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### **When Disagreements Come Acts 15:36-41**

Most people do not like conflict. It's stressful. It takes up a lot of emotional energy. Given the chance to escape from conflict, most of us would duck out. Some try to escape from conflict by pretending that the conflict really doesn't exist. They sweep it under the carpet and hope it goes away. They imagine that their marriage is just fine and put on a happy smile in public. They grit their teeth through a forced smile with that coworker you are in tension with. Others people avoid conflict by separating from people. If I never see you then I don't have to deal with you. Other people try to avoid conflict by pretending that they have no desires or needs of their own. Pretend they have no opinions. They always take the blame. Its always their own fault. They placate and pacify in order to try and create a conflict free zone around their life. Still others intimidate and rant and rave and yell in order to create a hostile space around them that no one dare try to disagree with. No one dare mess with them. They send out a very strong message, Look at me cross-eyed and you will eat a fist full of conflict. So few people do.

If you are married, you will experience conflict. If you have not yet experienced conflict in your marriage then I suggest you actually begin talking to one another. If you attend church for more then six months and are involved ministry more then just Sunday morning attendance, you have either witnessed conflict or been a part of some sort of relational conflict.

Most of us have had stomach churning conflict that keeps you up all night. Conflict is inevitable. It will happen. Our study in Acts chapter 15 begins with of conflict that deals with truth. That seems to be a lot easier to handle. The first part of chapter 15 there was a sharp

disagreement about how one is saved and gets to heaven. Some people thought you needed to become Jewish first in order to become part of God's family. Or at least follow the Jewish cultural aspects in order to maintain unity and peaceful fellowship. So they called a meeting and the leaders all met in Jerusalem to deal with the conflict. They decided that people are saved, not by following the Law and becoming Jewish, but saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of Jesus makes everyone first class Christians. But because I have been saved by grace, I will gladly restraint my freedom for the sake of others.

Conflict was an opportunity to demonstrate God's grace in our own life by the way we respond to others. It was an opportunity to sharpen and affirm the truth of salvation by grace. It was an opportunity for the leaders to lead well and the followers to follow well. Conflict was an opportunity to sharpen thinking, to motivate, to refine character and develop and direct. Conflict can open our eyes to help us see what is missing. Conflict has been a sharp but painful teaching tool in my own life.

At the end of Acts chapter 15 we see a conflict between two really good and godly people. One thing I really like about the Bible is that it never flatters its heroes. One minute we read about David downing Goliath with a stone and the next we see him casting a lustful glance at Bathsheba. We applaud as Peter leaves his nets and immediately follows Jesus and then we later read him swearing up and down in blue streak denial of Jesus. These are real people we are reading about and if they have difficult struggles and failures and weaknesses and yet God can use them, then he can me too.

As we read Acts 15:36-41 we see two very good men who are also two very fallible men who have headstrong opinions that sometime clash together. Read with me (READ)

Here we see conflict between two really good people. A clash between two old friends. In fact the Greek word used in v.39 is very

strong. It says they had a “sharp disagreement”. The word Paroxysm is a Greek transliteration of an English word we use to describe a fit, attack or sudden increase in the symptoms of a disease”. They were involved in an angry and heated disagreement with each other.

Think about what we know of these two men. Barnabas early on in the church just after Pentecost became a key leader. He was well appreciated for his obedience, humility and generosity. His given name was Joseph but was nicknamed “Barnabas” or “son of encouragement” because that’s who he was, an encouraging guy. Acts 11:24 says that he was “a good man who was filled with the Holy Spirit”. He was a man characterized by depth. If a storm blew through He would be the one you would want to be near. Barnabas was one who could see good in other people even when they couldn’t see it in themselves. One two occasions it was Barnabas who opened the door for Paul to bring him into fellowship of the church and ministry opportunity. After Paul returned to Jerusalem having been converted in a blinding flash of light on the road to Damascus, the believers back in Jerusalem remembered as the persecutor, the one who beat them and hauled off their family members off to prison. They were afraid of Paul. They didn’t trust him, but Barnabas...Barnabas welcomed Paul and brought him into fellowship with the others. He believed that God could do something through someone who had failed so badly. 10 years later it was Barnabas who was up ministering in Antioch and decided to search out Paul back at Tarsus to serve as a teacher and church leader. Barnabas was patient enough to believe that good results can take a long time to achieve and God was at work in people and would do what it takes to complete the work that He had begun. By the way Philippians 1:6 is true for you and me as well “he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Paul, now he was different. He came to Christ later. He began his interaction with Christianity on the other side jailing Christians and

