

WHAT IF . . . ?

What If You Need a Second Chance?

Acts 13:2–5; 15:36–41

2. An Example from the First Century: John Mark with Paul and Barnabas

(Acts 13:3–4, 13–14; 15:36–41)

Saul, also known as Paul (Acts 13:9), and Barnabas were two prominent teachers in the Antioch church whom God called to minister in other places (13:1–2). But these two men didn't go alone. They brought as an assistant young John Mark, who was also called Mark (12:12 NASB).

After ministering on the island of Cyprus, the travelers sailed for Asia Minor and landed in a port called Perga. There John Mark left the group (13:13).

In his record of the event, Luke told us nothing of Paul's immediate reaction to John Mark's leaving. However, we do know how it affected Paul later. Sometime after their return to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas explored the idea of returning to the churches they had started on their previous journey. Both men were excited by the prospect, aside from one thing: John Mark. Barnabas wanted to bring along his cousin again; Paul would have none of it.

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LET'S LIVE IT

Just as we'll all stand in John Mark's shoes from time to time, we'll all also slip on Paul's and Barnabas' sandals. People will fail us. And when that happens, we must decide what to do. How do we determine—amidst others who might disagree—what to do with the individual who failed? Here are four guidelines to help you navigate those treacherous waters and make the right choice.

- First, *when in disagreement, work hard at seeing the other point of view.*
- Second, *when both sides have excellent support, seek a wise compromise.*
- Third, *when conflict persists, care enough to work it through rather than stomp it out.*
- Fourth, *when you can't reach a resolution and you must disagree, try not to become disagreeable.*

Do you disagree or have you recently disagreed with someone about offering a second chance? Describe the situation.