

# Barnabas, a Good Man

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The adjective *good* is applied to men very sparingly in the New Testament. In fact, it is used only in reference to Joseph of Arimathea and Barnabas and by the same writer in both cases (Luke 23:50; Acts 11:24). While we are not to conclude that no others were deserving of the term, it may be fairly said that it was not used indiscriminately. Focus on Barnabas for a moment. What traits earned him this distinction?

He was full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:24). There is no record that he possessed miraculous powers, but this seems to refer to a fullness of the Spirit the Lord would desire for all. It involves living by the Spirit's teachings (Gal. 5:25) and minding the things of the Spirit rather than those of the flesh (Rom. 8:5). It is seen in the way one lives (Gal. 5:22-24).

He was full of faith (Acts 11:24). Such a faith comes only from a complete trust in and an adequate knowledge of the Word (Rom. 10:17). A **full faith** is a working, obedient faith (Jam. 2:17-24).

He was an exhorter, an encourager, a consoler, and a teacher (Acts 11:23, 26). *Barnabas* literally means "son of exhortation/consolation" (4:36). This statement simply means that he strongly urged others to do what was right. He shared his knowledge willingly with others.

He was trustworthy and dependable (Acts 11:22, 30; 13:2). The brethren at Jerusalem and Antioch and the Holy Spirit all had complete confidence in him or he would not have been chosen for such important tasks. He had proved himself worthy of their trust.

He was generous with his wealth (Acts 4:36-37). The first time he is mentioned in Scripture tells us of his selling some land to help the helpless. One may have many good traits, but without generosity, he cannot be truly good.

He risked his life for the name of Christ (Acts 15:26). Compromise was unthinkable to Barnabas. Suffering and persecution lay in his path, but there was no turning back; he would die before he quit.

Before we use the adjective *good* too freely, we would do well to consult Barnabas.

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