assisting at their executions. Paul was a guy that burned jet fuel in his soul. When he hated Christ, he hated him vigorously. When he loved Jesus, no one ever loved him more. Paul was brilliant. Author of 13 books of the New Testament. Arguably Paul had the greatest influence on the world for Christianity other than Jesus himself. While Barnabas was a man of depth and patience, Paul was a man of passion. He was driven, there was never a moment to lose. Paul knew what it was like to be saved by grace. He was so radically changed by it, he was determined to never stop speaking of it.

This patience and passion of Paul and Barnabas formed an incredible missionary team. They had already been sent out once by the Spirit and church of Antioch. Their complementary strength had served so well its natural that when a return trip to revisit the churches was discussed, they would want to go together. So what were they fighting over?

V.37 Barnabas was desirous of taking John Mark along with them too. Remember what happened? John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas who in Acts 13:13 went back to momma. Gave up when it got tough and went back to Jerusalem. We aren't told why. Just that he did. Paul believed that the mission of spreading the gospel was so important that nothing should be allowed to hinder the word of God. Paul is thinking here. If you think the first trip was tough, this one will be twice that. We are heading to some hard places, why would we want to jeopardize the success of something so important by including this young man who has already proven he's not up to the challenge.

Now Barnabas was a guy who believed in people. He knew that young people especially will fail a few times when they don't know any better and even older people will when they do know better...but can still believe that God can do a good work in them. You can almost hear Barnabas saying "Have you ever failed Paul? Didn't I believe in you when

no one else would? If we don't mentor the young green horns of ministry we will never be able to multiply our fruit.

So who was right? They both were. Sticking with the ministry when it gets tough is very important to see that deep long-term fruit. Paul said we can't be uncertain whether or not he is going to stick it out. We are in war and decisions of eternal consequences are being made here. This is serious business. And Barnabas was yelling back. God loves this boy too and wants to use him, I'm not going to give up on this boy. I've spent my life finding people that no one else wanted and believing in them and I'm not going to give up on him. So Paul choose Silas as a new travel partner and Barnabas with John Mark headed in two different ways.

I wish the text told us that Paul and Barnabas turned to each other in an embrace of old friends and said, "I see your point of view. God bless you. I agree with you that your choice is right for you. God wants me to pursue this now." There is no record that they left each other on those terms. In v.40 it says the church committed the Paul and Silas to the grace of the Lord and we can assume they did the same for Barnabas and John Mark. It doesn't say that but probably only because the author of Acts was focused on telling Paul's journey for the rest of Acts.

So what are some things we can learn from this conflict? First, we see that there are spiritual Christians that will at times disagree. Indeed disagreements are inevitable as it's a part of being human. G. Campbell Morgan wrote; "I am greatly comforted whenever I read this...if I had never read this passage at the end of Acts 15 where Paul and Barnabas had contention with each other, I should have been afraid. They were not angels but men...just like me."

The truth is that even the best of Christians do not always agree. We all walk with limps. We all must rely on the grace of the Lord. I have heard stories of great contention between Swindall and Multnomah press and Dobson. Great heated disagreements between the guys who wrote the Left Behind books. Sometimes good Christians disagree intensely.

