

*“A Case Study In Grace-Giving”*  
*September 6, 2009 \* Acts 11:19-30*

*I. A bit of background on Barnabas*

*A bit of background on what’s happening in Acts 11*

*II. Five Qualities of a Grace-Giver*

**Quality #1 – Grace-givers see \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
where others do not.**

- A. What else might Barnabas have seen, other than God’s grace, when he came to Antioch?*
- B. “Reality is never quite what you see – it’s what you choose to see.” Examples of this:*
- C. What was the supreme example of Barnabas’ grace-giving ability?*
- D. To be like Barnabas then, what must I be willing to do?*

**Quality #2 – Grace-givers experience \_\_\_\_\_ as their  
emotional default.**

- A. In the Greek, what two words are related to each other?*
- B. What are scientists learning about human happiness?*

*C. If a Christian is not experiencing much joy, what might be wrong? How can we increase our ‘joy default’?*

**Quality #3 – Grace-givers \_\_\_\_\_ around them.**

- A. To encourage means what?*
- B. Are grace-givers just hopeless optimists who see the world through rose-colored glasses?*
- C. What happens when we’re together for church on Sundays? (Hebrews 10:25)*

**Quality #4 – Grace-givers know how to grow in \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. What are we not talking about here?*
- B. Can a person grow in goodness or evil? (2 Peter 1:5,8)*
- C. How does this happen? (Luke 6:45)*

**Quality #5 – Grace-givers are full of the \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. How do I experience this in my life?*

# “A Case Study In Grace-Giving”

## September 6, 2009 \* Acts 11:19-30

### *I. A bit of background on Barnabas*

We first meet Barnabas in the Bible in Acts 4:36 where we find him selling a field his own and bringing the proceeds to the apostles for the ministry of the church. His original name was Joseph, but the apostles saw something in this man that cause them to dub him “Barnabas”, a name which meant ‘son of encouragement’.

### *A bit of background on what’s happening in Acts 11*

The first storm of persecution has broken against the early church, beginning with the killing of a young leader in the Jerusalem church named Stephen. He was martyred, with the approval and aid of a relentless, bounty-hunter of a man named Saul, who hated Christians as much as a man could hate anything. Stephen’s death set in motion a violent assault against the church, as dozens, perhaps hundreds of believers are rounded up and thrown in prison. As a result of the persecution, many believers pack up their things and hightail it out of Jerusalem. And with all the reshuffling of Christians going on, the message of Jesus Christ is being shared in a lot of different places than it was before, to a lot of different people, especially Gentiles, those who weren’t Jews. An epidemic of salvation breaks out. And when the Jerusalem church hears that God is on the move in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman empire – there are roughly a half million people living there in the first century – they dispatch Barnabas to go and give these new believers a hand.

### *II. Five Qualities of a Grace-Giver*

**Quality #1 – Grace-givers see God at work where others do not.**

*A. What else might Barnabas have seen, other than God’s grace, when he came to Antioch?*

**The smallness of the church. Its lack of leadership. Its vulnerability in a time of persecution. The Gentiles.**

*B. “Reality is never quite what you see – it’s what you choose to see.” Examples of this:*

**The Pharisees saw an adulteress and a whore in the woman they caught in adultery. Remember that story from earlier in the series? Jesus saw a daughter of God who needed to be called out of her life of sin. When a grace-giver is in conflict with a believer, they don’t see someone to drive out of the church, they see someone with whom to attempt reconciliation. When a grace-giver sees an enemy, they don’t see someone on whom to hurl God’s judgment, but someone to pray for and forgive.**

*C. What was the supreme example of Barnabas’ grace-giving ability?*

**In recruiting Saul, now Paul (and now a Christian) and bringing him into leadership in the church. He was the first to believe Saul had converted and accept him into the church.**

*D. To be like Barnabas then, what must I be willing to do?*

**It requires that we forgive those whom God has forgiven, that we let go of grudges, that we let go of negativity, that we stop labeling people, that we work for reconciliation with those we can’t get along with or even those who oppose us, that we practice kindness, that until we absolutely know otherwise we will believe the best of a person, that we believe that others can be truly born again, they can start over with Jesus in their life. It means we give second, third and fourth chances to people.**

