

Acts Part 17 Refusing Strife

Pastor John Carmichael

[Act 15:1-2, 7, 22 NASB95] 1 Some men came down from Judea and [began] teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, [the brethren] determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. ... 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. ... 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

- Strife is something we will always deal with in relationships.
- If you have 2 intelligent engaged people they will have a difference of opinion. That does not mean its strife. Strife is hurtful, toxic, and disrespectful.
- Acts 15 deals with strife on doctrinal (15:1-35) and personal issues (15:36-41.)

What do we need to know about refusing strife?

Here are 5 things to learn about how to refuse strife.

I. Understand the problem with strife.

- a. [Jas 3:16 NASB95] 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

II. Let others speak while you listen.

- a. [Act 15:2, 5, 12 NASB95] 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, [the brethren] determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. ... 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses." ... 12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.
- b. [Jas 1:19 NASB95] 19 [This] you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak [and] slow to anger;

III. The solution should not compromise truth.

- a. [Act 15:11, 28-29 NASB95] 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." ... 28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."
- b. [Mar 9:50 NASB95] 50 "Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty [again?] Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."
- c. [Jas 3:18 NASB95] 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
- d. [Mat 10:34-36 NASB95] 34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

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IV. Sometimes peace with someone will not happen.

- a. [Act 15:36-41 NASB95] 36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, [and see] how they are." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. 38 But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.
- b. [Rom 12:18 NASB95] 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
- c. [1Co 5:11 NASB95] 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler not even to eat with such a one.

V. Be willing to change and admit error.

- a. [2Ti 4:11 NASB95] 11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.
- **Dissension happens, but strife needs to be dealt with by learning to listen, not compromising truth, being willing to set boundaries when necessary, and change when in error.**