Martin Luther in his famous self-evaluation stated, "I am rough, boisterous, stormy, and altogether warlike, fighting against innumerable monsters and devils. I am born for the removing of stumps and stones, cutting away thistles and thorns and clearing wild forests." He was also one of God's princes greatly used for the Kingdom. We are all wired differently and have different opinions. Disagreement with another is not necessarily a sign of carnality. It is quite possible to disagree without being disagreeable. And God reserves the right to use people who disagree with me. God is not the author of conflict, but He certainly is not afraid of it. He uses it to guide and shape our character and move us.

Paul and Barnabas split up but in fact it doubled the number of missionary teams that went out. Was Silas a bad choice? No. He may have been even better for where God was taking them. Silas was a Roman citizen. He probably spoke Greek. He became Paul's amanuenses or stenographer writing the letters and books for Paul. Silas was a prophet and while Barnabas was a great loss, Silas was a great gain.

Often it is through our difficulties and failures, conflicts and disagreements that God uses to lead us to increased levels of productivity and creativity. Phillips Brooks, one of the greatest preachers America has ever produced, started by failing miserably as a teacher. He did not like his students and they did not like him. In the middle of his failure at teaching he wrote; "I do not know what will become of me and I don't care much...I wish I were 15 years old again. If I could start over I could really become something; but somehow or other I do not seem in the way to come to much now."

It is in conflict with others that I have been challenged and sharpened to do a better job at my preaching. To wed my points better to the Bible text. To affirm God's character. To be more sensitive to the needs of others. To curtail my pride. To throttle back my need to always get my own way and control events. To see people as people and not just a resource to complete a project. In conflict I've been challenged to

rethink the way I've always done things, rethink my values and priorities. I don't like conflict but it motivates and drives, shapes and guides when one continues to keep a heart that seeking God.

That is another point that I want us to be learning from the study this morning. Don't allow people to derail your heart to seek God. Conflict is inevitable even from godly men and women, don't let that wipe out your relationship with God. Paul and Barnabas did not let their conflict to hinder them from pursuing the purposes of God. Both of them kept on telling people about Jesus. Both of them kept on investing in younger men. Just a couple of verses down the page in chapter 16 we read the Paul has found a young man named Timothy to disciple and train up in Christian leadership, just as Barnabas did with John Mark. Perhaps Paul too did some thinking about what Barnabas said to him and the disagreement spurred him to mentor Timothy.

We can take a lesson from Paul and Barnabas in our own disagreements in that they did not allow the disagreement to sever their relationship. Neither attacked the character of the other. They did not polarize the church and force the people to choose sides. They did not undermine the church or the ministry of the other person. They didn't go off and talk about it with others. They talked it out with each other. None of that easy to do especially when we are licking our own wounds or the wounds of a friend. I know that even though they parted ways here in Acts 15, the disagreement didn't sever their relationship because later on in II Timothy Paul writes from a Roman prison to Timothy, the young guy he mentored. "Hey Timothy would you go pick up John Mark and both of you come visit me. John Mark is useful to me."

In many disagreements between godly people, just like this one between Paul and Barnabas, each side has some merit and there are points that are valid, yet in the heat of the fray, I've observed that its difficult for me to see past my own side. I look only for that information that further supports my side. When it gets emotional it becomes a

win/lose battle and I don't want to give up any ground to the other side. Love is able to see and admit there is some ground they are standing on that is solid. I think we would all be better served to try and see the issue from the other side. When we calm down, we may have to admit that its more an issue of perspective as each side has some valid points. So work hard at seeing the other guys viewpoint. When both sides have merit, seek a wise compromise much like the leaders did at the Jerusalem counsel. If the conflict persists, care enough to work through it. Don't run away. Don't quit your job, your church or your family because of conflict. God may move you on as He did Barnabas, but don't slam down the phone and shut the door and apply the silent treatment. It just doesn't work. If you truly care about your relationship, you will work it out in love.

