

STUDY GUIDE

for the week of 9/22 thru 9/28
Acts 15:36-41



WHATS THE STORY?

Despite their success on their earlier journey, Paul and Barnabas part ways over Barnabas's desire to bring along John Mark. This argument leads to Paul and Barnabas taking new partners and going in different directions as they continue to spread the gospel.

LECTIO DEVINA

Prepare: Find a calm and quiet place to read and absorb the passage.

Read: Read through the passage. Listen for any words or phrases that jump out and listen for what God has to say.

Reflect: Try to understand what God could be saying to you through this passage.

Respond: Journal or pray to God, communicating about what you think God was telling you through Scripture.

Rest: Spend time contemplating, allowing God to work.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does a healthy disagreement between Christians look like?
- What does a healthy partnership between Christians look like?



FAMILY STUDY

Discuss: What does it mean to reconcile with someone?

When is it the right thing to give people another chance?

How can we show the love of Christ even when we are frustrated with someone?

A Deeper Look

For such a short passage, we are given a lot of information about Paul, Barnabas, and their “disagreement”, to put it lightly. The central issue is the inclusion of John Mark (according to tradition, the author of the Gospel of Mark) on their upcoming missionary journey. Although we are given very little information about what *exactly* happened with John Mark, the assumption can be made that at some point during their last journey, John Mark returned to Jerusalem, perhaps without the permission or knowledge of Paul and Barnabas. Understandably, Paul questions John Mark’s reliability as a partner for this work.

However, Barnabas seems particularly insistent about John Mark being included in their journey. As people who usually value efficiency and individual contribution, we may be confused why Barnabas so desperately wanted to include John Mark. But this is consistent with the character that we have seen from Barnabas throughout the book of Acts.

Barnabas has been on the forefront of inclusion, mercy, and forgiveness. It was Barnabas who vouched for Paul before the leaders in Jerusalem. It was Barnabas who, along with Paul, visited the Gentiles outside of God’s people to invite them in. It was Barnabas, along with Paul, who recounted the salvation of the Gentiles to the Jerusalem Council. And now Barnabas looks to show that same inclusion, mercy, and forgiveness to John Mark while Paul, ironically, does not. Perhaps the point of this passage is...we should be like Barnabas.