



Course 6, Session 4 Student Notes: Develop People, Even the Risky Ones

Leadership and Multiplication

Big Idea: Great leaders see what a person could become and invest before it is obvious. Be the one who develops people, including the ones others have written off.

How to use these notes. These are yours to study on your own, before or after the session. Read each section slowly. Under every principle there is a **Notes** space to write what stands out to you, and a **Reflect** question to answer honestly in writing. Keep your Bible nearby. Take about 30 minutes, and end in prayer. Bring your notes and questions to the group.

Open in Prayer

Before you begin, pray this simple prayer, or your own: "Father, You saw something in me before anyone else did, and You invested in me when I had not earned it. Give me eyes to see people the way You see them, and the courage to bet on someone others have written off. Amen."

The Scripture for This Session

Read these slowly, out loud if you can:

- **Acts 9:26 to 27**, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."
- **Acts 15:37 to 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 the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other."
- **2 Timothy 4:11**, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."
- **Galatians 6:1**, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Reflect: Who was a Barnabas to you? Who saw something in you before it was obvious, and what did their belief actually do for your life?

The Big Picture

Here is tonight in one sentence. The leaders who change history are usually the ones who develop people others gave up on.

We love to celebrate the famous names, the great apostle, the powerful preacher, the founder everyone quotes. But behind a surprising number of those names is a quieter person who saw them early, took a risk on them, and invested when it was not obvious it would pay off.

This session introduces you to one of those quiet developers, a man named Barnabas, and makes the case that being a Barnabas is one of the most important things you will ever do as a leader. You will not get famous for it. You may not even get credit for it. But the people you develop may go places you never could, and that is exactly the point. Read each principle, write your notes, and answer the reflection.

Principle 1: See People for Their Potential, Not Only Their Past.

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus has just been dramatically converted on the road to Damascus. But remember who Saul was. This was the man who had been hunting Christians, standing there approving as Stephen was stoned, going house to house dragging believers off to prison. His name struck fear into every believer.

So when this same Saul shows up in Jerusalem and tries to join the disciples, the text says something very human: “they were all afraid of him.” And who could blame them? For all they knew this was a trap, the persecutor pretending to be a convert so he could get close enough to finish the job. Every reasonable person in that room kept their distance. Every one, except Barnabas. He took Saul, brought him to the apostles, and vouched for him.

That Saul became Paul, who wrote half the New Testament and carried the gospel to the nations. The greatest missionary in history needed someone to vouch for him first, and that someone was not famous. Here is the choice it puts in front of you. You can lead by looking at people’s track record, or you can lead by looking at their trajectory. Both matter. The developer leans into trajectory.

Reflect: Who around you have you been quietly judging by their past instead of their trajectory? What might they become if someone believed them?

Notes:

Principle 2: Take a Measured Risk on People Others Have Written Off.

Notice the word measured. Barnabas was not naive. He did not put Saul in charge of the church on day one. He vouched for him and brought him in, personally standing behind the risk rather than pretending there was no risk at all.

Then watch him do it again, and this time it costs him something real. Years later Paul and Barnabas are planning a second missionary journey, and Barnabas wants to bring a young man named John Mark. But Mark had gone with them on an earlier trip and had bailed, deserted them partway through and gone home. Paul remembers, and Paul says no. Absolutely not. And these two good men disagree so sharply that they actually part ways over it. Paul takes Silas. Barnabas takes Mark.

Look at what Barnabas is spending. He is spending his partnership with the great apostle Paul in order to invest in a young man who failed and whom everyone else was ready to discard. He chose the risky, unproven person over the comfortable, prestigious partnership. Developing risky people is not about being reckless. It is about being willing to bet on a person when the bet is reasonable and everyone else is too scared to make it.

Reflect: Have you ever paid a real cost to give someone a second chance? Who around you right now has failed once and might be worth a second investment?

Notes:

Principle 3: Encouragement and Belief Are Leadership Tools, Not Soft Extras.

Here is a beautiful detail that is easy to miss. Barnabas was a nickname. His real name was Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas, which means son of encouragement. That was his reputation, the thing people named him for. He was the one who believed in people, who lifted them, who spoke the word that kept them going.

Do not mistake that gift for weakness or for niceness. That capacity to believe in someone out loud is exactly what unlocked both Paul and Mark. Sometimes the single most valuable thing a leader does is say clearly, at the moment when no one else will, “I see this in you, and I am willing to stake something on it.”

