

BARNABAS: WILLING TO DECREASE

- Acts 13

Being second requires important abilities

I. SERVICE IS IMPORTANT

A. THE RECORD

- Barnabas has served as ...

1. A Giver (4:36-37)
2. A Sponsor (9:26-30)
3. A Teacher (11:19-26)
4. A Courier (11:29-30)
5. A Recruiter (12:25, 13:5)
6. A Leader (13:1)
7. A Missionary (13:4)

B. THE REALITY

1. Decreasing implies that you were doing something
2. Decreasing does not mean discontinuing
3. Duties and designations can change
 - a. When Barnabas and Saul began working together “Barnabas and Saul” was their team name - See Acts 11:30; 12:25 and 13:2, 7
 - b. During their first missionary journey, Paul became more prominent than Barnabas
 - 1) Note: “Paul and his companions” in 13:13
 - 2) Then: “Paul and Barnabas” in 13:42-43, 46, 50 and 15:2, 22, 35

II. OBSERVATION IS IMPORTANT

- Barnabas is good at evaluating the things he sees

A. HISTORICALLY

1. He observed a need (4:37)
2. He observed frustration (9:26)
3. He observed grace (11:23)
4. He observed an opportunity (11:25-26)

B. PRESENTLY (13:4-16)

1. He witnesses Paul's fulness (9)
2. He sees Paul's boldness (8, 10)
 - a. Undeterred by an Elymas (8)
 - b. Unafraid of an enemy (10)
3. He notes Paul's effectiveness (11-13a)
 - a. With a sorcerer (11)
 - b. With a seeker (7b, 12)
 - c. With other servants (13a)
4. He experiences Paul's steadfastness (13b-14)
 - a. Though deserted by John (13b)
 - b. Though distressed with disease (See Gal. 4:13 and II Cor. 11:26)
 - c. Though daunted by dangers (14)
5. He revels in Paul's preparedness (15-16)

III. HUMILITY IS IMPORTANT

- Barnabas must determine how he will respond to what he's observed

A. BARNABAS ADAPTED TO CHANGE

1. Recognizing that Paul was more suited for this particular ministry than himself
2. He recognized that Paul's gift of evangelism (9:15) was different than his gift of encouragement (4:36)

B. BARNABAS YIELDED TO GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

- Knowing that the Holy Spirit had formed this team (13:2) but that Barnabas would not insist on how it must function

C. BARNABAS QUIETLY MOVED ASIDE

1. He recognized that "in personality, education and eloquence, Paul outranked him."
[D. Edmond Hiebert, "In Paul's Shadow," p. 46.]
2. He graciously deferred to Paul
 - An old couplet wisely states "It takes more grace than I can tell ... to play the 2nd fiddle well."
3. Examples
 - a. Jonathan with David in I Sam. 23:17
 - b. John the Baptist with Jesus in John 3:30 > He must increase, and I must decrease

CONCLUSION: Barnabas was willing to decline and was good at it because:

1. He faithfully served
2. He thoughtfully evaluated
3. He humbly moved

May God help us to have a similar attitude

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