**Quality #2 – Grace-givers experience joy as their emotional default.**

*A. In the Greek, what two words are related to each other?*

**In the Greek language – the original language the New Testament – the word for joy is “chara”. And the Greek word for grace is “charis”. The two words are related. The word “joy” is derived from the word “grace”. Barnabas saw the “charis” of God and “charad” (rejoiced). In other words, when you really get a hold of God’s grace, then you’re really going to begin to experience joy in your life.**

*B. What are scientists learning about human happiness?*

**They're learning is that everyone seems to have a certain happiness default point. If you could measure happiness on a scale, ranging from grumpy to giddy, everyone tends to have their own setting. Some are happier than others. Some are grumpier than others. And though there are things that happen to us along the way that might bump our happiness up or down on that scale – win the lottery, your happiness may bump up dramatically; lose your job, your happiness takes a downward trend – usually we tend to quickly reset to our default, whatever it is.**

**They're also learning that people can adjust their happiness set-point by making dedicated changes in the way people see the world.**

*C. If a Christian is not experiencing much joy, what might be wrong? How can we increase our 'joy default'?*

**Maybe at the root of the problem is you don't understand grace; you don't understand how radically loved you are by God, and how he moved heaven and earth to save you from your sin and selfishness. For as a remind myself of these truths each and every day, and as I live out the radical implications of these truths, my happiness set-point will go up. Must go up. Because you cannot receive *charis*, and not experience *chara*.**

**Quality #3 – Grace-givers lift others up around them.**

*A. To encourage means what?*

**What word is enclosed within the word “encourage”? Courage. So to encourage someone is to be a courage-builder in another's life.**

*B. Are grace-givers just hopeless optimists who see the world through rose-colored glasses?*

**Grace-givers try to see the world through *God-colored* glasses, and when you see the world through God's eyes, you will see so many things that are not what they should be. Because we live in such a world, then there are going to be things that happen to us that are reflections of this broken, hellish world. And these things will tempt us to lose our courage, to walk away from God.**

**No one is strong enough on their own to remain true to the Lord in their hearts. We need the encouragement of other saints.**

*C. What happens when we're together for church on Sundays? (Hebrews 10:25)*

**This time we spend together, worshipping, praying, reading God's Word, makes me a stronger and better man. I see you remaining true to God; it rubs off on me. I am more resolved to do what is right. Skip this time for very long, I start to sink within my selfishness and despair.**

**Quality #4 – Grace-givers know how to grow in goodness.**

*A. What are we not talking about here?*

**The goodness we're talking about has nothing at all to do with a person's salvation, because no one on earth will be saved, will inherit heaven by being good. When it comes to salvation, we're all evil. We've all fallen short. Jesus said as much. But the Bible's not talking about salvation here. We're talking about the overall moral quality of a person. And when you look at people in terms of their morals and character, it is permissible to say that there are good people and evil people. We're not all at the same moral place. Some people you'd want to have as your neighbors, and some you would not.**

*B. Can a person grow in goodness or evil? (2 Peter 1:5,8)*

**Absolutely.**

*C. How does this happen? (Luke 6:45)*

**It's GIGO – Garbage in/Garbage out – Godliness in/Godliness out. I've got to make sure that goodness is being stored up in my heart. And I make sure I'm doing that by watching all the things I let into my body, mind and spirit. It's a reflection of all the things I let my mind dwell on all day long. Bitter people rehearse all the injustices they've received over and over again in their mind. They won't end up in a good place. Complainers have conditioned themselves to see the clouds and not the blue sky. That won't take them toward goodness. The Bible tells us to think about “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is lovely, whatever is**

admirable” (Phil.4:8). Again, this is an actual skill you can learn and develop.

How do I grow in goodness? It’s a reflection of all the things I let my eyes focus on throughout the day. Job said to God, “I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” Goodness is a reflection of what I read. Goodness is a reflection of what I listen to. Goodness is a reflection of the people I hang out with. Garbage in – garbage out. Godliness in – godliness out. Barnabas had a lot of good stuff flowing into his life – and that was consequently why it didn’t take people very long to realize that here was a good man.

Quality #5 – Grace-givers are full of the Holy Spirit and faith.

*A. How do I experience this in my life?*

It’s getting close to Jesus, building up my relationship with him.