If there is a division caused by conflict then repent of it. Remember the unity of the body is your job. God gets very serious when he talks about maintaining the unity of the body. Homework. Perhaps there is a brother or sister in Christ. Perhaps a husband, wife, son, daughter whom you are actively at odds with. Maybe you have allowed an argument, a disagreement, a difference of opinion to separate you from a fellow Christian. Will you do the hard homework of moving toward forgiveness and restoration this week? Don't allow people to derail your heart to seek God. Don't allow disagreements to sever your relationship with other believers. It's communion this Sunday and I Corinthians 11 tells us that we should not take communion in an unworthy manner. If there is a tension between you, deal with it first. IF there is sin deal with it before God and then come to communion. Use this time to remember and to get right with God.

**Paul and Barnabas conflict;**

**God guides through conflict and failure:**

When doors slam shut.

Pack up for a family vacation. Go to one hotel, closed. Another closed. Another closed. Disappointment ended with a string of No Vacancy signs. Without warning one door after another slams shut.

v.33-34 Judas went back home, but Silas “it seemed good” to him to stay there. Paul and B. kept on teaching with many others in Antioch.

v.36 After some days Paul said, “Hey I’m ready for another mission trip. What say we go back and visit some of those same churches and see how they are doing in the Lord?”

v.37 Barnabas thought that was a good idea, but really wanted to take his nephew Mark along with them also. Paul didn’t think this was a good idea at all. Paul had remembered how Mark had deserted them in Pamphilia and gave up and went home when it got too tough. Well this caused a sharp disagreement. Not a mild gentleman’s disagreement, but an intense and passionate conflict.

Why did the missionaries here feel it was best to go out in teams? How might this principle strategy apply to your own outreach efforts?

Morgan's comment "I am greatly comforted whenever I read this...if I had never read that... Paul and Barnabas has a contention, I should have been afraid. They were not angels....they were men.

Truth is...even the best of Christians do not always agree. All Christians walk withlimps. We all rely on the grace of the Lord.

I could tell stories of Swindall and a Multnomah publisher. Of Jerry Jenkins and Tim Lahay the guys who wrote the Left Behind books.

Sometimes Good Christians intensely disagree.

Luther in a famous self-evaluation " I am rough, boisterous, stormy, and altogether war like, fighting against innumerable monsters and devils. I am born for the removing of stumps and stones, cutting away thistles and thorns and clearing wild forests." He was also one of God's princes.

There is nothing wrong with desiring success per se, but it is from our failures that we learn the most. We sometimes experience what we discern as failure and cannot see the hand of God's providence. At such times we need to accept God's direction and entrust our lives anew to Him. We should not seek failure or excuse it, but we can learn from it and grow through it.

Mature Christian believers can disagree about important things. That's Ok God can use that too as long as they are still seeking God's heart.

Here we see fallible men with headstrong opinions that sometimes clashed. The Bible doesn't candy coats its heroes.

- 1) Disagreements are inevitable. It's a part of being human we are all wired differently and have different opinions.
- 2) Even godly people will disagree at times. Disagreement is not a sign of carnality. We can disagree without being disagreeable. In fact I am amazed how god reserves the right to use people who disagree with me.
- 3) A disagreement includes an issue and various viewpoints of the same issue. It can help us to understand and see the other side of their viewpoint. Both sides will probably have some valid points. Work hard at seeing both sides of the issue. This is hard work because our pride is at stake. We become myopic seeing only our own opinion.
- 4) When both sides have support seek a wise compromise
- 5) Augusburgers four perspectives on conflict p.129 Swindall

\* I see conflict as a fixed matter

v.40 Here the disagreement caused them to double their missionary efforts. Barnabas and Mark went one way, and Paul chose Silas and

went another way. Both groups were committed by the church to the grace of the Lord.

Paul was task oriented Barnabas people oriented. Barnabas a man of compassion. Paul a man of conviction. Barnabas a builder of men. Paul a planter of churches. Paul looking at the good of the overall ministry. Barnabas looking at good of the man.

“sharp disagreement” Paroxysm our English word is transliterated letter for letter from Greek and means “a fit, attack, sudden increase of symptoms of a disease. It is a convulsion, a violent emotion.

