



THOUGHTS FROM THE MESSAGE

- Jon shared the Order of Relational Dissonance this weekend: *Differences* → *Disagreements* → *Dissent* → *Division* → *Disunity* → *Destruction*. Use this continuum to try to identify what stage you are in with someone you've disagreed with.

Acts 15:36-41

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**.

- Are you afraid of sharp disagreements and conflict? Why or why not? Share a relational conflict you've experienced.
- Place a *Yes* or *No* next to each of the following statements based on how you typically think about disagreement or disharmony -- Discuss your answers together
 - _____ Conflict is bad and leads to disunity
 - _____ Conflict is good and leads to intimacy
 - _____ If I come into conflict with someone, I can't trust them
 - _____ If I come into conflict with someone, I can trust them
 - _____ In order to forgive, I have to trust again
 - _____ I can forgive without trusting again
 - _____ I have to like everyone in my church and have everyone like me
 - _____ I can be part of my church without liking or being like by everyone
- Through Paul and Barnabas' friendship and ministry partnership years before, during and even years after their disagreement, we see the power of conflict when it's handled well. The church is strengthened and grows by their separation, and along with the development of John Mark through discipleship with Barnabas until Paul - seventeen years later - commends John Mark and calls him truly helpful. Here are four keys to handle dissent together that we've pulled from the story:

"Unity is not Uniformity - Division is not Always Detrimental - Disagreements are not Destructive"



- Listen Well (Do you understand the other?)
- Humbly accept a different perspective (Do you feel defensive?)
- Be willing to change your mind (Will you untangle your worth from your position?)
- Move into the hard places (Will you engage a difficult topic and a hard place?)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK WITH YOUR LIFE GROUP:

- What Conflict or disagreement do you need to enter into? Share...
- What Conflict or disagreement do you need to re-frame from your past? Share...
- What attitude adjustment do you need to stop framing, naming, and blaming others? (Write it down | Pray together for this change in yourself)
- How might you move into genuine harmony with others through the process of conflict rather than the avoidance of it? (Identify what a next step could be to engage)

QUESTIONS FROM WEEKDAY READING (pgs 73 - 106)

WEEKLY QUESTIONS:

1. *What's something you noticed for the first time?*
2. *What questions did you have?*
3. *Was there anything that bothered you?*
4. *What did you learn about loving God?*
5. *What did you learn about loving others?*

- As we see growth and health come from hardship, conflict and adversity throughout our reading in Acts this week, both within and without the church, what do these difficulties and struggles teach us about our own participation in following Jesus and aligning ourselves with his church?
- What seems to be the most frequently used method Jesus uses to nurture, shape and increase his followers?

“Unity is not Uniformity - Division is not Always Detrimental - Disagreements are not Destructive”