

Book Study #14

ACTS

Acts 15:36 – 16:10

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas – Timothy Joins Paul and Silas – Paul’s Vision..Macedonia

Before we begin this journey...

1. When you have a sharp disagreement with a friend, how do you usually handle it?
2. When have you held a grudge against someone? Do you still hold a grudge? (ouch!)
3. As far as you know, what nationalities are included in your family tree?

Do Some Research and Mapping...

4. What did Paul suggest to Barnabas (15:36)
5. What did Barnabas want to do? (15:37)
6. Why didn’t Paul want Mark to accompany the apostles on their trip? (15:38)
7. What did the apostles do about their difference of opinion? Who “won?” (15:39-40)
8. Who visited Derbe and then Lystra? (16:1)
9. What was Timothy’s parentage and reputation? (16:1-2)
10. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised? (16:3)
11. How did God guide the missionaries in their travels? (16:6-7)
12. What did the missionaries do after they understood what God wanted them to do? (16:10)
13. How did the narrator of the story (Luke) participate in Paul’s travels? (16:10)

Sort, Organize, Discuss, Understand...

14. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas’s difference of opinion turned into such a deep division?
15. When should you give up your rights, your position, or your point of view for the sake of peace with another person?
16. How did Timothy’s heritage create a problem?
17. How might a multiethnic background be both an advantage and a disadvantage?
18. How do you think Paul, Silas, and Timothy recognized the Holy Spirit’s directions as they traveled around Asia Minor?
19. How can we be receptive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance?



Application for this week...

20. What step can you take this week toward resolving an old disagreement with another Christian? How will you do it?
21. How do you need to open your heart and home to Christians who are ethnically different from you?
22. What is one thing you can do to make yourself responsive to God and His will?



A prayer for your journey... “Lord Jesus, as I walk through this coming week, help me prepare for my journey by reading my Bible more regularly, seeking help as I need it from my Christian friends and focusing on the needs of others instead of myself. Help me to demonstrate my faith by stepping into the unknown, untried, and untested areas of my life.” -Amen

Reflection



Write down some ideas on how you can resolve differences of opinion and still keep your relationships in tact...

What is helping me, I will...

Study Note:

The conscription of Timothy (16:1-5)

16:1-3. Timothy, whose home was Lystra, was of mixed parentage; his mother was Jewish and his father was a Greek. Probably Timothy had been converted under Paul's ministry during the apostle's first visit to Lystra (cf. 1 Tim 1:2). Some suggest he had been led to the Lord by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Tim 1:5). At any rate, he became Paul's protégé. Because of Timothy's good reputation (Acts 16:2) Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, probably as a helper as Mark had been. There was a problem, however. The Jews to whom Paul would be preaching the gospel would be offended if a man with a Jewish mother was **uncircumcised**. So Timothy was **circumcised**. Apparently he had been **uncircumcised** because of his father's influence.

This appears to contradict Paul's thinking in **Gal 2:3-5 where he refused to let Titus be circumcised**. The situations, however, were different. In Gal 2 the issue was the method of justification; here it was a question of not giving offense (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23). The Jerusalem Council, of course, had determined circumcision was not necessary for salvation (Acts 15:10-11,19). **In Acts 16 Paul acted as he did for the sake of the ministry; it was a wise move.** (Using wisdom...not "fleeces" or "trying to find God's Will")

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Circumcision: For Jews, circumcision is mandatory, as it is prescribed in the Torah:

- In the Book of Genesis as a mark of the Covenant between God and the descendants of Abraham:
"Throughout all generations, every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old...This shall be my covenant in your flesh, an eternal covenant. The uncircumcised male whose foreskin has not been circumcised, shall have his soul cut off from his people; he has broken my Covenant"^[1] and
- In Leviticus: *"God spoke to Moses, telling him to speak to the Israelites: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy...And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."*^[2]

Biblically, the infant's father (avi haben) is commanded to perform the circumcision himself. However, as most fathers are not comfortable or do not have the training, they designate a mohel as a delegate. The mohel is specially trained in circumcision and the rituals surrounding the procedure. Many mohelim are doctors or rabbis (and some are even both) or cantors. However, all are required to receive appropriate training both from the religious and medical fields.

Traditionally, the mohel uses a knife and not a scissor to circumcise the newborn; glass was never used. Today, doctors and some non-Orthodox mohalim use a perforating clamp before they cut the skin. The clamp makes it easier to be precise and shortens the recovery time. However, Orthodox mohalim have rejected perforating clamps, arguing that by crushing and killing the skin it causes a great amount of unnecessary pain to the newborn, cuts off the blood flow completely, which according to Jewish law is dangerous to the child and strictly forbidden, and also renders the *orlah* (foreskin) as cut prior to the proper ritual cut.

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