Who was right? No one can fault Barnabas for wanting to give John Mark a second chance. Nor can we fault Paul for fearing to trust him again on this important venture.

Even the closest of friendships can be tenuous. God did not cause the disagreement, but used it to guide both men into increased fruitfulness and service. They were now two missionary teams instead of just one. Silas brought to Paul's ministry some things that Barnabas did not have. He was a Roman citizen. He was a prophet. He probably spoke greek. He served as Paul's stenographer. Barnabas was a great loss to Paul but Silas was also a great gain.

Often it is through our difficulties and failures that God lead increased creativity and productivity. Phillip Brooks one of the greatest preachers America has ever produced failed miserably as a school teacher. He did not like his students and they did not like him. “I do not know what will become of me and I don not care much...I wish I were fifteen years old again. I believe I might become a stunning man; but somehow or other I do not seem in the way to come to much now. There is nothing wrong with being constantly successful, but we seem to learn most from our failures. This does not mean we ought to seek failure or excuse it, only when it comes we can learn from it and grow through it.

Hughes:

It was a worthy idea to retrace those first missionary steps, he and Barnabas had made a great missionary team and it was worth doing again. Barnabas's relational skills coupled with Paul mastery of the Law and his brilliant intellect produced dramatic results. These guys were soul brothers sharing both vision and wounds.

They would meet and encourage new believers, reprove false teaching and teach more about Gods grace as they also bring the good news of the results of the Jerusalem council. Paul and Barnabus were not going to make the mistake of failing to follow up on their evangelism efforts. But

something redirected Paul's ministry keeping it in line with God's hidden agenda heading him to Europe instead of back to Antioch. Paul probably didn't understand all that happened until much later when Barnabas and he sat down for a little talk.

So Baranbas sailed away with John mark to his native Cyprus.

Paul sees an opportunity to mentor a young protégé' in timothy inspired by Barnabas "if we don't mentor our ministry will end with us???" Amy way here is a young man that Paul believes has what it takes to stick to out and well on his way to spiritual maturity.

Timothy from Philppians 2 19 we see that he had a similar vision purpose as Paul "like-minded" They were both interested in building up of the churches.

Timothy was concerned for people. "For everyone looks out for his own interests not those of Jesus Christ. Timothy also looked out of the interests of Jesus Christ. He worked well with people. Some people I know can't seem to work with anybody. They do a good job, but its all by themselves. They know nothing of teamwork. Paul says that Timothy is not like that.

v.5 churches were strengthened "Greek "to make firm or solid" along with verb increasing in the imperfect tense indicates the believers spiritual muscles were continually being built up and the numbers continuing to multiply. Then they turn to Asia and the door slams shut.

v.6 forbidden is Greek Kolos an older word that mean to "to cut off, to lop or to trim." In a sense the Holy Sprit cut them off like wandering in a maze they hit a dead end.

Trying to get into Bythinia another closed door. They were trying but God was blocking their efforts. God may allow sicknesses, financial difficulty, business failures, relationship breakups and at times we can get very discouraged and frustrated. The missionaries were cut off from the west south, north and east. The only thing they could do was to press on between trwo forbidden territories in a direction that brought them to Troas on the coast of the Aegean sea. There Paul waited to see what God was going to do with him.

In Troas they waited and added another member to their group. Luke possibly a citizen of Troas. He would be Paul's physician and an evangelist in his own right.

Sometimes before the Lord can turn us He has to first stop us. We may be headed in a certain direction in cruise control, but God has a different destination for us. So he throws in some pothole to wake us up, puts

some obstacles in the way so we swerve this way and that. We stop and now He can turn us around.

When a good door closes, a better door opens up.

Does God truly have our best in mind? Matt 7:11 “if then you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall our father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask him?”