Paul later gives the posture that goes with it, in Galatians 6:1. If someone is caught in a fault, restore them in the spirit of meekness, watching yourself, lest you also be tempted. The world discards people who mess up. Barnabas restored them, gently, without arrogance, remembering he was not above falling himself. The leaders who develop the most people are the ones who handle failure with grace instead of disposal.

Reflect: When someone on your team fails, what is your default, disposal or restoration? Who needs a word of belief from you this week, spoken plainly and out loud?

Notes:

Principle 4: The Leaders You Develop May Go Further Than You, and That Is the Win.

This is where our pride gets in the way, so hear it carefully. Barnabas is barely famous. We name churches after Paul, we quote Paul constantly, we read Mark's gospel every year. Barnabas gets a few paragraphs. And yet without Barnabas there is no Paul as we know him, and no Mark as we know him.

A true developer is not threatened when the person they raised surpasses them. They count it as the whole point. If you only develop people up to the level where they might start to outshine you, and no further, you are not really developing them. You are protecting yourself, and the person can feel it.

The Barnabas kind of leader gladly pours everything into someone who may go somewhere the developer never could. That takes a settled heart, one that already knows its worth is not in the applause. If your identity is secure in Christ, another person's rise is not your loss. It is your fruit.

Reflect: Where does the fear of being outshined by someone you developed show up in you? What would it take to let that go?

Notes:

The Story: Barnabas, the Developer (Acts 9:26 to 27; Acts 15:36 to 39; 2 Timothy 4:11)

Read all three passages out loud, in order. Three short texts, one remarkable man, and a leadership lesson that quietly shaped the whole New Testament.

First, Acts 9. Saul the persecutor arrives in Jerusalem and the disciples are afraid of him, and their caution is completely reasonable. Then verse 27: "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles." One man broke ranks with the fear in the room, took the risk, and personally vouched for the person everyone else was keeping at arm's length.

Second, Acts 15. Barnabas is not a one time hero, this is his pattern. He fights for John Mark, the young man who quit, and loses his partnership with Paul over it. He chose the unproven person over the prestigious relationship.

Third, the payoff. Years later Paul is near the end of his life, writing from prison to Timothy, and he says: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." The very man Paul once refused to travel with has become, in Paul's own words, useful for ministry. What changed? Barnabas invested in Mark when Paul had written him off. And that same John Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark.

One quiet developer, two of the most important figures in the early church, and history barely remembers his name. Developers change history quietly.

Reflect: Everyone in Jerusalem was afraid of Saul, and their caution was reasonable. When is caution about a person actually wisdom, and when is it fear dressed up as wisdom? How do you tell the difference?

Notes:

Put It Into Practice

1. Name one person. Quietly write down one name: a person in your orbit who has real potential that others tend to overlook. Maybe because of a past failure, maybe because they do not look the part yet, maybe because they are quiet and easy to miss.

The one person with overlooked potential I am thinking of:

2. Name what you see. Write two or three specific things you actually see in this person that others are missing. Naming it in writing helps you see them the way Barnabas saw Saul and Mark.

The potential I see in them that others tend to miss:

Why others might overlook or hesitate about this person:

3. Make it concrete and time backed. This is the key step. Not “I will encourage them.” Something real, with a day and time on it: a coffee where you tell them specifically what you see, a responsibility handed over with coaching, an introduction that opens a door, an hour teaching them something you know.

One concrete way I will invest in them this week, with a day and time:

What it would look like, five years from now, if I developed this person well:

4. This week's assignment. Actually do it. Give this person your real time, not just kind words in passing. Tell them plainly what you see in them, and open one real door. Bring to the next session what you did, how they responded, and what you noticed in yourself, including any fear or pride that came up.

Go Deeper (Optional)

- **Read:** *Multipliers* by Liz Wiseman.
 - **Listen:** the *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* podcast, any episode on developing people.
 - **Study:** Acts 4:36 to 37; Acts 9:26 to 30; Acts 11:22 to 26; Acts 15:36 to 41; 2 Timothy 4:11; Galatians 6:1 to 2.
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Close in Prayer

“Father, thank You for the people who believed in me before I had earned it. Make me a Barnabas. Give me eyes to see potential where others see only a past, the courage to take a measured risk on someone written off, and a heart secure enough to rejoice when they go further than I ever will. Let me be a restorer of people, gentle and humble, the way You have been with me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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