

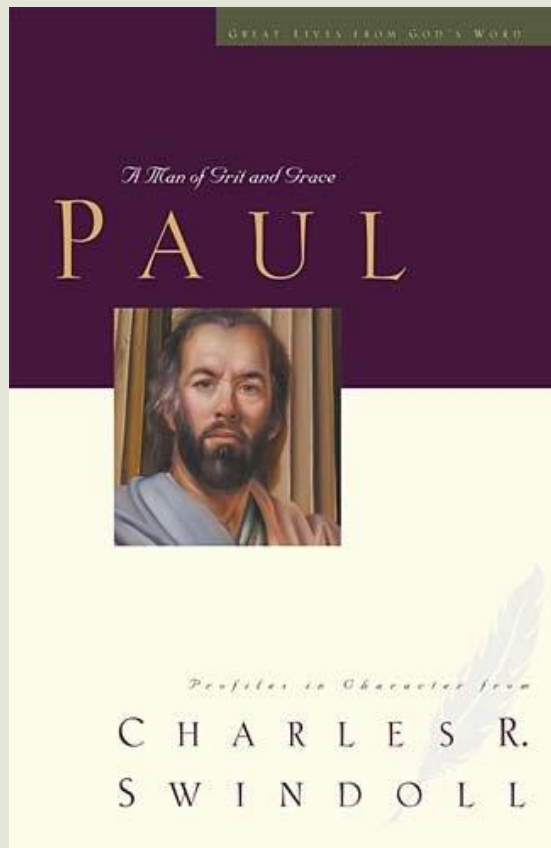


Paul – Lesson 7

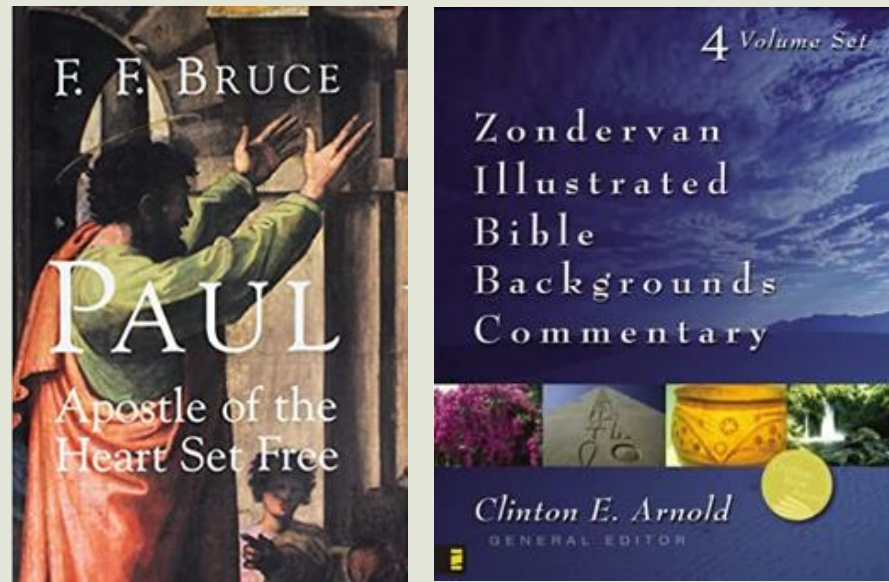
New Testament Studies

CBC B&B Sunday School
May 7, 2023

Source Material



Primary Source



Companion Sources

Lesson 7 Intro...

- Acts 15 The Jerusalem Council
 - Pharisaic Jewish Christians created dissension in the church in Syrian Antioch with a works-based salvation theology (AD 49)
 - Syrian Antioch church sends Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to seek resolution on matter
 - Church leaders in Jerusalem acknowledges doctrine of salvation by grace alone. Drafts letter affirming such theology and sends Silas and Judas with Paul and Barnabas back to Syrian Antioch (AD50)

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

The Impact of Leadership Conflict

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

Case Study of Church Leadership Conflict

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

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- Church Leadership went back to doing “normal” ministry of teaching and preaching (15:35)
- Mission Committee suggested visiting the churches they planted in the mission trip led by Paul and Barnabas (15:26)

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- Key pastoral leaders sharply disagreed on the matter, creating a rift in leadership unity (15:38)

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

The Impact of Leadership Conflict

... Analysis ...

