

Introduction: How do you navigate disagreements as a follower of Jesus?

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 15:36-41

Two observations on Paul and Barnabas' disagreement:

1. The disagreement did not diminish the impact, but it expanded it.

2. The disagreement did not undermine future partnership and relationship.

Three observations about conflict:

1. Conflict is _____.

2. Conflict is _____.

3. Conflict is an opportunity to _____.

Proverbs 27:17

Four steps to navigating disagreements well:

1. Define the _____ on your _____.

• Examine your _____ and _____. Matthew 7:3-5

• Move from _____ about them to _____ for them. Matthew 5:43-45

• Give a _____ explanation for their _____. Philippians 4:8

Just after we observe what others do and just before we feel some emotion about it, we tell ourselves a story. We add meaning to the action we observed. We make a guess at the motive driving the behavior. Why were they doing that? We also add judgment—is that good or bad? And then, based on these thoughts or stories, our body responds with an emotion.

• If necessary, seek _____ _____ Proverbs 15:22

2. Set up a time to _____; don't put it _____.

- Face to _____.
- Sooner than _____.

Ephesians 4:26
Matthew 5:23-24
Romans 12:18

3. Address the _____; don't attack the _____.

- Be specific: focus on _____ issue, not _____ issues.
- Language matters: speak the _____ in _____.
- Seek _____ and extend _____.

Ephesians 4:14-16

Colossians 3:12-14

4. If stuck, seek _____ help.

Matthew 18:15-17

Discussion Questions:

1. What new insight did you learn about Paul and Barnabas' disagreement in Acts 15:36-41? How can you apply this new knowledge to your current situation?
2. Take some time right now to examine your own heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any area of unconfessed sin.
3. Why is it so important to talk to someone face to face and talk to them sooner rather than later?
4. Which of the four steps to "navigating disagreements well" do you need to act on today?