

PROGRESS OUT OF CONFLICT

Acts 15:36-16:5

INTRODUCTION

Following the “sharp” disagreement Paul and Barnabas had with the Judaizers in Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-2, they had a “sharp” disagreement with each other about how to proceed forward on the second mission to the Gentiles. The conflict resulted in them separating from one another and launching in different directions with different people— ultimately expanding the impact of the Gospel.

THIS WEEK:

Discover this week from Acts 15:36-16:5 how God can leverage believers' differences to expand His ministry purposes.

OBSERVATION *What does it SAY?*

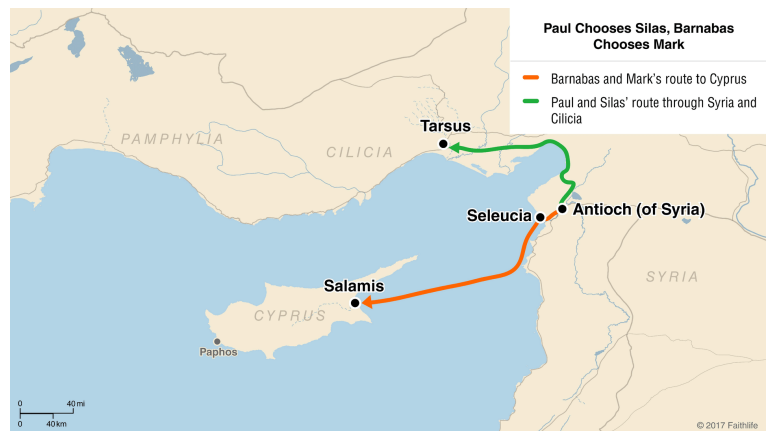
Discover key details of the passage by reading Acts 15:1-35 and then answering the following questions:

1. What were Paul and Barnabas' plans for ministry in Act 15:36?
2. Summarize the conflict Paul and Barnabas had over John Mark and the result of the conflict (Acts 15:37-39).
3. Who was Timothy, and why was he circumcised (Acts 16:1-3)?
4. What resulted from Paul, Silas, and Timothy's ministry in those regions (Acts 16:4-5)?

INTERPRETATION *What does it MEAN?*

Use the Bible to interpret the Bible. Look up the cross references and use them to interpret the passage under study:

5. What facts about Barnabas may explain why he wanted to give John Mark a second chance in ministry (Acts 4:36; 11:22-24; Col 4:10)?



6. Paul recruits Timothy into the ministry in Acts 16:1-2. What information do we glean from Acts 16:3, 1 Cor 4:17, 2 Tim 1:5, and 2 Tim 3:15 about Timothy's character and ministry?
7. What reasons do we have in the Scriptures to think that Barnabas' investment in John Mark was well spent (2 Tim 4:11; 1 Pet 5:13)?
8. Describe the content of the letter the apostles gave the people in the regions to observe and the reasons why the letter proved helpful to the churches (Acts 15:24-29).

APPLICATION *Why does it matter?*

Now that you know what the passage means, think through the various ways it may apply to your life or the lives of others:

9. Do you see the differences between Paul and Barnabas as a matter of theology or a matter of preferences? Explain.

10. Recall a time when a disagreement or difference of opinion within a group led to a positive outcome. How did this experience reflect God's ability to use differences for good?

11. Describe an experience where you or someone you know had to adapt or compromise to reach others with the gospel, similar to Paul's decision with Timothy. What was the outcome?

12. Compare and contrast the personalities of Barnabas and Paul. In what ways are their *similarities* helpful to expanding the Gospel? In what ways are their *differences* helpful in expanding the gospel? Is that true today? Explain.

TAKE AWAY *How does this change me?*

13. What does this passage reveal about God?

14. What does this passage reveal about humanity?

15. What is the Holy Spirit revealing in this passage about your life?