

A scenic view of a rocky coastline. The foreground shows dark, jagged rocks partially submerged in the water. The middle ground is a vast expanse of blue sea with gentle waves. In the background, a range of low mountains or hills stretches across the horizon under a clear, light blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall atmosphere is calm and serene.

EVERYBODY NEEDS A
BARNABAS

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While nobody should go so far as to say that Barnabas was a perfect Christian, he is an exemplary model of charity, self-sacrifice, bravery, and fortitude. In this lesson we will look at several episodes from his life, detailed in the scriptures, that show why all of us need people like Barnabas!



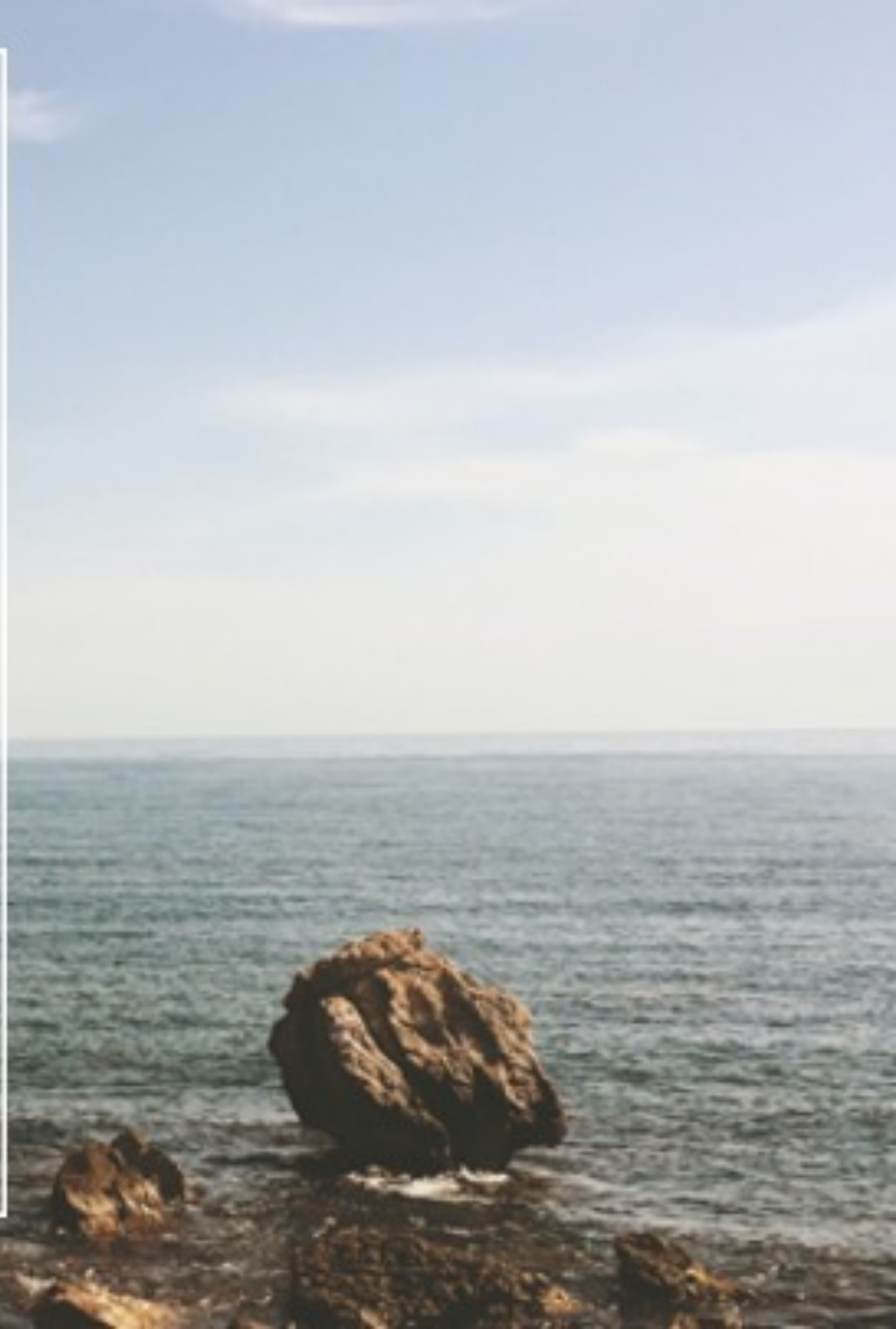


SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- Barnabas, also known as Joseph, is first introduced in Acts 4:36-37. He is identified as a Levite and a Cyprian and was personally known by the apostles.
- His nickname literally means “son of encouragement” or “son of consolation.” It’s fitting given that the writer notes his incredibly charitable spirit.

