



Do Continue to Teach

Scripture reading Acts 15:35

“Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”

The teaching of the Word of God is absolutely essential. Each one of us has the privilege of teaching God’s Word to many different individuals. If you are a pastor of a church, you have the privilege of teaching the Word of God to the congregation that God has given you. Maybe you are not a pastor but the teacher of an adult Bible study, or a teacher to children in a Sunday school class. Maybe you don’t have the official title of teacher, but you are a grandparent, a mother, or a father. Each of us have the responsibility for taking the truths God has given us and passing them on to the next generation.

Paul was a man sent from God as an apostle. The word *apostle* means one sent from God. As an apostle, he was sent from God to teach people the truth of God’s Word. One thing that the Apostle Paul continually did throughout his ministry was teach.

It is a great privilege to be able to teach truth. What truth should we teach? We need to teach lost people how to be saved. We need to teach Christians how to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to teach couples how to live together as couples. We need to teach our children to grow in their love for God and teach them what God has done for us.

We need to teach! I want to encourage you, as a believer, to ask God for others whom you can teach. There are people all around us who know less about the Word of God than we do. It is evident in our culture that people do not understand the principles of the Word of God. Ask God to help you to teach and strengthen others BY FAITH.



Do Encourage the Family of God

Scripture reading Acts 15:36

“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.”

The Apostle Paul and Barnabas had been in Antioch preaching and teaching the Word of God. While they were there, people said that Gentile believers needed to adopt Jewish traditions in order for them to be saved. Paul and Barnabas went a long way to make sure that false teaching was discounted by the Apostles and the leaders of the Christian movement of that day. Paul and Barnabas were seeing fruit from their ministry in Antioch, but their thoughts were going to other places with other believers whom they had led to Christ and brought up in the Gospel, and they wanted to be an encouragement to them.

It is important that we do whatever we can to encourage. New converts need the encouragement of Christian leaders. New converts need those who have led them to Christ to help them and bring them along. The Bible tells us that one of the main reasons that God established the local church was so that we could meet together to exhort one another unto love and good works. That was true of the first church and that is true of our church today. What a wonderful blessing it is to walk into the general assembly of the church on a Sunday morning and see the shining faces of your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ who love God and whom you haven't seen all week long. They have gone through struggles. You have gone through struggles, and yet, we gather together to praise God and worship Him. When we do, it lifts our spirits and encourages us.

It is important today that you be like Paul and Barnabas. Determine to be in church, not just for what you will receive. You are going to be in church because others need you to encourage them. Determine that no matter what is going on in your life, you will be an encouragement. When you do, you are walking BY FAITH. Our God is the God that is in control. It doesn't matter what is going on politically or financially in the world, because we have a God that is in control. When we remember and share that truth with others, we are encouraging them BY FAITH.



Scripture reading Acts 15:37-39

“And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other...”

Throughout Scripture we find that Satan is a divider, but that God unites the brethren. There are certainly definite things that we should divide from as we saw in Acts 15. The Bible tells us if somebody has no respect for life that we should divide from them. We also found that if somebody is living immorally, we should divide from them. We have seen that if somebody is worshipping a false God, we should divide from them. Also, if somebody is insensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others, we certainly shouldn't continue in fellowship with them. However, having said those things, it is sad to say that so many Christians allow the Devil to divide them from other Christians. We need to understand that not everyone is going to believe every little thing that we believe. Brothers and sisters have always differed in some areas. We need to allow for those differences. Somebody may like one type of music, where you like another. Somebody may like one particular type of fashion, where you like another. Some people may think certain entertainment is okay, while others think it is inappropriate. We can't allow the Devil to divide us over issues that are not significant or have no eternal value. It is sad that as we read through the story of Paul and Barnabas, we see a long enduring friendship torn apart over an issue that should not have divided them.

I want to encourage you, as a believer, don't let Satan divide you. Allow God to use to encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible says, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”* (Romans 12:18). I would encourage you to live that way BY FAITH.



