

BE A BRINGER

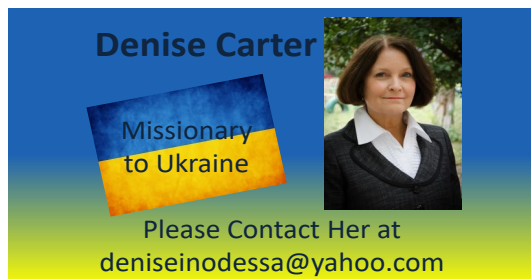
“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....” John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

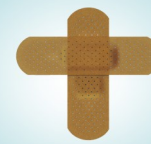


Denise Carter
Missionary to Ukraine
Please Contact Her at
deniseinodessa@yahoo.com

Forgiveness

Letting Go Of Your Hurt

GROWTH GUIDE



Handout: 04/22/18

Study: 04/29/18

How Can I Restore a Broken Relationship?

In a perfect world, Christians would resolve all conflicts. If we all followed God’s Word completely, we would resolve our differences and move forward together.

The reality is, it does not always work that way. There are times when trying to achieve resolution seems to make matters worse. People remember what has already taken place differently. And they disagree about how to move forward. It is an impasse, a hopelessly complicated knot. Despite prayer, despite efforts, despite meeting after meeting, reconciliation seems impossible.

These impasses can begin calmly enough. But when lines are drawn and people align on one side or another, the situation takes on a life of its own. E-mails fly. If it is in a church setting, out-of-town ministry authorities may be contacted “for advice.” Some people, even those who have not read the Bible for years, begin to search for relevant verses. Others organize “prayer” meetings. Laymen are tempted to gossip or to accuse leadership of being overly controlling. Leaders are tempted to issue accusations of gossip and mutiny. Some talk about holding high a banner of “truth.” Others dismiss doctrinal issues to major on “love.”

Almost always, there is more to a conflict than the obvious issues. Soon enough these other matters are dredged up, and the knot is tied tighter still. Well-intentioned attempts to defuse the situation are taken the wrong way.

The damage from these interpersonal cycles of violence is horrific. Sometimes local churches never recover. Young believers are hurt. Pastors are burned out. Joy is taken away. God is not glorified by his people.

How do we move beyond an impasse? What do we do when people simply cannot reconcile with one another or agree on a solution? In such cases it seldom works to simply walk through the steps of Matthew 18:15–17. This is not because there is any deficiency in God’s Word. It is because we are fallen people who do not always think alike. And sometimes we do not know how to come to resolution.

We find a great deal of help in addressing impasses from studying a conflict that took place in the early church between Paul and Barnabas. It was a major disagreement between two key leaders. It was tremendously painful and resulted in the parting of ways. Yet in the end, healing happened, and God’s Word went forward. To those struggling with an impasse, this story from Acts offers wisdom and hope.

Brauns, Chris. *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds* (pp. 179-180). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

KEY VERSE

Acts 15:39

*And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other.
NKJV*

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Acts 15:36-41

Introduction

1. Have you ever parted ways with someone close to you because of a disagreement? What circumstances led to that?
2. What did Paul and Barnabas disagree over? What was the result of the disagreement?

Tuesday: Matthew 5:23-24

Recognize Your Relationship Is Broken

3. What are some reasons people ignore problems in their relationships?
4. How would you rate your willingness to make the first move towards reconciliation when you have a conflict?

Wednesday: I John 4:9-10; Ephesians 5:1-2

Love Like Jesus

5. How would you describe the love Jesus has for you?
6. Why is it hard to demonstrate love for those we have conflict with? How can you love those who offend you like Jesus loves you?

Thursday: Philippians 2:8; Ephesians 4:1-3

Humble Yourself Like Jesus

7. In what ways did Jesus demonstrate humility?
8. Why is it difficult to be humble when dealing with conflict?
9. If you practice humility, how could it help restore a relationship?

Friday: Ephesians 2:14-22; Matthew 18:15

Invite Others to Reconciliation

10. How did Jesus reconcile us to God?
11. How can we invite others to reconcile with us?
12. On Monday we read about a conflict between Paul and Barnabas over Mark. Paul later writes complimentary things about Mark in II Timothy 4:11. Who is your Mark that you need to reconcile with?