



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Theme of the month:

Marks of a Believer

Text for the Week:

Acts 11:19-30

Message for the Week:

“Balcony People”

Theme for the Week:

Be a balcony person; Be a Barnabas

Week 23

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

Who were the people who encouraged you when you were growing up? How did they encourage you?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read [Acts 11:19-30](#) out loud.

What words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

Who are the 'balcony people' in your life currently? To whom are you currently a 'balcony person?'

Why isn't every follower of Jesus an 'encourager'?

Would you be comfortable being called Christian? Would you be comfortable being called a fanatic for Christ? Why or Why not?

What does it take for a person to have a servant's heart, to be an encourager, to be a bridge builder and a wall breaker?

Barnabas is willing to give others a second, third, even a fourth "chance." How many "chances" do you think a person should get?

What would our world be like without balcony people? What would the church be like without people like Barnabas?

"Try It!"

Identify 5-10 people in your circle of influence (home, workplace, school, neighborhood, sport team, etc.) who you could encourage this week. Come up with a creative way to encourage each one of them differently. Need some ideas? Here is [an article that list 52 different ways](#) you can encourage someone. Need more ideas? Here is a [list of 50 more](#). Commit to encouraging 1-3 different people each day. Do this also for the people in your life who have encouraged you.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer regarding the things God revealed and that you discerned in your time with God today.

Also, spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you.

Lord Jesus, there are days when the reality of our broken world — hurt, disappointments, and sickness — can overwhelm us and make it seem like we're alone. Especially in seasons when it feels like we're walking through a dark valley, we need Your light. Thank You, Jesus, for walking this earth and for experiencing the brokenness of our world so that You can meet us in compassion and empathy in times when we feel down. We know that in times when we don't know what to pray that Your Spirit is interceding on our behalf. When we are weak, You become our strength. We ask for You to strengthen every person in our community. Today, we ask that Your light of encouragement would dawn on us. As we reflect on who You are, we praise You for being the same yesterday, today, and forever — no matter what life throws our way. Let the truth of Your character wash over us and lift our spirits. Encourage us and enable us to encourage one another. In Jesus name we pray, AMEN.

Missional Practice for the Month: Wall Breaking / Bridge Building

A few times this month, engage in an activity that will help you break down a wall and build a bridge with someone who is different than you ethnically, socially, economically, politically, or in age. Some examples...

- Have a cup of coffee outdoors with a neighbor you don't know very well.
- Go for a walk with someone different than you.
- Take your kids to a playground in a different neighborhood.
- Get to know the parents on your child's sports team.
- Eat lunch with or hang out on break with a classmate you don't know very well at your school.