John Mark

Paul's Perspective:

- Not Dependable
- Not Fit
- Not Mature

Barnabas' Perspective:

- Grace
- Growth
- Mentorship

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Other Factors

- Family – John Mark is Barnabas' cousin
- Scars – John Mark abandoned Paul when he needed him the most

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

The Impact of Leadership Conflict

... when church leaders cannot work together...

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- Church leadership agrees on the second mission trip, but have a disagreement on the makeup of the mission team (15:36-37)
- Key pastoral leaders sharply disagreed on the matter, creating a rift in leadership unity (15:38)
- Disruptive pastoral leaders both left the church; unable to continue their ministry in Antioch any longer. Both started ministry elsewhere (15:39-40)

Hermeneutical Observations

- **Conflict severely damaged relationship between Paul and Barnabas**

Paul and Barnabas had largely enjoyed a close friendship dating back to Paul's conversion and his first visit to Jerusalem. The two super pastors went through a rough journey that included heavy persecution and praise in the Gentile nation, which would likely have solidified their bonding as friends. Although church tradition indicated that Paul and Barnabas made peace later in life, the two super pastors were never seen doing ministry together – ever – again.

- **Conflict led the church to lose two pastors**

Most scholars and commentators acknowledged that this parting was God-ordained; nonetheless, it cannot be overlooked that the outcome of this intense personal argument between two key pastoral leaders at this church meant that both had to go their separate ways, and never pastor at this church again. Paul would later visit this church very briefly between his second and third missionary journey – two years after this conflict, and Barnabas' ministry activities after this conflict was not preserved for us by the Holy Spirit, though church tradition indicates that he would lead successful ministries in North Africa.

- **Conflict revealed that even men of Godly character can be fallible**

By all accounts, Paul and Barnabas were men held in high regards who possess genuine godliness in their teaching and in their lives. Of all things to argue over that would lead to a broken friendship while also shutting down a solid teaching ministry, this one seemed rather petty. Godly leaders are not infallible.

Acts 15:35-41 [NASB]

The Impact of Leadership Conflict

The Verdict

Historical Observations

■ John Mark

- Wrote the first Gospel
- Became a great ally to Paul's ministry
- Became a great ally to Peter's ministry
- Sought by Paul in his final days on earth

Leadership Lesson: Develop "Future" Perspective

Swindoll's Biblical Principles

- **In every disagreement, there is one issue but several viewpoints**

In this episode, the issue was John Mark. This was objectively true. The viewpoints, however, are subjective. Paul and Barnabas each have their own viewpoints, and the intense dispute was over disagreement on viewpoints (subjective matter), not objective cause.

- **In every disagreement, each side has validity**

When the dispute involves subjective matter, neither side can claim an objective “win.” The goal is to move beyond subjective disputes

- **In heated disagreements, someone usually gets hurt**

The more intense the argument, the deeper the wounds. In this particular episode, imagine John Mark listening to the dispute, then recognizing that he was the reason the church parted ways with two of its super pastors.

Swindoll's Applications

- **When in a disagreement, work hard to see the other point of view**

The first step requires an intentional effort dedicated to listening that leads to understanding. In tense disagreements, we tend to listen looking for angles to attack. We should be listening to understand.

- **When both sides have validity, seek a wise compromise**

In tense disagreements, compromise are often viewed as a weakness to one's point. Compromise should be embraced, not shunned.

- **When the conflict persists, care enough to work it through, rather than walk out**

Walking away from tense disagreements are usually followed by silent, manipulative, passive-aggressive attitude towards one another that benefits no one. Always try to work it out, rather than to walk out.

- **When it cannot be resolved, graciously agree to disagree without being disagreeable**

In Swindoll's words, "Get Over it!" and move on. Harboring animosities and refusing to move on only serves to create more disagreements and more problems. Avoid leaving such matters unresolved. When the parties cannot come to a compromise, learn the principles of grace, embrace humility, agree to disagree, and move on.

Questions