Do Partner with Other Believers

Scripture reading Acts 15:38-40

“But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed...”

Partnership is so, so important. The Bible tells us that Jesus sent out His disciples two by two. The Bible is very clear when God created man, *“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone”* (Genesis 2:18). We need brothers and sisters in Christ to be an encouragement one to another. It is important that we not allow Satan to divide us. There is someone in your life that God wants you to get close to. There is someone in your life that you need to develop a relationship with. Of course, if you are married, God wants you to be partnered strongly with your spouse. You should share everything about your life with your spouse and enjoy life together with your spouse. But as a family, I would encourage you, to get to know other families. Partner together with other families. If you are a single adult, find other single adults who you can get together with to encourage one another. We need to partner together. When I go out soulwinning to tell people about Christ, I never go by myself. I always take a partner. It might be my wife, my children, or another man in the church, but it is important that we do that. Why?

1. There is a protection in having another individual with you.
2. You have an added resource with you who may be able to answer difficult questions that you are unable to answer.
3. You will also have someone to strengthen you, lift you up, and be the encouragement that you need so you can continue in the work of God.

It is sad that Paul and Barnabas were divided over an issue that they did not need to divide them. We Paul left Barnabas, he did not leave alone. He left with Silas. When Barnabas left, he did so with John Mark. We need partners in ministry. I encourage you to find a partner that you can encourage BY FAITH.



Do Expect to Work

Scripture reading Acts 15:38

“But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.”

Do you realize that ministry is work? When I started Liberty Baptist Church forty-three years ago, I did not realize all that was involved in ministry. Oh, I expected to go out door knocking. As seniors going into ministry, we were challenged by the founder of our school, Dr. Jerry Falwell, to knock on doors. So, we determined to come to Las Vegas and knock on doors. My wife and I would go out door knocking in 110° heat and knock on 100 doors everyday Tuesday-Saturday. We did that and trusted God that we would have results as we reached out to the community to invite them to church and tell them about Jesus Christ.

Ministry involves work. However, even knowing we were going to door knocking, we had no idea the work that was really involved in ministry. We did not know about the late-night counseling. We did not know about visiting people in their homes night after night. We did not know the work and preparation of messages. Nor were we aware of the fact that when we started the church, we would be the janitors, nursery workers, teen directors, and leaders of every area of ministry. We were also unaware about construction, building buildings, putting up walls, painting, and laying carpet. All of those things are part of the work of the ministry.

If you are going to be used of God, then you need to expect to work. Ministry is work. Ministry is also life. We do the work God calls us to do BY FAITH.



Don't Demonize Other Christians

Scripture reading Acts 15:40-41

“And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.”

This is the first break up of a Christian partnership that we read about in the New Testament. I think it is interesting that though Paul and Barnabas had a severe contention that led to their departure from one another, we do not read anywhere in Scripture of Paul criticizing Barnabas, nor of Barnabas criticizing Paul. It is true that Barnabas is not mentioned in Scripture from this point on. But we do have reference from Paul regarding Barnabas. Every time he spoke of Barnabas, he spoke of him with respect and honor.

We need to understand how important it is, as believers, to highly esteem other believers. Can I tell you that every believer has the same entity? It is not a human entity. The Bible tells us, *“...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12). Your enemy is not another human being, and specifically, is not another Christian. If you have a problem with another Christian, then I would encourage you to pray for that Christian, but don't criticize them publicly or privately. If you have an issue that you need to discuss, then discuss it with them on a one-on-one basis. When the discussion is over, keep the discussion to yourself. Don't demonize your brother. Don't demonize your sister. The world is not in anyway brought closer to Christ through division within the Christian community. Be what God wants you to be. The Bible says, *“Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you”* (Luke 6:28). *“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing”* (1 Peter 3:9).

God wants you and I as believers to lift up others, so don't demonize other Christians. Instead, lift them up and do it BY FAITH.