

-- We may find that, as events turn out, our perspective wasn't entirely accurate or what we thought best was even a possibility (19:29).

- Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27)

ESV **Genesis 27:41** Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob." ⁴² But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran ⁴⁴ and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away- ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him.

The matter had to do with Jacob receiving the **blessing** instead of Esau.

They couldn't agree on who should get their father's blessing.

The result of their disagreement was **anger** and family division.

Their disagreement existed in the context of lifelong disharmony (e.g. selfish grasping early on, stark personal differences, parental partial treatment, underhanded interpersonal behavior; cf. 25:19-34).

- A host of factors, including circumstances and people's affections and actions, can contribute greatly to the possibility of disagreements and to our handling of them proficiently or not.
- The results of a disagreement can be both what God intended and what may still be challenging to experience, all without the underlying cause and practical handling of it being commendable.

- Jacob's Sons and Shechem (Genesis 34)

ESV **Genesis 34:21** "These men are at peace with us; let them dwell in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters as wives, and let us give them our daughters. ²² Only on this condition will the men agree to dwell with us to become one people- when every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. ²³ Will not their livestock, their property and all their beasts be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will dwell with us."

The matter had to do with being **one people** by bearing the same mark.

They wanted agreement with Jacob, and they all did so together.

The result of their agreement was getting **killed** (and Jacob stinking).

Jacob's sons pursued this out of deceit for revenge, while they did so out of self-interest.

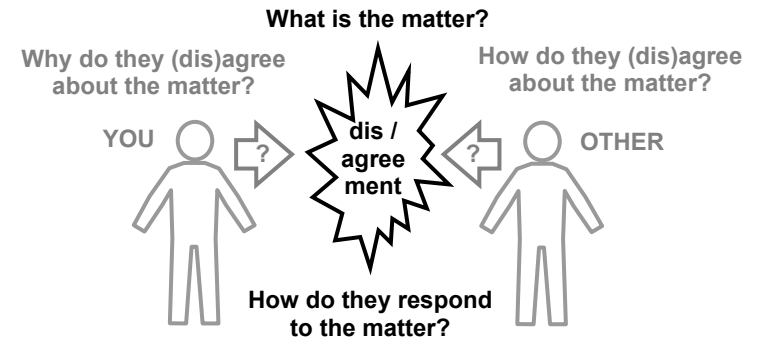
- People can agree on many things and even seek a degree of unity for all sorts of reasons and objectives, all while harboring ulterior motives that inevitably undercut relational harmony.
- The prospect of some provisional agreement, especially involving self-interested matters, can blind a person to the reality of what may be really going on.

Sunday, August 10, 2025
Danny Capon, *Pastor*

A Theology of Disagreement
No. 2 | The Old Testament and Disagreement, pt. 1
Selected Scriptures

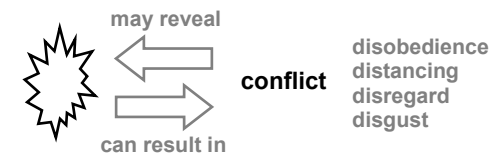
Review

A Theology of Disagreement



We can disagree about what **is** (reality).
We can disagree about what it **means** (interpretation).
We can disagree about what is **right** (righteous).
We can disagree about what is **best** (wisdom).
We can disagree about what we should **care** about (values).
We can disagree about what we should **want** (desires).
We can disagree about what we are **okay** with (submission).

- A disagreement is a situation in which two parties do not have the same opinion.
- A disagreement occurs, most observably, because no two parties are exactly the same and both parties are naturally morally corrupt.
- A disagreement may not initially be morally consequential or result in immoral conduct between two parties.
- A disagreement may also start out immorally by one or both parties, and proceed quickly to conflict or a range of other relationally-charged actions.



Is it possible to avoid disagreement? Should disagreement be avoided? Can two parties still work together while in disagreement? Is it ever prudent to avoid working together because of disagreement? Can two parties avoid sinning while in disagreement?

The Old Testament and Disagreement, pt. 1

What do we see in the Old Testament that may contribute to our understanding of disagreement and our handling of disagreement?

Disagreement in Genesis

Early Foundations and Expressions

Foundations

- Genesis 1-2 = All of God's "very good" creation is full of **difference** and **harmony**.
- Genesis 3 = Because "sin came into the world," though God's creation is still full of **difference**, it is now **corrupt**.

Disagreement operates between virtually all parties:

- a person **disagrees** with God (3:6)
- people are united in **disagreeing** with God (3:6)
- a person **disagrees** with another person (3:12)
- God **disagrees** with persons and people (3:16, 17-19)

Expressions

- Genesis 3:1-24 | disagreement = disobedience

The disagreement was between Adam and Eve and God.
The disagreement was over eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—God had said, "No!" they by eating said, "Yes!"

Why did they disobey and eat the fruit?

- They didn't agree with God's way and words.
- They wanted it.

- Genesis 4:1-16 | disagreement = murder

The disagreement was between Cain and Abel (and God).
The disagreement was over God's regard for Abel's offering—they brought different offerings, and God regarded Abel's, not Cain's.

Why did he murder his brother?

- He was angry.
- He rejected God's word.

- Genesis 4:17-6:22 | disagreement = violence

The disagreements were between people (and God).

The disagreements were over revenge (Lamech, 4:23-24) and general evil desires towards one another (man's heart, 6:1-5, 11-13)—they disagreed over how they ought to be treated.

- Genesis 11:1-9 | (wrong) agreement = independence (from God)

The agreement was between people.

The agreement was over staying together and making a name for themselves—God had commanded them to fill the earth and honor him and his word, but they wanted to be united apart from him.

Through the Life of the Patriarchs

- **Abram and Lot** (Genesis 13)

^{ESV} **Genesis 13:5** And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶ so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷ and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.

The matter had to do with **sharing** the land between Abram and Lot.

Both of their herdsmen couldn't agree on how to share the land.

The result of their disagreement was **strife** between the herdsmen.

Abram ended up functioning as a peacemaker between the two parties.

- Sometimes separation (v. 9), while unfortunate, is the most strategic course of action to avoid further, unnecessary strife between parties.
- At the same time, while separation may prove to be the most strategic, it may also reveal underlying, existing competing affections (vv. 11-13)

- **Abraham and God** (Genesis 18)

^{ESV} **Genesis 18:23** Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

The matter had to do with God **sweeping away** the entire city of Sodom.

Abraham didn't necessarily agree with God on the extent or timing of Sodom's destruction.

The result of his disagreement with God was **arguing** with him to adjust how or when Sodom would be destroyed.

Abraham ended up functioning as an intercessor on behalf of Lot.

- We can at times, given our limited knowledge and wisdom, project on God, his intent and actions, what may not be true or fair (v. 23).