



LEADER'S NOTES

Never Alone

Acts 15:36-41 (NLT)

Purpose of the Session

To help group members process the pain of relational adversity, such as rejection, misunderstanding, or abandonment. This week centers on the story of John Mark—caught between Paul and Barnabas in **Acts 15**—and how God's grace and community can bring growth, healing, and restoration. The goal is to guide group members toward seeing adversity in relationships as an opportunity for transformation rather than isolation.

How to Use This Guide

Begin with prayer—invite God's presence into the conversation. Read the "Context for the Week" aloud or summarize it in your own words to frame the story of Mark and the tension between Paul and Barnabas. Allow group members to reflect on the Scripture readings, especially **Acts 15:36–41** and **2 Timothy 4:11**, to see the full story of in Mark's life.

Use the Sermon Reflection Questions to open hearts and draw on the key themes of the message. Then move through the five Discussion Questions, pausing for thoughtful sharing and application. The notes below will help you guide the group into deeper insight and connection.

Leader Notes for Discussion Questions

Question 1 – Relational Adversity

Encourage vulnerability here. Relational wounds often go deep, and Mark's experience can resonate strongly. Ask the group to describe what it might have felt like to have two mentors fight over your worth. Affirm that it's okay to feel hurt, confused, or isolated in such moments. Help members name the emotions that come with being misunderstood, left out, or even caught in conflict. This is a good place to normalize pain while pointing toward healing.

Question 2 – Choose God (instead of blaming)

This question pivots toward perspective and response. Explore how Mark could have chosen bitterness, but didn't. Help members reflect on their own reactions in similar situations—do they tend to blame others, God, or themselves? Draw attention to **Proverbs 4:23**—guarding the heart is about choosing spiritual health over resentment. Encourage the group to consider how they can actively choose God even when people disappoint them.

Question 3 – Know You Are Never Alone (instead of isolating)

Isolation is a common response to relational hurt. Use this moment to emphasize God's unchanging presence (**Hebrews 13:5**) and the power of prayer (**Philippians 4:6–7**). Invite the group to reflect on where they go when they feel rejected—toward God or away? This is a key point for spiritual growth. Mark didn't walk away from the faith, and that's a powerful lesson in resilience and dependence on God.

Question 4 – Find Support (instead of giving up)

Introduce this by highlighting Barnabas's role in Mark's life. Ask who has played that "Barnabas role" for group members in the past—someone who stood by them in tough seasons. Also ask who they could be a Barnabas to now. Emphasize the value of community and how it can help someone restore confidence and vision after pain. **Ecclesiastes 4:9–10** underlines this truth well.

Question 5 – Trusting God and Growing Through Relational Adversity

Close with hope. Mark's story didn't end in **Acts 15**—he reemerged as a valuable leader (**2 Timothy 4:11**). Ask your group where they've seen growth come from rejection. This is a chance to affirm that God uses even painful seasons to shape us. Encourage them to reflect on what God may be doing in their lives now through current or past relational adversity. It's not just about survival—it's about becoming more like Christ.

Closing Reflection and Prayer

Invite a moment of silence or journaling for group members to identify a relational wound or memory where they've felt rejected or misunderstood. Then, lead the group in a time of prayer, asking God for healing, restored relationships, resilience, and the courage to trust again. End with a reminder: we are never alone, even when relationships fail—God's grace never leaves us.