

“After some time Paul said to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing.” But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus.” Acts 15:36, 38-39 NLT

lectio / Acts 15:36-41

And just like that... it was over, for awhile. Paul had taken the lead in most of the decisions on who, what, when and where the team would travel. Paul is probably an enneagram eight, and Barnabas a nine - it happens. The beauty of oppositional leaders is that, when they work to balance each other’s weaknesses, a lot can be accomplished. But it’s not without its sparks. The Holy Spirit works in us and through us, but that does not guarantee flawless cooperation. You could even say these two leaders loved each other, and still there is conflict. Paul has no time for Mark’s whining and wants to move on to others more capable of handling the hardships of the road. Barnabas wants to quickly restore and give guys like Mark another chance to grow under the pressure. So the power team separates for awhile. I wonder what effect that had on their mission? Did the churches, know at the time, that their Apostles were divided over team issues? Who can say. Paul eventually calmed down and said later, “and send John Mark,” so we know there was some healing. It’s not good to pretend that conflict doesn’t or shouldn’t happen - it’s human. We awkwardly move through life like a Junior-higher at their first dance. This, surprisingly, gives me hope. I’ve had some hard conversations with those above, next to and below me about conflicting ideas. That’s why love, patience and reconciliation is a big part of maturity in leadership. No one “gets” their way 100% of the time.

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Dad,
I never liked running into these kinds of conflicts with people I absolutely love. Yet, it is a part of our brokenness and passion to get it right, stay on mission, protect and defend ourselves and our ideas. It’s never easy. However, having gone through it a few times, I realize the strength of oppositional opinions and begin to value NOT seeing things the same way. In the middle of the chaos, there is clarity IF we can work through the emotions we experience when making our views be known, being right or feeling trapped and the need to defend ourselves. In our humanity, there is still the possibility of good coming out it. Help me see this before I get protective, closed minded, reactive and say things that hamper the relationship and the mission.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root