

## Acts 15:36-41 “Advancing the Gospel Despite Conflict” 10.19.14

Intro.

**Subject: the conflict between Paul & Barnabas regarding Mark**

**Object: resolve conflict so that the gospel is advanced**

### I. Reason: what was the conflict about? [36-38]

#### A. Paul and Barnabas begin to plan their 2<sup>nd</sup> mission trip [36]

36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see how they are doing*: Jerusalem council decree re gospel delivered. Paul, Barnabas & Saul remained at Antioch to strengthen the church. Now consider a 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary trip to strengthen the churches they planted on their 1<sup>st</sup> trip [Ac.13-14]

#### 1. Conflict whether to include Mark [37-38]

a. Barnabas wants to take (his nephew) Mark with them [37]: Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

b. Paul insists that they should not take Mark [38]: 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.

**Why was Paul against Mark going?** Mark left at Pamphylia in middle of 1<sup>st</sup> trip to return home to Jerusalem [38] [Ac.13:13]. Why did Mark leave? Not sure – perhaps fear, overwhelmed, not called, not mature enough. Not sure whether Paul ever discussed his concerns with Mark.

### II. Result: what were the consequences? [39-41]

A. Paul and Barnabas separated their ministry 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the

**churches:** Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus (B’s home) & Paul took Silas with blessing of church at Antioch & went back to the churches planted on the 1<sup>st</sup> trip & built-up the disciples. No evidence of any wrong (gossip, sin)

1. difference of philosophy: Barnabas wants to give Mark a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance & Paul doesn’t feel he’s ready. Neither necessarily right or wrong, unsure if God’s perfect will.

2. the gospel was advanced not hindered

3. Mark & Paul were later united in ministry: Mark was w/Paul at his 1<sup>st</sup> imprisonment at Rome [Col4]. At the end of Paul’s life he asked for Mark to come [2Tim.4]. Mark was encouraged & prepared by both Barnabas & Paul [later pens the gospel of Mark]

#### B. Typical responses:

##### 1. Ignore: Eli & his sons [1Sam. 8]

**Note:** like an infection if problem is serious don’t ignore or serious consequences

2. Winner take all: Absalom & his father King David [2Sam.15] destroys relationships

3. Give in: Solomon & dispute between two women [1Ki.3] the one who gives in still feels they are right just tired of the conflict

**4. Confront: Nathan regarding David & Bathsheba [2 Sam.12]** conflict can produce great benefits if tactful & led by God

**5. Compromise: Paul & Barnabas regarding Mark [Ac.15]** everyone gets something, no one gets everything

**C. Some harmful consequences of conflict [5]:** 1. Division, 2. People feel hurt, discouraged, 3. People leave relationships, 4. Drains energy, 5. Promotes selfishness

**D. Some benefits of conflict [4]:** 1. Catalyst for growth, 2. Produces change, 3. Safety valve, 4. Increased understanding

### **III. Reduce: How can you reduce conflict?**

**A. Invite discussion: [Mt.5:23-25, Mt.18] without gossip**

**B. Describe your feelings without passing judgment on motives:**

1. take resp. for your thoughts or feelings: “I am frustrated” vs. “You are so frustrating”

**C. Listen to response:** don’t get defensive, admit where wrong, take responsibility

**D. Clarify expectations and responsibilities:**

### **Discussion Qs**

**1. Consider the typical responses described in the study. Of the five described which is your most likely response [choose one]?**

**2. How can the way people handle conflict either advance or hinder the gospel?**

**3. What advice would you offer to try to reduce conflict in ministry and relationships generally?**

**Intro.** How many of you have experienced conflict in your lives in the last three months?

Ministry and life generally is done in relationship with others. Human relationships inevitably experience conflict as a result of competing values, perspectives and philosophies. How we deal with conflict can reduce or escalate it, *and either hinder or advance the gospel.*