



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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Have you ever been let down or hurt so badly by someone that just the thought of the incident creates a degree of stress? Many of us have been there, and perhaps I've opened old wounds just by reminding you of your hurt. We've all been hurt by someone, and most likely the person who hurt you the most was someone closest to you. Such hurts and pains remind us that it is better to put our trust in God than our confidence in men.

The Apostle Paul was no different. On one mission trip, he and his friend, Barnabas, traveled with a young man named John Mark. Before the trip had ended, however, John Mark had left the mission to return home. The reason could have been homesickness, being overwhelmed by the work, or countless other reasons. We are not told specifically why. We just know that he left the mission. When Paul and Barnabas prepared for a second mission trip, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along. Paul refused. Although about two years had passed, he still had reservations after the first mission with John Mark. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was so strong that Barnabas took John Mark and Paul went with Silas.

We all have been involved with a "John Mark" who may have deserted us when we needed them the most or perhaps let us down in some other way. Unfortunately, even among believers, the wounds don't always instantly heal. So what do we do with our John Marks? Let me offer some suggestions from the Word:

1. We may not be able to return the person who hurt us to the place of trust they once held; but we must never forget our eternal

debt to them, found in Romans 13:8. We are to *Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* Why is this debt so important to keep in mind? It is because of the truth found in love. Love covers a multitude of faults. We do not have to agree on every point to love. (In fact, love does not mean there will ever be complete agreement or reconciliation in broken relationships. If you have had a failed marriage, it would seem that the greatest good would be the restoration of that relationship; but realistically speaking, it may not occur.)



2. We must forgive the person who has let us down or wronged us! I believe that despite their differences, Paul forgave John Mark — and you must also forgive that person who has let you down or wronged you. If the disagreement was so strong about Mark returning to the mission with Paul, how do we know there was forgiveness? We know it be-

cause in 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul asks Timothy, who is at Ephesus, to come to him, pick up Mark by the way, and bring him along, because he says about Mark, *"he is profitable to me for the ministry."*

Maybe you're saying, "But my pain is so much greater than Paul's." Perhaps, but we know it is possible to show love and forgiveness when we see the ultimate manifestation of it in Luke 23:34. Here, the Son of God Himself said about those who had hung Him on the cross, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

Still can't do it? Then take the painful situation to God in prayer. He is experienced ... [Full Article](#)

WHEN YOUR VALENTINE GETS TURNED DOWN

We've all had conflicts from time to time. In many instances they involve friends and loved ones (you know, the people we typically favor with Valentines this time of year). Conflict has a way of turning the best of relationships sour. Just ask writer William Palmer. In the *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, Palmer described a conflict he had with a difficult neighbor.

When Mr. Palmer moved into his new house, he and his new neighbor got along just fine. They would smile broadly and wave when they saw each other in the driveway. There was no fence between their yards, and it appeared they would never need one.

The problems began when Palmer's children began stepping in dog droppings in their yard. They didn't own a dog, and their neighbor had two poodles. Palmer assumed they were the culprits, and Palmer brought up the delicate subject. The neighbor naturally denied the poodles were the problem. With Palmer's mind already made up, he stood his ground and refused to accept his neighbor's response. He thought there was absolutely no way the droppings could be from any other dogs in the neighborhood. Thus began a messy spiral of antagonism. Droppings were thrown from lot to lot. Angry words were exchanged. Signs were posted.

Eventually the dogs disappeared, but the damage had been done.

In Palmer's mind, the conflict reached its low point when another issue surfaced. One day he received a note from his hostile neighbor suggesting that the dead elm tree that stood squarely on the lot line between them should be cut down. Palmer didn't like the idea of splitting the costs involved and ignored the letter. A few months later he and his wife suddenly heard the sound of a chain saw outside. They looked out their window and watched the dead elm on the lot line as it was sawed vertically down the middle, leaving half of a grotesque dead elm standing on his property. He left it standing for a few years as a conversation piece, and then finally cut it down.

What might Mr. Palmer have done to prevent matters from escalating? What can we learn from his experience as we sort through our own conflicts?

Be Careful About Making Assumptions

Mr. Palmer immediately assumed the droppings in his yard were from his neighbor's dogs. This assumption led him to confront his neighbor about the problem. When Palmer's neighbor denied he was responsible, this led Palmer to believe he was being untruthful (with his first assumption as a premise), creating feelings of resentment which escalated the situation. Instead of assuming the worst, Palmer should have given his neighbor the benefit of the doubt until this was confirmed. Perhaps the droppings were from a stray

dog which had wandered into their yard. Because Palmer didn't know for sure, he should have waited until he had more evidence before he confronted his neighbor.

It is a good rule never to make an assumption based upon your first observation. Also, don't take a person's response personally. The person could be having a bad day or they may be dealing with a number of other issues. Instead of making an immediate assumption, give the other person the benefit of the doubt.

Strive for Peace Whenever Possible

Even if Mr. Palmer's assumptions were accurate, he should not have lowered himself to retaliate by throwing the droppings into his neighbor's yard. This obviously did nothing to resolve the matter. Furthermore, in the brief time which elapsed between his scooping up the droppings and launching them into the adjacent yard, Mr. Palmer suddenly became the antagonist. . . . [Full Article](#)



Contact Dr. Edwards if you would like to have him as your special guest.

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