

Acts 15:39–40 NIV

Gathering

VISION FOR MISSION

According to the Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary, there are approximately 41,000 Christian denominations/organizations in the world (*as of April 2020*). It is probably fair to say that most of those denominations started with a disagreement. It is also fair to say that the members in each of these groups seek to serve God faithfully. How can differences be reconciled for the good of the mission? In Acts: 15:39–40, Luke says:

“They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.” (NIV)

This was not a mild dispute. The original word, *“paroxysmos denotes a passionate, even bitter exchange. Words were said that made this partnership impossible to continue”* (NIB, Vol.10, p.225). As Christians, we first seek unity in our mission, just as Paul and Barnabas attempted to do. But if reasonable compromise cannot be found, causing greater division and discord, we may need to agree to disagree and serve the Lord separately.



Gathering

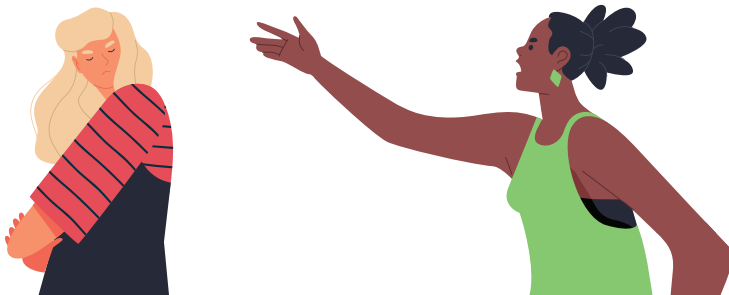
Sometimes disagreements such as these are necessary to the advancement of the Gospel. The outcome of this dispute was not that a missionary team was halved, but rather doubled, resulting in a broader missionary reach for spreading the Gospel. In addition, not just one but two brothers in the faith (*John Mark and Silas*) were mentored as missionaries, planting the seeds for the next generation of missionaries and church leaders.

As husband and wife, we may disagree at times, but we do all we can to reconcile our differences in God honoring ways as part of our commitment to marriage. Let us do the same with our family of faith certain that “...*in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*” (*Romans 8:28*).

After reading scripture consider these questions

- Have you ever lost a friendship because of a religious dispute? What happened?
- When have you experienced conflict in the church and how was it handled?
- Have you ever compromised your religious views to avoid a bitter conflict?
- Have you been reconciled with someone in the church with whom you have had a significant dispute in the past?

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.



Gathering



Gathering

VISION FOR MISSION

Have you ever lost a **friendship** because of a religious **dispute**?
What happened?

Gathering

VISION FOR MISSION

When have you experienced **conflict** in the **church** and how was it handled?

Gathering

VISION FOR MISSION

Have you been **reconciled** with someone in the church with whom you have had a significant **dispute** in the past?

Gathering

VISION FOR MISSION

Are there relationships that you have seen **improved** when aligned with God's **priorities**?



"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord."

Acts: 15:39-40



"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord."

Acts: 15:39-40



"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord."

Acts: 15:39-40



"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord."

Acts: 15:39-40



We can be divided in viewpoints and issues, but still be united in Christ. Even in disagreements, we should guard our hearts and not allow strong, but temporary feelings to sow seeds of bitterness in our spirit, and possibly destroy our testimonies. Consider the following scripture for discussion

ACTS 15:37 -39A

Role play how you think Paul and Barnabas split up. With which one would you have sided? Why?

COLOSSIANS 4:10

Paul expressed his strong opposition to Mark joining the ministry team. Years later in this Scripture we see that Mark has joined Paul in ministry. How would you deal with the feelings that Mark must have experienced?

ACTS 8:1, 4

Have you ever experienced or considered how God used difficult and painful circumstances that resulted in deeper faith and growth of your mission?



*Written by Captains Sharon and Ted Fressler,
WPA Division*



We can be divided in viewpoints and issues, but still be united in Christ. Even in disagreements, we should guard our hearts and not allow strong, but temporary feelings to sow seeds of bitterness in our spirit, and possibly destroy our testimonies. Consider the following scripture for discussion

ACTS 15:37 -39A

Role play how you think Paul and Barnabas split up. With which one would you have sided? Why?

COLOSSIANS 4:10

Paul expressed his strong opposition to Mark joining the ministry team. Years later in this Scripture we see that Mark has joined Paul in ministry. How would you deal with the feelings that Mark must have experienced?

ACTS 8:1, 4

Have you ever experienced or considered how God used difficult and painful circumstances that resulted in deeper faith and growth of your mission?



*Written by Captains Sharon and Ted Fressler,
WPA Division*