16:2 Why would Paul circumcise Timothy? Was this a compromise of the principle of the counsel in Jerusalem/ no. Paul had strongly resisted circumcision in the case of Titus Gal 2:3,5 a pure Greek. But Timothy was both Jew and Greek, and being uncircumcised would continually offend the Jews to no advantage to the cause of freedom. So Timothy voluntarily removed the stumbling block. Because he was under grace he gladly limited his freedom? Being half Jew and half Gentile, Timothy could bridge both cultures.

This seems to contradict Paul's thinking but the situations were different. The Jerusalem council had determined that circumcision was not necessary for salvation. Paul did it for the sake of the ministry. It was a wise move to reach more people. In Galatians 2 Paul refused to circumcise Titus because it had become an issue of justification. Here the issue was giving offense.

When the essence of the gospel was at stake, Paul refused any compromise whatever. However, when the gospel was not at stake as was the case here. Paul was willing to compromise many things in order to win others to Jesus Christ.

Timothy was found in the place where Paul was once left on a refuse heap for dead. God loves to bring joy and hope during times of trial.

### **God guides through restraint:**

v.6 When Paul was done with his ministry in Galatia, he decided to go south and minister in an area where Ephesus was located, (not the Asia we know of but a small province near Ephesus named Asia.) But something stopped him. Then he tried to go north into Bithynia near the Black sea, but something stopped him, so Paul was effectively funneled down into Europe driven west by closed doors.

How specifically did the Holy Spirit restrain them? Removing or adding a sense of peace? Possibly that is how he often directs today. Was it through difficult circumstances? Illness? Transportation problems?

What kept Paul keeping on despite the problems? His simple faith that God was in control of his life. Faith in God and that he will guide us is

quite comforting. Do you ask for God's guidance? Anticipate and expect it?

He leadeth me, O blessed thought  
O words with heavenly comfort fraught  
What'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still tis Gods hand that leadeth me.

### **God guides through revelation:**

"Come over to Macedonia and help us" Pauls vision. Europe was calling for help and people there needed the gospel. Nothing makes a person strong like hearing someone crying for help.

Illustr. The last couple of weeks. A Man who fell though the bridge girders on a foggy rainy night at I-5 and Salmon creek trying to help people in a car that crashed. Man who went out into the ocean to try and save a boy who had been swept out to sea by a wave, the boy was spared he was not. You may be wiped out tired after a long day but a scream for help and you completely forget all your weariness. Paul and Silas moved forward in the power and strength of Christ.

Ministry was multiplied. Timothy was engaged in ministry. John mark got back into the battle under Barnabas loving care. And even Paul at the sunset of his life recognized the value of Timothy "II timothy 4:11 Bring Mark with you ,because he is helpful to me in my ministry" John mark wrote the gospel of Mark that presents Christ as the perfect servant. There was also healing between Paul and Barnabas as we read I Cor 9:6

God can use perplexing failures and conflicts to bring a fresh purpose and direction to our lives. Be careful not to box God in based on our prior experience. God may now be ready to do a new and fresh work through you even in an area that you have failed at in the past. God may direct you to go west when you really want to east. Not sure why but God will direct us in every situation, the apparently good and the apparently bad. If its clear that God is moving you in a certain direction even if its not what you planned take a tip from G. Campbell Morgan who said, "It is better to go to Troas with God, than anywhere else without Him."

v.10 "we" sounds like Luke joins Paul and his group here at Troas.

We see a spirit sensitive, saturated prayer person who was so immersed in the spirits presence that he was given guidance and enabled him to make the right decisions.

Isa. 43:19 "I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isa. 44:3 “for I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants; and my blessing on your offspring.

Isaiah’s prophecy is now fulfilled in Christ and experienced through His Spirit. There is a word picture that links the river and the outpouring of the Spirit. Paul and his missionary friends were being carried by the river on the Holy Spirit. They had leaped into the fast moving currents of the Lord’s guidance. With each decision they were swept along, instructed and directed. Swept around the dangerous rocks and through the exciting rapids. The Holy Spirit’s river keeps flowing constant and consistent.

