



# Relationship Case Study: Paul, Barnabas, & John Mark

*by Dr. Bill Cullen*

1. Describe two of your best friends and the relationship you have with each of them.
  - If they know each other, describe the relationship your two friends have with each other.

2. Read the following Bible passages (biblical text is found at the end of the study):

- Acts 4:26-27
- Acts 9:26-28
- Acts 12:12 & 25
- Acts 13:2-3
- Acts 13:13
- Acts 14:1-3, 8-15
- Acts 15:12
- Acts 15:35-41
- Galatians 2:11-13
- Colossians 4:10
- 2 Timothy 4:11
- Philemon 1:23-24
- 1 Peter 5:13

3. From the list below pick five words you would use to describe Paul. Five words you would use to describe Barnabas. Five words you would use to describe John Mark. Explain your choices. (You can use the same word for more than one person.)

Understanding	Intolerant	Experienced
Demanding	Encouraging	Loyal
Tolerant	Patient	Judgmental
Forgiving	Confident	Soft-hearted
Growing	Critical	Task-oriented
Wise	Easy-going	Person-oriented
Nurturing	Immature	Supportive

4. From the list below pick three words you would use to describe Paul and Barnabas' relationship. Three words you would use to describe Paul and John Mark's relationship. Three words you would use to describe Barnabas and John Mark's relationship. Three words you would use to describe Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark's relationship together. Explain your choices. (You can use the same word for more than one relationship.)

Strong	Multi-dimensional	Deteriorating
Shallow	Mentoring	Affirming
Growing	Respectful	Questionable
Fluctuating	Disrespectful	Nurturing
One-sided	Critical	Forgiving
Easy-going	Evolving	Self-centered
Supportive	Heart-warming	Other _____

5. With whom do you most identify: Paul? Barnabas? Or John Mark? Explain.
6. Brainstorm things we can learn from Paul, from Barnabas, and from John Mark regarding what to do and/or what not to do as we relate with each other as friends and as teammates?
7. Things to think about (biblical text is found at the end of the study):

**Watch what we say**

Matthew 12:36-37

Ephesians 4:29

Colossians 4:6

James 1:26

**Don't judge—forgive—act gently**

Matthew 7:1-2

Romans 2:1

Romans 15:1-2

Galatians 6:1-2

**Encourage**

1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14

2 Thessalonians 2:17

2 Timothy 4:2

Hebrews 3:13

Hebrews 10:25

- As you think about your friendships and/or teammates, which of the above verses are most meaningful for you at this time (pick no more than two). Explain.
  - As you think about your relationships, which three words from question #3 do you most want or need in a friend and/or teammate? Which three are you best able to offer as a friend and/or as a teammate?
8. The Gospel: God's Good News of His Empowerment (biblical text is found at the end of the study):
- |                     |                   |                  |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| John 15:4-5         | Galatians 3:26-27 | Philippians 2:13 |
| 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 | Galatians 5:22-23 | 2 Timothy 1:6-7  |
- As you think about being a friend and/or teammate, which of the above verses is most meaningful and empowering for you at this time (pick only one). Explain.

## BIBLE PASSAGES FOR QUESTION #2

Acts 4:36-37 (NIV)

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 9:26-28 (NIV)

When [Saul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Acts 12:12-25 (NIV)

When this had dawned on [Peter], he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.... When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Acts 13:2-3 (NIV)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13:13 (NIV)

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

Acts 14:1-3 & 8-15 (NIV)

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.... In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."

Acts 15:12 (NIV)

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

Acts 15:35-41 (NIV)

But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Galatians 2:11-13 (NIV)

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Colossians 4:10 (NIV)

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV)

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

Philemon 1:23-24 (NIV)

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

1 Peter 5:13 (NIV)

She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

### **BIBLE PASSAGES FOR QUESTION #7**

Matthew 12:36-37 (NIV)

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Colossians 4:6 (NIV)

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

James 1:26 (NIV)

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Matthew 7:1-2 (NIV)

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Romans 2:1 (NIV)

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Romans 15:1-2 (NIV)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 & 14 (NIV)

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.... And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

2 Thessalonians 2:17 (NIV)

...encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

### **BIBLE PASSAGES FOR QUESTION #8**

John 15:4-5 (NIV)

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (NIV)

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Galatians 3:26-27 (NIV)

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.