



THE BARNABAS FACTOR

DYNAMICS OF CHARACTER

RIGHTEOUS REAL ESTATE (Acts 4:31-37)

“The supreme test of goodness is not in the greater but in the smaller incidents of our character and practice; not what we are when standing in the searchlight of public scrutiny, but when we reach the firelight flicker of our homes; not what we are when some clarion-call rings through the air, summoning us to fight for life and liberty, but our attitude when we are called to sentry-duty in the grey morning, when the watch-fire is burning low. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by daily inconsistency, unfaithfulness, and besetting sin.” -- F.B. Meyer

I. THE COALITION OF POWER (Acts 4:31)

- A. Maximum church dynamics through the filling of the Holy Spirit .
- B. Measure of expression in declaring the Scriptures.

II. THE COMMUNITY OF GRACE (4:32, 33)

- A. Shared hearts and shared possessions (v. 32)
- B. Outworking of the testimony of power and grace (v. 33)

“I fear, wherever riches have increased (exceeding few are the exceptions), the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.” —John Wesley

III. THE COMMISSION OF SHARING (4:34, 35)

- A. Efficiency of sacrificial stewardship (v. 34)
- B. Apostolic leadership respected (v. 35)

IV. THE COMMITMENT OF AUTHENTICITY (4:36, 37)

- A. Introducing the “Son of Encouragement” (v. 36)
- B. Instituting his voluntary spirit of giving (v. 37)

“That was not his name. ‘Barnabas’ was a designation of endearment, meaning ‘son of comfort.’ He traveled with Paul, Paul liked him; he could preach. The people of the church liked him; he gave to the poor till it hurt. The first thing recorded of him is that he sold his farm and gave the sale price to the church. ‘Son of comfort,’ and no mistake.” —Frank S. Mead

FOR CONSIDERATION...

1. What aspects of first-century stewardship must be considered as changeless principles? What, if any, should be seen as no longer applicable to the Church?
2. In the often-problematic area of Christians and the use of their possessions, how did the early Church not only succeed under testing, but prosper?
3. Where did Ananias and Sapphira fall short of the standard for spiritual blessing and reward? (Acts 5)
4. With his introduction into the Apostolic era, how does Barnabas immediately qualify himself?