



Two men / one goal

April 23, 2018

ACTS 15:36-41 NKJV – (36) Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see how they are doing.*” (37) Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. (38) But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. (39) Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; (40) but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. (41) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

On their first missionary journey together, John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (**Col. 4:10**), accompanied them. Along the way, however, John Mark decided to return to his home in Jerusalem (**Acts 13:13**). The reason for his departure is not specified in the sacred text. Later on, when a second campaign was planned, Barnabas proposed taking Mark as a helper, but Paul resisted the idea. The New Testament record indicates that a “sharp contention” developed between them (**Acts 15:36-41**). They could not reach an agreement, and so they split up. As far as the sacred record indicates, these two remarkable men never saw one another again.

The serious Bible student cannot read this episode and not be moved. Nevertheless, there are some vital principles that one may learn from the dispute that developed between these Christian brothers. This dissension between Paul and Barnabas was not over a *doctrinal* issue. The rupture involved a personal dispute based upon a judgment call. To their credit, neither Paul nor Barnabas let the conflict distract them from their respective efforts of spreading the gospel.

Making application to Christians today, there will always be times when good brethren will disagree in matters of opinion. The important thing is to keep focused on doing the will of Christ. That is what Paul and Barnabas both did. As a result, perhaps even *more work* was accomplished for the Lord because of the manner in which their disagreement was handled.

I work for USPS. One day I saw another driver from UPS driving and he stopped at a traffic light along side my truck. Neither truck had air conditioners and it was in the middle of July. Both of us were sweating!!!! I had an ice chest and he didn't. I grabbed a couple of cold water bottles and handed it to him while the light was red. You see, we may be delivering for separate companies, but we have the same goal. Competition should not come in between God's instruction. No pride allowed. It's about the welfare of our fellow brothers and sisters. **Working as one.**

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 17:20-23

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Pray as much as you think.