

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for September 27, 2015**

**The Conflict Between Paul and Barnabas**  
**Acts 15:36-41**

In Acts 15:36-41, Paul begins his second missionary journey to Greece.

**1. The plan suggested (15:36)**

Paul's plan to travel back to Asia Minor very likely came in the spring of 50 A.D. after spending the winter in Antioch.

Paul's plan to return to each city included Barnabas. Not only will Paul's plan with his partner change, his plan for his destination changes as well (cf. Acts 16:6-10). The mind of man plans his way but the Lord directs his steps (Proverbs 16:9)

**2. The potential selection (15:37-38)**

Mark had joined Paul and Barnabas on their initial journey before leaving for Jerusalem from Perga (Acts 13:13). This departure was viewed by Paul as a ministry failure.

Luke does not note that Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), and therefore we cannot conclude the fundamental issue was nepotism.

Without making any conclusion of who was right about Mark, the person in the position to end this conflict was Barnabas. It is much easier to find an alternative plan that is acceptable to all than it is to advance a plan that is considered unacceptable.

**3. The problem of separation (15:39)**

The "sharp disagreement" (PATOXYSMOS) was so strong that this word is used of Paul's response to idol worship in Athens (17:6) and of God's wrath in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. This disagreement was not over theological issues but rather over ministry decisions.

It is important to recognize that Paul would later speak well of both Barnabas (1 Corinthians 9:6) and Mark (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11) subsequent to this split. Ministry decisions do not necessitate animosity.

We must not conclude that Mark was a moral failure but that Paul did not consider him suited for the missionary journey. Mark would later write the Gospel of Mark and would be considered useful by Paul (2 Timothy 4:11). Because a person is not suited for a specific ministry does not mean they cannot be of great service to the church.

This is the last mention of Barnabas and Mark in the book of Acts. The implication is in favor of Paul's approach to ministry selection. Ministry opportunities are our privilege, not our right.

#### **4. The pick of Silas (15:40-41)**

Like Barnabas, Silas was a church leader from Jerusalem (Acts 15:22). Silas had proven himself faithful to ministry and was approved by the church in Jerusalem which served the unity with the church in Antioch. Silas also had the advantage of being a Roman citizen (cf. 16:37-38).

They travelled through Syria and Cilicia on their way to Asia Minor. One purpose of this journey was to explain the results of the meeting in Jerusalem (cf. 15:23-29; 16:4).

A lesson we can see from Acts 15:36-41 is how to work together successfully in ministry. Be consistent with the ministry opportunities that have been given to you. Be cooperative with the ministry opinions that have been given by others. Be concerned about the ministry obligations that have been given by God.

May we be faithful to grow in our service to the Lord, so that He will grant us more ministry opportunities in the future.