



Decade of Availability Growing Apart

How could it be possible that the powerful team of Paul and Barnabas could split up?
Was this a Spirit-led parting?
Was it God's perfect or permissive will?

Introduction: In the aftermath of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 where the Church decided to NOT put extra burdens on the Gentile believers—Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch to share the good news. They minister in Antioch for a few months. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul and told him to go back to the new churches and ‘strengthen them in the faith.’

A. Paul and Barnabas Acts 15:36-41

1. The Holy Spirit in Acts: vs. 36 It is important to understand that Paul is being led by the Holy Spirit on these missionary journeys. We know this because of what happens in the remainder of Acts.

2. John Mark: vs. 37 This is the Mark who deserted the first missionary journey at Pamphylia. Barnabas was Mark's cousin (Col 4:10)

3. Determination, desertion and direction: vs. 37-41 Paul considered Mark a deserter. Barnabas had seen a change in Mark and wanted to give him a second chance.

- Our judgment goes with Paul, but our hearts go with Barnabas. All believers are ‘under construction.’ Later Paul does commend Mark as ‘worthy’ to the work. (Col 4:15)
- It does not appear that Paul and Barnabas prayed about this issue. The Church commends ONLY Paul and Silas.
- While God **did not** cause the disagreement or the fateful separation, **He used it** to guide both men into increased fruitfulness and service.
- God's directed purpose is fulfilled as Paul and Silas go back to ‘confirm’ [establish] the churches in the Jerusalem decree.

B. Paul and Timothy Acts 16:1-5

1. Timothy: Timothy became a believer during Paul's first visit to Lystra. Timothy was probably there when Paul was stoned and then raised up. Not dissimilar to Paul's witnessing of Stephen's stoning.

2. Why Timothy? Vv. 1-3 Timothy became a replacement for Barnabas. Silas became Paul's stenographer and co-worker but Timothy became Paul's son in the faith.

- Timothy was both Jew and Greek.
- His reputation grew quickly as a man of God
- As Barnabas ‘determined’ to take Mark, here Paul ‘determines’ to take Timothy. BOTH Mark and Timothy hold critical places in the New Testament. Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark and Paul wrote first and second Timothy to Timothy which contain some of the greatest New Testament teaching.

C. You and I — The Big Picture

1. The Holy Spirit had Silas in the wings—ready to drop everything and respond to the call to go with Paul. The Holy Spirit had Barnabas there to repair Mark's life for future service in the kingdom.

Are you available to the Holy Spirit to do God's will?

2. Daily guidance: We see that the Holy Spirit gives daily guidance to those who are set in the ultimate will of God.

Do you seek God's ‘daily guidance’?

Acts 15:36-41 (KJV)

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Acts 16:1-5 (KJV)

1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek;

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.