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Tearing It Down

By Teresa Hampton

Recently I saw a video of a house being torn down. One man used a huge, clawed machine the size of a bulldozer. In just a few hours the large two-story house was literally chomped to pieces. It made me wonder how long it had taken to *build* that same home many years ago. I would guess many men labored six months or longer to construct the once lovely dwelling that had served families for many decades. But, it took just a short time to tear it down.

The same is true in life. Tearing something down is easy. It requires little thought and little time. But building something takes much thought as well as days, months, or years of diligent labor.

There are few characters in scripture that give a stronger example of building people up and building up the church than a man called Josus. He quickly earned the nickname Barnabas, which means Son of Encouragement. *Having land he sold it* so hungry Christians could be fed (Acts 4: 36-37). When the Jerusalem disciples were fearful of the newly converted Saul of Tarsus, Barnabas took him to the apostles and fully explained his conversion (9:26-27). The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to believers at Antioch and he encouraged all of them to continue faithfully in the Lord. *For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord* (11:23-24). Barnabas departed to seek Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to the believers at Antioch. For a whole year the two men assembled with the church *and taught a great many people*. Scripture says the disciples at Antioch were the first ones to receive the divinely appointed name, *Christian* (11:25-26). Finally, we see Barnabas believing in John Mark's ability to do mission work, even when Paul disagreed (15:37-39). Barnabas stood up for the young man and the two of them worked mightily spreading the gospel.

It takes a long time to build good character, strong families, good relationships, lasting friendships, and faith-building congregations. It takes only a short time, however, to stain one's character, to break up a family, to sabotage a relationship, to ruin a friendship, or destroy a congregation. Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement, challenges each of us to cease the needless tearing down, and pick up the useful tools of a builder!

Today's Verse: *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Romans 15:5-6

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