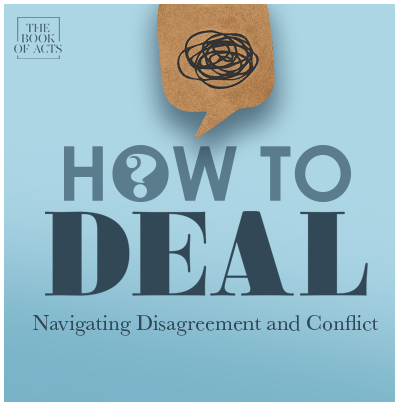




WEEKLY STUDY

How to Deal - Week One

Pastor Jacob began a new series called How to Deal. As we continue our study of Acts we will see how the early church dealt with conflict. For many of us, the conflict of our current age can feel personal, but it is nothing new. In conversation with God, see if you can discover a different way to navigate conflict.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray that God would show you the places that He calls you to share the Good News. Ask Him to stretch your boundaries and lead you to new territories.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 13.1-3 (NIV)

¹ Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

- The disciples, (including a couple of new characters) were intentionally seeking God’s guidance. By worshiping and fasting, they put themselves in a position to hear from God, and hear from God they did. The Holy Spirit specifically called out Barnabas and Saul for missionary work. Have you ever witnessed someone called and sent out from your community? How might fasting have set the stage for this calling? Under what conditions are you most likely to notice the Holy Spirit at work?

- **Prayer Prompt: “The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. (2 Samuel 23.2)**
- *God, I long to hear your voice. May I have the discipline to put myself in the posture of listening today. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ACTS 13.4-12 (NIV)

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

⁶ *They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus,⁷ who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.⁹ Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,¹⁰ “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?”¹¹ Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”*

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.¹² When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

- Saul (Paul) and Barnabas travelled to Cyprus and were immediately in the company of false teachers and sorcerers. Notice that Saul is called “Paul” now that he is in the mission field. The name-change was not connected to his conversion, but rather to his obedience to God’s calling. “Paul” was his Greek and Latin name—how he would be known among the people he was sent to reach with the Good News. Has your obedience to God ever changed the way others referred to you?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5.17)**
 - *God, I am willing to go where you send me. Change the way others refer to me if that is what brings you glory! Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 13.13-15 (NIV)

From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.¹⁴ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down.¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

- Paul and Barnabas were gathering quite a reputation—so much so that leaders of local synagogues were asking them to speak. It appears as though Paul had become the leader of this mission and for some reason John decided to return to Jerusalem. There seems to have been a growing receptivity to this mission team, and people were eager to listen. Have you ever had to take a back seat to someone else who was well positioned to carry out the mission?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Philippians 2.3-4)**
- *God, fill me with a humble spirit that I might be most usable for your purposes. I repent of my own need for glory. May my life point to you. Amen.*

THURSDAY: ACTS 13.16-41 (NIV)

“Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country;¹⁸ for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness;¹⁹ and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance.²⁰ All this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years.²² After removing Saul, he made

David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

²³ "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴ Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶ "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷ The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸ Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³² "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

"'You are my son;
today I have become your father.'

³⁴ God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

"'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.'

³⁵ So it is also stated elsewhere:

"'You will not let your holy one see decay.'

³⁶ "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. ³⁷ But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

³⁸ "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

⁴¹ "'Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.'"

- This is Paul's first sermon. It's easy to imagine that this had been bubbling up in him for some time now. Ever since his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus, and through the trials he had already faced, these words were forming. Paul starts with the common history of his audience, recounting the time in the wilderness and the entrance into the promised land. His point in revisiting the past was to connect it to Jesus who was raised from the dead. Is God calling you to share the good news of Jesus Christ to people around you? What is the common history that you could begin with?

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- **Prayer Prompt:** *“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’ (Acts 13.34)*
 - *God, please open my eyes to the common story I share with those you have sent me to serve. Show me the starting place, that they might enter into your story of redemption. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 13.42-47 (NIV)

As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

*“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

- Paul and Barnabas had fully claimed their mission of reaching the ends of the earth with the Gospel. Their message was both contagious (people wanted to hear more) and threatening to the status quo. Crowds were gathering, clamouring for more and that led the authorities to hurl insults and false teaching. When was the last time you knew that speaking the truth would get you into trouble?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” (John 14.6-7)*
- *God, I look to your Son Jesus for the truth in every situation. Fill me with words of truth and a heart of love for those whom you put in my path today. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 13.48-52 (NIV)

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

⁴⁹ *The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.* ⁵⁰ *But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.* ⁵¹ *So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium.* ⁵² *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

- Shaking the dust off of your feet was a common saying that indicated moving on from a place or situation. It was an act of protest against those who actively resisted the Gospel, and a way of saying that they had done what they were called to do. Notice that the result of moving on without regrets led the disciples being filled with joy. Is there something that you are holding on to that isn't yours to carry? What is keeping you from joy?
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- **Prayer Prompt: If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.** ¹⁵ **Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. (Matthew 10.14)**
- *Merciful God, I confess that I can hold on to things that are not my responsibility. This can hold me back from the goodness that you have waiting for me. Help me to let go and cling to you instead. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Have one person in your group re-read Paul's first sermon aloud. Acts 13.16-41.

- Paul begins with history. What does the wilderness, Samuel, and David have to do with Jesus?
- If you had the responsibility of preaching to people in your community, what history would you include?
- How would Paul's sermon be received in today's culture?