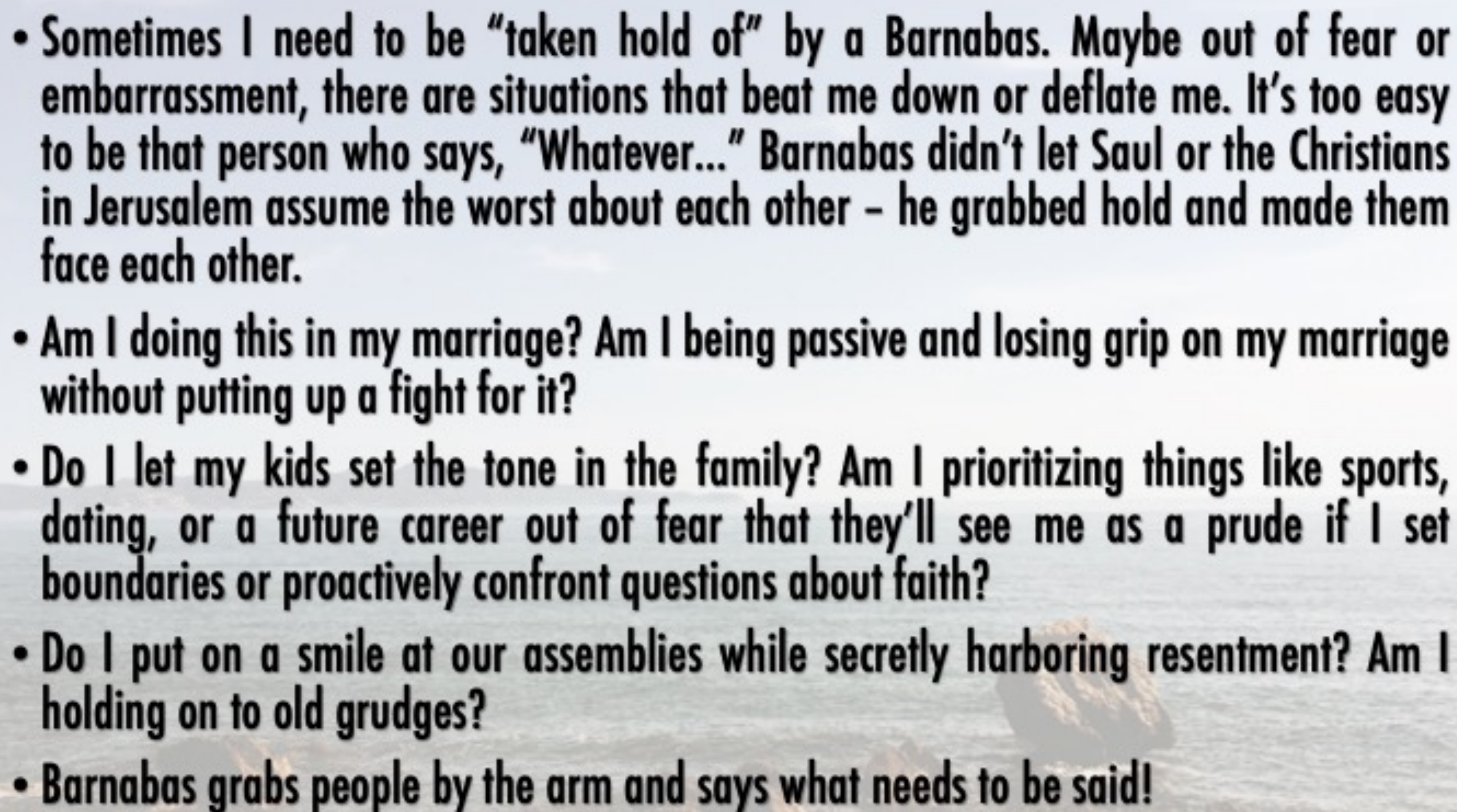
CHARITY

- We need to be careful not to elevate those who are materially wealthy to any kind of special status (James 2:1ff), but it's important to recognize what a blessing it is to have men and women like Barnabas.
- Wealth, directed toward the right goals, is a tool (Eph. 4:28, 1 Tim. 6:17ff). Like Queen Esther, God might have put people in a position of wealth, status, or prominence exactly because something good needed to be done (Esther 4:14).



BARNABAS TOOK HOLD OF HIM

Acts 9:26-28 – Saul, saved and reformed, was eager to share fellowship with the saints in Jerusalem. They responded with trepidation. Barnabas, however, took control of the situation and wouldn't allow either party to dwell on misgivings or rejection.

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- Sometimes I need to be “taken hold of” by a Barnabas. Maybe out of fear or embarrassment, there are situations that beat me down or deflate me. It’s too easy to be that person who says, “Whatever...” Barnabas didn’t let Saul or the Christians in Jerusalem assume the worst about each other – he grabbed hold and made them face each other.
 - Am I doing this in my marriage? Am I being passive and losing grip on my marriage without putting up a fight for it?
 - Do I let my kids set the tone in the family? Am I prioritizing things like sports, dating, or a future career out of fear that they’ll see me as a prude if I set boundaries or proactively confront questions about faith?
 - Do I put on a smile at our assemblies while secretly harboring resentment? Am I holding on to old grudges?
 - Barnabas grabs people by the arm and says what needs to be said!

BARNABAS ELEVATES OTHERS

- Acts 11:19ff – Clearly, Barnabas was held in very high esteem by the apostles. He was entrusted with a special mission to Antioch to see how things were going there. Encouraged, but perhaps overwhelmed by the workload, Barnabas goes to Tarsus to find Saul (vv. 25-26).
- Up to this point, Saul was not featured in the Acts narrative as a “main character.” This was a period of personal growth for him in preparation for the more prominent role he would fill in the second half of Acts.
- Barnabas shows no semblance of jealousy when Saul, called Paul for the rest of the book, comes into his own as a servant of Christ (Acts 13, 14:8ff).



BARNABAS WAS NOT PERFECT

- Acts 15:36ff – He was devoted to his cousin/nephew John Mark (perhaps to a fault, though there are two sides to every story). This caused a “sharp disagreement” between Paul and Barnabas.
- Galatians 2:11ff – Old prejudice dies hard, and it was a challenge for this otherwise good man to root out counter-productive and harmful preconceptions about Gentiles.
- Paul seems to have moved on in good faith eventually, mentioning both John Mark and Barnabas in later epistles (1 Cor. 6:9, 2 Tim. 4:11).