



## CALLED TO ENCOURAGE

### SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE

Isaiah 43:16-21

### ADDITIONAL STUDY

Genesis 26:12-22, Isaiah 65:17 (MSG),  
& Luke 5:36-38 (NASB)

### PRAYER POINTS

- + Ask for grace not to be consumed by your needs, but to look out for others and be willing to supply them with your sufficiency where they are deficient.
- + Pray that you will be a Barnabas to those you encounter daily; and you will meet people that would also be channels of encouragement to you.

For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. **Acts 4:36-37 (NLT)**

How does it feel to get an award or to be rewarded for something you have done well?

How does it feel to be recognized for every effort you put into doing the right thing?

How will you feel if every day, everybody around you said good things to you?

Today, we live in a world where everybody tends to be harsh; finances are hard, everybody seems so stressed up and they unconsciously look for somebody to vent their anger on. Bosses yell at us, friends remind us of our weaknesses, the clothes boutiques remind us that we are short on cash, and so on. We have become so self-consumed that we fail to see the pain, disappointments, lack and hopelessness around us.

Barnabas’ name means “Son of Encouragement” (one who makes it his duty to encourage others). The disciples nicknamed him so because he had a predisposition to willingly help and encourage others. He encouraged the Apostles, the Believers and especially Paul. Although he did not get any credit for all he did, he stood by Paul when he needed him. Perhaps Paul couldn’t have been as effective as he was but for Barnabas encouraging him; he stuck his neck out for Paul when nobody would identify with him (Acts 11:19-26).

John Mark was another person whose life was greatly impacted by Barnabas. He went with Paul and Barnabas on a missionary trip as their assistant but left them halfway without completing the Journey. His behaviour upset Paul so much that when Barnabas later suggested they take John Mark on subsequent trips, Paul refused, and that caused a rift between them which made them to be separated for a while – Paul chose Silas and departed, but Barnabas took John Mark with him, he didn’t ‘dump’ him because of his temporal misbehaviour. We wouldn’t be far from the truth to assume that when Barnabas took John Mark in, he thoroughly trained him in the way of the Lord and helped him to mature in the faith. John Mark’s life transformed after that and he became so useful that later, Paul specifically asked for him to be brought to him for he considered him to be useful to him in ministry (See Acts 13:13, Acts 15:36-40, & II Timothy 4:9-11).

Like Barnabas, we (Christians) are all called to encourage others; to pause and look out for others. This means we have to look away from our petty needs and lend a helping hand to another – take time off our busy schedule to visit with a neighbour who is sick, pray and encourage a colleague who is going through marital difficulty, give our resources to alleviate the sufferings of a friend who is in a financial bind, through love and patience bring back to the faith a backslidden Christian, etc. This is the way we can reflect Jesus to a world that desperately needs to experience the God-kind of love.

Will you be a Barnabas? Will you be a voice that uplifts; that sings a different song? Will you be the one that tells people how God feels about them? Will you commit to give hope to those around you in this harsh world? God is counting on you to shine His light and dispel the darkness in your world; stand to be counted!

### CONTACTS

PHONE: +234 9082222222  
EMAIL: INFO@INSPIRED2GO.ORG

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