

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Acts Series

These questions are for the **August 16, 2020** sermon, "A New Direction." Please read the sermon passage (Acts 15:36-16:10) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

AS WE SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE FOR ADVANCING HIS PURPOSES, DON'T BE SURPRISED BY . . .

1. The new conflicts we need to address (15:36-41)
 - a. Conflicts do not diminish as we seek to advance God's purposes. They often increase.
 - i. Note how God used Judas' betrayal to bring about his perfect purposes.
 - ii. Make distinctions: "Am I truly focused upon advancing God's purposes?"
 - b. Sometimes there is not a "good guy" and a "bad/wrong guy" in a conflict.
 - i. Paul is focused upon global outreach. Constantly insisting.
 - ii. Barnabas is focused upon personal relationships. Constantly insisting.
 - iii. Let us see to it that disagreement does not produce disunity.
 - c. God can turn conflict into conquest because he is sovereign over all.
 - i. Yes, there is conflict that leads to separation.
 - ii. But God now has two incredibly gifted missionary teams.
2. The new relationships we need to develop (16:1-5)
 - a. Paul and his new teammate Barnabas now take Timothy under their wing.
 - b. It is crucial for mature believers to pour themselves into newer believers.
3. The new courses that we need to take (16:6-10)
 - a. The Holy Spirit leads them west (Macedonia/Europe), NOT east (Asia).
 - b. God's "no" is full of grace. There may be several "nos" before we experience "yes."
 - i. Continue to trust God and advance his purposes while waiting for "Yes."
 - ii. Do not trust impressions and impulses (feelings) in determining God's leading.
 - c. The source of divine guidance remains ever-present at every one of life's intersections.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: Sometimes conflicts increase because we insist upon our own "non-essential" ways. Describe conflicts which were made worse because you insisted upon your own tendency, opinion or control. What was the issue? Was it worth it? What did you learn?
2. Based on #1, above: Disagreements do not have to lead to disunity. One person may be focused upon one thing (big picture, spontaneity, artistic) while another person focuses upon another (details, planning people's feelings). How can you maintain unity when you disagree?
3. Based on #2, above: The Holy Spirit will lead us to new relationships through changes which God requires (and brings about). How has God brought you to a season of change? Are you open to the changes? Who are the new people which God is calling you "pour Jesus into"?
4. Based on #3, above: There is grace in all of God's "nos." What kind of "nos" are you experiencing today? Have you remained focused upon God's purposes? Have you experienced disagreement? Disunity? How has God uses the pain to guide you into a new season or direction? At a new intersection, are you seeking God's guidance? How?