

ACTS 15-16
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Acts 15:36-16:10
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Reflection & Discussion Questions

There is much to learn from Paul in the last section of Acts

We see Paul and his partners responding to the Holy Spirit and creatively sharing and defending the gospel.

*While Paul is much of the focus, in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit as the real hero in Acts?

Paul and Barnabas find themselves in sharp disagreement in how to continue the work

Read and discuss Acts 15:36-41 (NIV)

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸ but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹ They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

*Why is it helpful to remember the humanity of the 'heroes' of our faith?

*How can we disagree with other believers in healthy ways? Is there an example of ways you've experienced this?

*How do we prioritize focusing on what we've been called to over our own rightness?

Paul must navigate priorities and being responsive to the Holy Spirit

Read and discuss Acts 16:1-10 (NIV)

***16** Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. ² The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³ Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. ⁶ Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

*What can we learn from how Paul prioritizes the gospel in this passage?

*On issues not central to the gospel, how do we best interact with others on all sides of a cultural, political or spiritual issue?

*What do we see about the way Paul prioritized being responsive to the Spirit?

*What do you sense God saying to you through the life of Paul?