

Disagreement

Acts 15:36–41 (ESV)

³⁶ And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” ³⁷ Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹ And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

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Discovering the Church / Conflict; Quarrel / Acts 15:36–41

A failure to be of one mind, which should be avoided whenever possible within the church, the family and other areas of everyday life. Christians are urged to maintain the unity of the church and avoid damaging division.

I. Disagreement within the Church

A. Between individuals

1 Corinthians 1:11–12 ESV

¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.”

1 Corinthians 3:3–4 ESV

³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? ⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

2 Corinthians 12:20 ESV

²⁰ For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

B. About doctrine

Acts 15:1–2 ESV

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¹ But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

Galatians 2:11–14 ESV

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

II. Disagreement in the family

A. May cause estrangement

Micah 7:6 ESV

⁶ for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.

B. Is unpleasant to live with

Proverbs 21:9 ESV

⁹ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.

III. Wisdom in handling disagreement

2 Timothy 2:14 ESV

¹⁴ Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

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Proverbs 17:14 ESV

¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

Romans 16:17 ESV

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

2 Timothy 2:23 ESV

²³ Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

To prevent division

Matthew 12:25 ESV

²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

IV. Sin provokes disagreement

Galatians 5:19–20 ESV

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,

Proverbs 6:12–14 ESV

¹² A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, ¹³ winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, ¹⁴ with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord;

Titus 3:9–11 ESV

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

James 3:16 ESV

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¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

V. Ways to resolve disagreement

A. Settlement out of court

Matthew 5:25 ESV

²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

1 Corinthians 6:1 ESV

¹ When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

B. Accepting weaknesses

Romans 14:1 ESV

¹ As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

C. Striving for harmony

1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

D. Appointing wise leaders

Matthew 18:15–17 ESV

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

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E. Being of sound doctrine

1 Timothy 1:3–4 ESV

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

Titus 3:9–10 ESV

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VI. Those who seek to resolve disagreement are blessed

Matthew 5:9 ESV

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

James 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

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Invitation God’s Plan of Salvation

