

DISCUSSION STARTER

Have you ever experienced Church conflict, ie. Christians disagreeing with one another in a local church? What were the factors involved, and how did it work out?

BIBLE STUDY

1. **READ ACTS 15:36-41.** The disagreement around circumcision earlier in Acts 15 was doctrinal. The disagreement around John-Mark was more emotional. What role does emotion play in conflict?
2. Do you think Paul and Barnabas parting ways was a good or a bad thing? Why?
3. Barnabas was a people-oriented leader, while Paul was more task-oriented. Which is more effective in Kingdom ministry?
4. **READ ACTS 16:1-5.** After the resolution in chapter 15 that it was unnecessary for Gentiles to be circumcised, Paul then goes and circumcises young Timothy! Why?
5. What message did Paul and the freshly circumcised Timothy bring to the churches (vs 4)?
6. Read Galatians 5:13. How did Timothy use his freedom as an expression of love and service rather than an 'opportunity for the flesh'? How can we exercise this principle today?
7. **READ ACTS 16:6-10.** Who was directing the steps of the missionaries? How was this discerned?
8. Why did the Holy Spirit prevent the team from ministering in Asia and Bithynia? What possible reasons could there have been for Him to close this door?
9. According to the language in vs 8 and 10, who apparently joined the team in Troas? Why was this addition especially valuable?
10. What lessons can we learn from these accounts of how God worked through the Apostles, despite the obstacles of *division*, *diversion* and *disappointment*?

PRAYER

For the Holy Spirit to continue to guide His Church, despite the many obstacles we need to navigate. May we remain obedient to His leading!