We learn that God’s NO actually becomes part of God’s YES

As we are carried along by the stream of the spirit, we can depend on how we are feeling, depend on our reasoning...as we are people who belong to the Lord, surrendered to Him, immersed in His Word, want what He wants. God is going to let us know where He wants us when He wants us.

It was not the Lord’s timing for Paul to go to the province of Asia where Ephesus was, but later it would be right. God is the master strategist. We look back and can see how important it was for Paul to get over into Macedonia. Looking back we can see that God was right.

We know times when we feel blocked and certain directions seem wrong. The temptation is to get up out of the flow and move up to some other stream of our own choosing, or go back home and sit in our own selfish hot tub. But when we do, we are cutting ourselves off from the guidance of the Spirit. This depletes our energy, our effectiveness. It can take the Lord a long time to get us back into the mainstream out of the eddies of our own self-determination. Paul could have gotten stuck in Asia never to be heard of again for a long time unless the current of the Holy Spirit had torn Paul loose from his own efforts while the Spirit was cutting a new channel in the wilderness ahead of him.

Seasoned Canadian guide while canoeing in the wilds gave instructions as to how to keep my directions clear and not get lost. “Stay in the main river. Let it carry you south. Don’t get off into side streams that only appear to be the way to go, or you’ll never make it. Sound advice for life in the spirit as well.

I think about some of the things I have almost done in life. I think about some of the things I have pursued and at the time really wanted them to work out but they didn’t. Looking back I can see how disastrous for the ultimate life God wanted me to live. When I stop clinging to the branch

on the side of the bank, wanting not to move forward, when I resolve to want to do what God wants the rush of the stream sweeps me on down the stream

The risk of obedience:

Going in a direction that is guided is always risky. One must trust and that seems quite risky to us. Must risk that the Holy Spirit knew what He was doing with them.

They moved and God steered them. Tough to direct a standing object. GPS is not able to direct you until you begin to move in a direction, then it can tell you the right way to go.

Sometimes, I wish that God would write all my instructions out in a message very clear so that I would know what I should do and say for every moment of the rest of my life. But the lord knows me too well and knows that I would put my trust in the instructions instead of the daily communication and relationship with Him. He knows that I would try to avoid the painful difficult things on my list. I would try to jump ahead the exciting thrilling stuff.

So he gives me long range direction. Purpose for my life. Love people. Share the truth about Jesus with people. But the daily stuff of life, he gives me only as much as I need to know in order to do His will in every situation.

To risk is to believe that He will be faithful and give me all I need to know say and do in each situation.

Prov 3:5,6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

V6 In what sense is the Holy spirit the spirit of Jesus? And what does this phrase tell you about the nature of God?

Swindall p123 When Coworkers clash

The bible never flatters its heroes. One minute David is downing Goliath with a stone, the next we see him casting a lustful glance at Bathsheba. Peter leaves his nets, then denies him. These are real people and if God can use them, he can use us too.

Acts 15 casts the two men here as fallible men who had headstrong opinions that sometimes clashed. Have you ever had such a stomach churning confrontation? Most of us have. Maybe we can learn a few lessons about preserving harmony while disagreeing.

- 1) Disagreements are inevitable: We are different people with different opinions, background, temperment not a bad thing, but we will naturally find things to disagree with each other.

- 2) Even godly people will not always agree. Disagreement isn't always a sign of carnality. As we love each other, believers can disagree without being disagreeable, in fact God reserves the right to you people who disagree with me.
- 3) In many disagreements each side is valid, yet in the heated fray its difficult for us to see past our own side. If we calm down and begin to see the issue from the other side, we have to admit its more of a issue of perspective as Each side has some valid points.

So work hard at seeing both viewpoints.

When both sides have merit seek a wise compromise

If conflict persists, care enough to work through it. Run run away. Don't quit your job, your church or your marriage because of conflict. Work it out. Slamming down the phone, shutting the door and applying the silent treatment doesn't work. If you truly care about your relationship you will work it out in love.