

### Listening Guide

**INTRODUCTION:** We're all on a journey **and** some will have a very positive impact on others. What ingredients are heroes and influencers made of? How do we become an influencer and hero to our kids and those around us who might change the world? Or better yet, how do we disciple and mentor someone who can change the world? Those and many questions about influence are answered as we study the journey of Barnabas.

#### I. **THE MAKING OF A HERO (or the making of a mentor and a person of influence).**

A. **How are heroes made?** This question makes one fact very clear:

1. **Heroes/mentors/influencers** (who change the world for the Lord) **are MADE, NOT born.** There is a process that makes a spiritual influencer. What are the steps? The process is different every time, but each hero has developed similar characteristics. For example, each of the apostles is unique, formed differently, yet when we observe their character, they are similar and reflect Jesus.
2. **Three examples of heroes/mentors/influencers:** Paul, Barnabas and Mark.
  - a. **FIRST, PAUL:** There are few people who have ever had more influence.
    - He appeared to have been highly trained—Acts 22:3.
    - He was a Roman citizen—Acts 22:25-29.
    - He was brilliant and very dedicated—Gal. 1:14.
    - Making Paul into a spiritual hero included bringing him back from being a religious terrorist—Acts 22:4-5; 7:57-8:1; 23:6; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:4-6.
    - Then, something extraordinary happened. Paul was arrested (stopped) on the road to Damascus—Acts 9:1-5; 22:6-11. (See Acts 9:17; 22:12-16.)
    - He went through some humiliating experiences, which included being lowered over a wall in a basket and having to go back home—Acts 9:25-30; 2 Cor. 11:30-33.
    - There are misunderstood steps in his story—Gal. 1:15-17; 2 Cor. 12:1-5.
    - But during his early history, Paul had a mentor, a hero, who interceded for him and opened doors for his ministry—Acts 9:23-29; 11:22-26.
  - b. **SECOND, BARNABAS.** He was prepared by the Holy Spirit to be a hero to Paul and others while he was in the Jerusalem church. His journey of being **MADE INTO A SPIRITUAL INFLUENCER** seems to be very different from Paul's, but there are some similarities in character; they both reflect Jesus.
    - **Where did he come from?** Acts 4:36-37 (a Levite and from Cyprus).
    - **Why is this reference important?** (A person's background is often a key element or ingredient in determining their future impact; it helps or hinders. We may need prayer, guidance, or forgiveness to build on it.)

- **What else does this passage tell us about Barnabas' prep for influence?** (If he owned land on Cyprus, he was already rich and influential.)
  - **How did Barnabas build on and use his past?** He gave some or all of his inheritance to the church. He was generous. It's a model to the church.
  - **What does this reveal to us about a spiritual hero?** They're GIVERS. A person of spiritual influence is always generous and a giver!)
  - **What else is revealed about Barnabas?** Joseph's name was changed to Barnabas (the son of encouragement), because his gift was so prominent and effective that a name change was in order.
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- **Where did he learn this? Who were Barnabas's heroes?** Acts 2-4,6. What are our children and friends seeing in us that they might mimic?
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- c. **THIRD, MARK.** What do we know about Mark? Mark 14:51; 10:21; 12:12-13.
- These references indicate that he knew Jesus, was rich, and he had some opportunities to know a few of the apostles as well—Acts 12:12.
  - We also know he was taken by Paul and Barnabas (his cousin) on their first missionary journey as their helper—Acts 12:25.
  - It appeared his journey was a “hero and influencer-in-the-making.” Did Mark initially think his journey toward influence a privilege? Acts 13:13

Let's take another look at Barnabas (and his friends) and suggest a few principles:

- B. **What are the principles that guide or shape a hero who trains others to be heroes, mentors and people of influence?**
1. **Heroes have a series of events throughout their lives that don't make sense initially; they seem random and disconnected.** But in retrospect, they are pieces of God's plan to prepare them (us) for a future of increased influence, e.g., Barnabas selling land and giving proceeds; Paul over the wall in a basket.
  2. **Heroes usually have propensities, failures, and/or some weakness they have to work through/get victory over.**
    - a. **Barnabas was loyal to a fault, and maybe thought too much of his heroes' opinions**—Gal. 2:11-14.
    - b. **Paul had a thorn in the flesh; it caused him to be weak, too**—2 Cor. 12:7-10.
      - The reason: 2 Cor. 12:7 (to keep him from being conceited).
      - The resolve: 2 Cor. 12:9-10 (delight in weakness; when weak he's strong.)
    - c. **Mark was privileged, and prone to not carry through when things were difficult**—Mark 14:51-52; Acts 13:13. The good news is that he eventually became strong—Acts 15:39-40; 2 Tim. 4:11; Col. 4:10; Philemon 1:23-24.
  3. **It's not unusual for people (children) who have been mentored by a mentor (or influenced by another) to forget the patience exercised toward them when they were starting out, especially as they grow into maturity and even become a hero to others.** (Yet a mentor/parent continues to invest in others.)

**C. Here are a number of general observations derived mostly from Barnabas:**

1. **Godly ministry often starts with GIVING what we have to Jesus**—Acts 4:36-37; Luke 19:17. They give themselves, resources, compassion, meet needs, take risks. They put “things” in perspective and are faithful with a few things.
2. **The best of heroes begin as mentorees/servants** (Elisha, Joshua, Barnabas, Paul, Mark—Matt. 4:19; Acts 13:5; 11:25-26).  
Principle: The same way we follow others is the same way we will lead. The book of Ruth shows us God directs a moving servant—Ruth 2.
3. **Encouragement is key to all successful mentoring**—2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:11; 5:14. Some will do it better than others, but all should have encouragement as a key element in how they influence others; to catch others doing something right. Paul was not skilled at this when he started, but he learned to encourage from the son of encouragement and the Holy Spirit.
4. **The test a mentor endures and learns from is one of the main lessons he passes on to his/her mentoree/child/friends.** We should collect/systematize the lessons we have learned. What do you think Mark learned from the disagreement Paul and Barnabas had with each other about him? (He learned you don’t give up on your kids, your mentorees, your sidekicks, or your heroes. He learned he needed to be patient with them and work with them even when they faltered. Mark learned to keep serving others even if they dropped out, were cranky with him, or even if they gave up on him)—Acts 15:39; 2 Tim. 4:11.
5. **Heroes and those they influence should openly share their tests,** e.g., Paul.
6. **Heroes are tenacious and loyal,** e.g., Barnabas.
7. **An exemplary hero usually has mentorees/children/friends/grandchildren who become heroes, too.**
8. **Heroes often don’t receive back the same treatment/encouragement they give.** (Their joy is watching their mentorees influence others—2 Cor. 7:4-7.)
9. **Heroes are on a lifelong mission to save the world, one mentoree at a time**—2 Tim. 2:2.
10. **Being a mentor/a hero to someone is the greatest investment we can make in this life.** Nothing else compares. Barnabas influenced the writings of the New Testament through Paul and the gospel of Mark.
11. **Spiritual heroes fade and point others to Jesus.** They often just walk out of the limelight and fade away. What happened to Barnabas? We don’t know! If we’ve done our mentoring well, it won’t be obvious what we’ve done until some time has passed. It’s only when we think about it that we remember how our mentors have affected our lives. That’s good, because a son of encouragement, a son of the Holy Spirit is really all about pointing to someone else, to the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s the One who should be the big deal, and be front and center on the stage of our life! Summary: A son of encouragement is really all about pointing to someone else, to Jesus!