

Acts 15:36-41 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” ³⁷Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. ⁴¹And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Contention: paroxysm

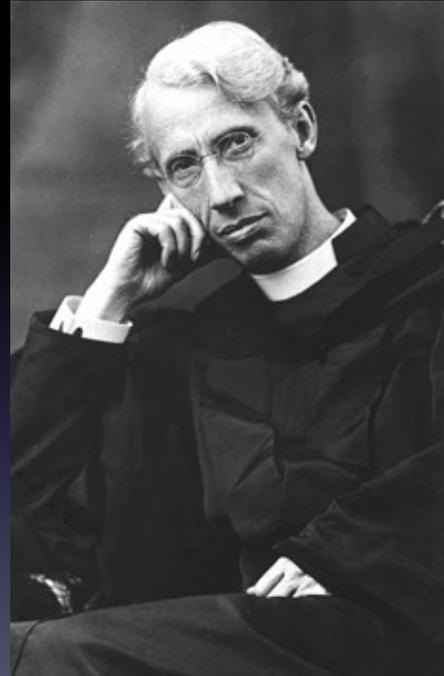
“a sudden attack or violent expression of a particular emotion or activity”

Synonyms: spasm, attack, fit, burst, bout, convulsion, seizure, outburst, eruption, explosion

Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to **stir up** love and good works,

“I am greatly comforted when I read this. I am thankful for the revelation of the humanity of these men. If I had never read that Paul withstood Peter to the face, and that Paul and Barnabas had a contention, I should have been afraid. These men were not angels, they were men.”

G. Campbell Morgan



“Because of our fallenness and also by divine design, there are going to be many differences among and between people in this life. Christian unity does not deny these differences, and neither does it attempt to change all of them. If we are to live in unity, we must, as Christians, agree on those few things which are essential to salvation, and on these we must have agreement.”

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1. Christians can disagree with each other and both can be right.
2. Disagreements are not necessarily a sin and neither are they evidence of some sin on the part of those who differ.
3. Disagreements can serve very beneficial purposes.

What Paul & Barnabas did right:

- They kept the problem on a personal level.
- They did not let their disagreement alienate them as friends and as brothers.
- They saw the matter through to a resolution.
- Neither appears to have been acting out of self-interest or self-will.
- Neither sought to make this a biblical issue in which one was “right” and the other was “wrong” theologically.
- Their separation was a cooperative action, not a competitive one.
- Both ended up ministering to John Mark by what they did.

What we must do as disagreements occur:

1. Recognize there are many differences between believers.
2. Consider who it is who differs with us and why.
3. Discern the source of our differences and the seriousness of the issues involved.
4. Decide if the difference is a matter of the gospel, of a clear biblical teaching/doctrine, or a matter of interpretation, personal conviction, or individual gift, calling, and guidance.
5. Give the appropriate response based upon the nature of the difference and upon what the Scriptures teach.

Thankfully, if believers will allow it, old offenses can fade into the distant past

Col 4:10-11 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹and Jesus who is called Justus. ... they have proved to be a comfort to me.

2 Tim 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Phm 1:23-24 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.