." Sometimes we need others to give us the perspective that we cannot see.

This is the power of visualizing the potential in other's lives for the glory of God.

GOALS

We all need to set goals and establish the standards of expectations. Paul was always stretching himself, going for the open door of ministry opportunity. He wasn't ransomed and haphazard in going about his business.

*Philippians 3:12–14 (ESV) Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I **press on** to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. **But one thing I do:** forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Paul said, "this one thing I do," not "these forty things I dabble at."

Warning: Manipulation comes when you use others to fulfill your goals! As Pastor Rick Warren states:

"If you are leading people and not loving them, you are leading, you are only manipulating."

EVALUATION

- ❖ Everyone desperately needs honest feedback from a trusted friend.

Both Paul and John Mark needed Barnabas' help as they grew as leaders. Certainly Barnabas "spoke the truth in love," to equip these dynamic leaders in God's forever family.

When you visualize the potential in others, don't stop there. Be willing to help them take the next step by setting goals and evaluating their progress.

Who do you see with the eyes of faith? Who has potential to lead in God's church?

Will you speak into their lives? Will you help them set goals and evaluate their progress?

This is the essence of being a "hero-maker" in the kingdom of God!

Prayer: God won't you give us more leaders like King David, a man after Your heart, who had the character and skill to lead well.

*Psalms 78:72 (ESV) With upright **heart** he shepherded them and guided them with his **skillful hand**.*
