

## March 21

**Acts 15: 39-40 (NIV)** <sup>39</sup> They [Paul and Barnabas] had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.

The church called a meeting of the board to discuss an issue that had become a very popular topic. Everyone agreed that the church needed to be enlarged, but agreeing on how that should happen was proving difficult. Lou and Greg were on the board and had a good relationship. Their families gathered often for weekends and short trips. However, this issue found them on opposing sides. Lou felt the church needed to focus on the sanctuary while Greg felt they needed more classrooms. The meeting started well; however, despite the pastor's pleading, arguments broke out. Lou and Greg became very vocal and eventually focused on each other. The attacks became personal when both men began speaking in anger. Lou felt Greg should support him and vice versa. It was not long until their friendship was in tatters.

Paul tells us that we can become angry, but we are not to sin. This is difficult because we are surrounded by a world that does just the opposite. We see anger in the highest offices of this land, in the news, in sports – in every walk of life. This anger drives the hearts and controls the tongue. Paul knows how destructive this can be because he has been there. Paul and Barnabas had a strong disagreement to the point that they parted company. They probably felt some anger, but they did not sin. They did not attack each other. They did not try to gather support for their cause against the other. They did not continue to grumble and complain to others. They did not harbor bitterness or unforgiveness. Instead, they continued to love each other and respect each other. They parted company not as enemies but as fellow servants of Jesus Christ. Such attitudes should guide all of us. Anger can rear its head at any moment. However, we are not to let that anger control us; instead, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are to control that anger and not sin.