

1. "Barnabas" wasn't his birth name (Joseph was), it was his nickname meaning "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). This rather obscure Bible character was so encouraging that it became his name. What a legacy to leave! What an example to follow. What would people nickname you?
2. Background: Acts 4:36 records that Barnabas was a Levite and a Cyprian (that is, a native of the island of Cyprus).
3. Barnabas put the kingdom first with possessions. His first recorded action is that he "sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:37). He also was acknowledged by Paul for supporting himself financially for his ministry instead of depending on churches (1 Corinthians 9:6).
4. After Paul's dramatic conversion, Barnabas courageously vouched for him when the Jerusalem church was suspicious that a former persecutor would want to join their ranks (Acts 9:26-31).
5. Barnabas was a Christian leader and preacher (Acts 15:35). On one occasion, he was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch. Acts 11:23-24 describes his arrival, "When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord." After his arrival, Barnabas sought out Saul to help him with the work (Acts 11:25). Barnabas' ministry and effectiveness touches on one of the goals of the **Fellowship of the Word** program, which is to equip leaders to preach God's Word with God's heart and to empower pastors to train others in the Scriptures as well.
6. While praying, fasting, and worshiping God, Barnabas and Saul received the call from the Holy Spirit to go on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).
7. Barnabas, along with Paul, served to straighten out Jew/Gentile tensions that arose in the early church by sharing from the Scriptures and his experience how the Gentiles were being saved and could fellowship with Jews (Acts 15:1-21; Galatians 2:1-10). Although this issue was not without its challenges for Barnabas. In Galatians 2:13, Paul called Barnabas out for being led astray by Jewish circumcision party hypocrisy for a time (presumably before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15).
8. Barnabas had a sharp disagreement with Paul that ended their ministry together. Acts 15:36-41 explains that Barnabas wanted to take Mark along on their missionary journey while Paul did not because Mark had abandoned them on a previous trip. Paul would eventually describe Mark as "useful to me" at the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11). It makes sense that Barnabas would stick up for Mark—they were cousins (Colossians 4:10).
9. There was wide speculation about Barnabas in early church history. James Brooks explains, "In the third century Barnabas was identified by Clement of Alexandria as one of the 70 of Luke 10:1; Tertullian referred to him as the author of Hebrews; and the Clementine Recognitions stated he was the Matthias of Acts 1:23, 26. All of these are most unlikely. In the second century an epistle bearing Barnabas's name appeared, became quite popular, and even received some

consideration for a place in the NT. Later an apocryphal Acts of Barnabas and perhaps even a Gospel of Barnabas were circulated.”¹

10. Barnabas left a tremendous legacy. All of the above facts (except #9) prove Barnabas to be a strong man of faith that left a lasting legacy and stored up for himself a lucrative inheritance in heaven.