

The background of the page is a photograph of a night sky. The Milky Way galaxy is visible, stretching diagonally from the upper left towards the lower right. The sky is filled with numerous stars. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of several ancient stone structures, possibly ruins or towers, are visible against the horizon. The overall tone is dark and atmospheric.

*From The Spirit Of Variance
Comes Controversy, Disagreement
Dissension And Discord*

The Word & Prayer

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Variance

Definition:

A difference that produces dispute or controversy; disagreement; dissension; or discord. Without a spirit of condescension, there will be an everlasting variance.

Without a whisperer, contention quiets down.

Proverbs 26:20

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.

Talking about every little irritation and piece of gossip only keeps the fires of anger going. Refusing to discuss those cuts the fuel line and makes the fires die out. Does someone continually irritate you? Decide not to complain about the person, and see if your irritation dies from lack of fuel.

There is jealousy and strife among you.

1 Corinthians 3:3

For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Paul called the Corinthians infants in the Christian life because they were not yet spiritually healthy and mature. The proof was that they quarreled like children, allowing divisions to distract them. Immature Christians are "worldly," controlled by their own desires; mature believers are in tune with

God's desires. How much influence do your desires have on your life? Your goal should be to let God's desires be yours. Being controlled by your own desires will stunt your growth.

Jesus is the bread of Life.

John 6:41-43

Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves.

Some of the people grumbled in disagreement because they could not accept Jesus' claim of divinity. They saw him only as a carpenter from Nazareth. They refused to believe that Jesus was God's divine Son, and they could not tolerate his message. Many people reject Christ because they say they cannot believe he is the Son of God. In reality, the demands that Christ makes for their loyalty and obedience are what they can't accept. So to protect themselves from the message, they reject the messenger.

Keep your eyes on those who cause division.

Romans 16:17

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

The fact that Andronicus and Junia were "highly respected among the apostles" could mean they had distinguished themselves as apostles. They may have been a husband and wife team.

Paul notes that they were "fellow Jews" who at one time had been in prison with him.

Do not wrangle about useless words.

2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

God worked through Paul and his companions to tell the Good News so that people could share in Christ's glory. It may seem strange that God works through us—fallible, unfaithful, untrustworthy human creatures. But he has given us the fantastic privilege of accomplishing his great mission—telling the world how to find salvation

Instruct men not to teach strange doctrines.

1 Timothy 1:3-4

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

Many leaders and authorities today demand allegiance, some of whom would even have us turn from Christ to follow them. When they seem to know the Bible, their influence can be dangerously subtle.

They are modern-day false teachers. How can you recognize false teachers?

(1) They teach what is contrary to the truth found in Scripture (1:3; 1:6, 7; 4:1-3).

(2) They promote trivial and divisive controversies instead of helping people come to Jesus (1:4).

(3) They aren't concerned about personal evidence of God's presence in their lives, spending their time on "meaningless discussions" instead (1:6).

(4) Their motivation is to make a name for themselves (1:7). To protect yourself from the deception of false teachers, learn what the Bible teaches and remain steadfast in your faith in Christ alone.

Cephas stood condemned.

Galatians 2:11

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

This was Antioch of Syria (distinguished from Antioch in Pisidia), a major trade center in the ancient world. Heavily populated by Greeks, it eventually became a strong Christian center. In Antioch the believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Antioch of Syria became the headquarters for the Gentile church and was Paul's base of operations.

The Judaizers accused Paul of watering down the Good News to make it easier for Gentiles to accept, while Paul accused the Judaizers of nullifying the truth of the Good News by adding conditions to it. The basis of salvation was the issue: Is salvation through Christ alone, or does it come through Christ *and* adherence to the law?

The argument came to a climax when Peter, Paul, the Judaizers, and some Gentile Christians all gathered together in Antioch to share a meal. Peter probably thought that by staying away from the Gentiles, he was promoting harmony—he did not want to offend James and the Jewish Christians. James had a very prominent position and presided over the Jerusalem council (Acts 15).

But Paul charged that Peter's action violated the Good News. By joining the Judaizers, Peter implicitly was supporting their claim that Christ was not sufficient for salvation. Compromise is an important element in getting along with others, but we should never compromise the truth of God's Word. If we feel we have to change our Christian beliefs to match those of our companions, we are on dangerous ground.

Although Peter was a leader of the church, he was acting like a hypocrite. He knew better, yet he was driven by fear of what James and the others would think. Proverbs 29:25 says, "Fearing people is a dangerous trap." Paul knew that he had to confront Peter before his actions damaged the church.

So, Paul publicly opposed Peter. Note, however, that Paul did not go to the other leaders, nor did he write letters to the churches telling them not to follow Peter's example. Instead, he opposed Peter face to face. Sometimes sincere Christians, even Christian leaders, make mistakes. And it may take other sincere Christians to get them back on track. If you are convinced that someone is doing harm to himself/herself or the church, try the direct approach. There is no place for backstabbing in the body of Christ.

The fool will quarrel.

Proverbs 20:3

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.

A person who is truly confident of his or her strength does not need to parade it. A truly brave person does not look for chances to prove it. A resourceful person can find a way out of a fight and avoid retaliating. Foolish people find it impossible to avoid strife. Men and women of character can. What kind of person are you?

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Make friends quickly with your opponent.

Matthew 5:25

"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

In Jesus' day, someone who couldn't pay a debt was thrown into prison until the debt was paid. Unless someone came to pay the debt for the prisoner, he or she would probably die there. It is practical advice to resolve our differences with our enemies before their anger causes more trouble (Proverbs 25:8-10). You may not get into a disagreement that takes you to court, but even small conflicts mend more easily if you try to make peace right away. In a broader sense, these verses advise us to get things right with our brothers and sisters before we have to stand before God.

Do not contend with a man without a cause.

Proverbs 3:30

Do not contend with a man without cause, if he has done you no harm.

Discord » The sowing of discord among brethren

Withholding good is inconsiderate and unfair, whether it is repaying a loan, returning a tool, or fulfilling a promise. Withholding destroys trust and creates a great inconvenience for the other person. Be as eager to do good as you are to have good done to you.

Seven things the Lord hates.

Proverbs 6:16-19

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

A proud look,

A lying tongue, and

Hands that shed innocent blood,

A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that speaketh lies, and

He that soweth discord among brethren.

Whether we buy or sell, make a product or offer a service, we know what is fair and honest and what is unfair and dishonest.

Sometimes we feel pressure to be dishonest in order to advance ourselves or gain more profit. But if we want to obey God, there is no middle ground: God demands honesty in every business transaction.

No amount of rationalizing can justify a dishonest business practice. Honesty and fairness are not always easy, but they are what God demands. Ask him for discernment and courage to be consistently honest and fair.

Prayer of deliverance:

Through heaven's door, The Blood of Jesus, I repent of the sin of variance. I denounce and cast out this evil spirit that is influencing my life and disturbing my peace of mind.

In the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. I command this spirit to leave and be cast into utter darkness never to return again.

Right now, I receive my deliverance from this spirit and receive God's peace. I pray in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, amen.