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**When Christians Disagree**

***Acts 15:36–16:10***

Introduction

### I once disagreed with my elders regarding God's direction for my life.

### Why do disagreements happen even among godly believers?

### Today we'll see three issues on Paul and Barnabas: **why** they disagreed (the issue), **how** they resolved it (the solution), and **what** resulted (the outcome).

# Paul and Barnabas disagreed whether to take John Mark on the second missionary journey (15:36-38).

## They agreed to revisit the newly established churches in Asia Minor.

## They disagreed whether to take along John Mark.

### John Mark had gone home early on their first missionary journey (13:13).

### Barnabas desired to take him.

### Paul didn't want him to come due to his earlier desertion.

## Luke is careful not to tag the blame on either one.

### Both of them felt that to do otherwise would be to dishonor God.

### Both of them felt that compromise or resolution was not possible.

# The best solution to an irreconcilable disagreement is separation (15:39a).

## Paul and Barnabas agreed to go separate ways.

## I believed my only choice was to go to Asia.

# Disagreement leading to separation may be God's means to expand His work (15:39b–16:10 = Main Idea)

## Paul and Barnabas' separation actually furthered the gospel.

### Two missionary journeys resulted from the separation.

#### Paul went north to his homeland area of Tarsus and Galatia to follow-up on the new churches that brought Timothy into ministry (16:1-5).

#### Barnabas had his own missionary journey to Cyprus—an area that also needed follow-up from the first journey.

### Two new apprentices received training for Christian service.

#### Paul chose Silas to accompany him. I doubt Paul would have taken Silas if he had Barnabas as his right-hand man.

#### John Mark went with Barnabas.

### Paul got confirmation of the gospel going to Europe.

#### He tried unsuccessfully to minister in Asia and Bithynia so had to leave Turkey—but should go east to the Far East (16:6-7)?

#### God called him to Macedonia as the Lord wanted Europe to first hear the gospel (16:8-10).

### Paul and Barnabas still remained friends.

#### Six years after their disagreement, Paul spoke positively about Barnabas in 1 Corinthians 9:6.

#### Evidently, their different opinions didn’t sour their friendship.

#### You have to hand it to Paul. He later admitted that Barnabas was right about John Mark after all.

## The gospel is furthered today in some separations between godly believers.

### After my disagreement with my church over God’s direction in my life, my church experienced God’s blessings.

### My going to Asia had several good results on the Asia side too:

#### Our music team reached almost 200,000 with the gospel—and we counted on comment cards at least 10,000 decisions for Christ!

#### My discipleship ministry bore fruit—three men whom I discipled ended up in full-time ministry.

#### And most significantly for me? I met my wife, Susan!

Conclusion

### So why does disagreement happen even among godly believers? Differences leading to separation may be God's means to expand His work (MI repeated).

### Have you experienced your own painful disagreements with other Christians?

#### How do you see God’s sovereign and gracious hand in it all?

#### How has God blessed both sides of the debate?

### Scripture never encourages us to look for conflict—we're to seek unity.

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