

Discuss

The first key to putting the last 15 months behind us: Stop Social Distancing. We have let divides separate us relationally from the people we love. We have allowed the many disagreements in our world to take hold and lead to relational breakdown. The Apostle Paul and Mark had a relational breakdown as well.

“... Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go back and visit... all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.’ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 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. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark... but Paul chose Silas.” ([Acts 15:36-40, NIV](#))

- How have your relationships with the people around you fared during the pandemic?
- What divides have you noticed that have led to relational breakdowns?

Barnabas giving Mark a second chance was a good move. He went on to write one of the biographies of Jesus that we read today. As for the relational breakdown between Paul and Mark, we learn from Paul’s letter to Timothy that the more time that passed, the less the things that divided them mattered.

“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.” ([2 Tim. 4:11, NIV](#))

- Are any of the divides you are seeing now worth the relational breakdowns?
- Have you ever ended a relationship with someone for a reason that doesn’t matter at all today?

What happened between Paul and Barnabas was an intentional return to the practice and the embrace of grace. The same grace that was given freely to us by Jesus and is meant to be passed on to others. It’s how we can stop social distancing and restore any broken relationships around us.

- Are you as quick to give grace as you are to receive it?
- How has grace been shown to you in the past?
- Is there someone you need to give grace to now?

Long Night's Journey Into Day:
5 Biblical Keys to Putting the
Last 15 Months Behind Us

“Stop Social Distancing”

Week 1

Next Steps

Take a survey of your relationship with others to see if there is anyone you need to extend grace to, or ask for grace for yourself. Then, call them or meet with them to restore the relationship. It likely won't be easy, but God will show up and help you.

June 12: [Crisis Assistance Ministry](#) & [Hope Vibes Serve Day](#)

June 27: [Starting Line](#) & [Game Time](#)

Continued Reading

Read [Acts 15:36-40](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#).

Prayer

God, you have given us more grace than we could have ever asked for through the life of Jesus. For the past 15 months we have been increasingly resistant to giving out that same grace to others. Help us to give it out as freely as it was given to us, and restore the relationships around us.