



## Week 18: Acts 15-21

### Study Guide for the week of April 27 - May 3

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

Reflect on the life of Barnabas, which you can find in Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-27; 11:19-26; 12:25-13:13; 13:42-15:39.

Barnabas was nicknamed the Son of Encouragement. Is there someone in your life who is an encourager? When do you most need encouragement? Who are you encouraging? When do they most need encouragement?

If you are a spouse or parent, what is your ratio of encouragement to criticism? Are you in or out of balance?

Barnabas' involvement in the younger John Mark's life increased John Mark's effectiveness in ministry. Are you investing in the life of someone so their Christian walk is deeper and fuller? How are you investing? Where do you see your investment producing more fruit? If you aren't investing directly in someone, pray for God to show you a fellow believer to encourage and take the first steps to become more like Barnabas to them.

#### Discussion starters

1. The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35) dealt with the question of whether Gentiles had to obey Jewish laws to be saved. Where do you make the same mistake of substituting human-made traditions and rituals for simple obedience to God? Is your faith more concerned with rules and ceremonies or with the freedom to obey Jesus' commands?
2. Timothy was a second generation Christian (Acts 16:1). Can you trace your spiritual genealogy? Who are you influencing in the next spiritual generation?
3. Reread Acts 16:13-30, three stories of new converts. What three separate parts of society are represented? Can you think of people from similar backgrounds who are in the Christian family? Where do you place yourself—white-collar, blue-collar, no collar? How welcoming are you to the various segments of society that are invited into a relationship with Jesus?
4. Priscilla and Aquila are an example of a married couple who are an effective team, complementing each other. Share some examples of couples you know who are like Priscilla and Aquila in the same respect. What makes them an effective team? If you are married, can people see Christ in your marriage? In your home?
5. Reread Acts 18:24-26. Are you surprised at Apollos' willingness to learn despite his great accomplishments as a speaker? Do you know accomplished people who are humble enough to keep learning? Who have stopped learning? Which type of person are you?
6. The story in Acts 19:13-16 is either quite funny or quite convicting – or both! Are you attempting to use Jesus as the seven sons of Sceva were without really knowing him? Would the demons know you as a follower of Jesus or as a person who is trying to co-opt Jesus' power for your own agenda?

#### Bible verse to memorize: Acts 20:24