

Devotion 2 May (HBL)

Collaboration: I manage disagreements that arise when working with others.

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

(2 Tim 2:23)

'Vs' verses 'And'

It's easy to think that the Bible only holds stories of people who are 'goody-two-shoes'. But right from the beginning in the book of Genesis, there are records of disputes among God's people: sibling rivalry between Cain and Abel, brothers Esau and Jacob, Abraham and his nephew Lot, as well as Joseph and his brothers. When these quarrels were not managed well, it brought about detrimental outcomes which included distrust, separation and even death.

These were not pleasing to God and it greatly saddened Him.

Fortunately, there are also records of disagreements in the Bible that were handled slightly better by those involved. Apostles Peter and Paul were one such example. During the days of their ministry to the early Church, these two faithful followers of Jesus came to disagree on some things they knew of Jesus and His saving grace. This led to quite a public rebuke of one another. But in the end, they set aside their differences in opinions, with one of them calling the other 'beloved brother' (2 Peter 3:15). Both went on to do great things for God - bringing God's salvation to many around them.

As Paul advised young Timothy later: "*Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.*" (2 Tim 2:23), Paul is advocating for a 'Peter and Paul' collaboration, rather than a 'Peter vs Paul' division. This pleases and honours God.

Whether at school or at home, how many times have you faced some form of disagreements with those you interact and work with? Did you quarrel over how you thought a project should be done? Or perhaps your opinions were not sought after? Did your parents make you share something with your siblings and which you refused to?

When situations like these occur again, how are you able to set aside your preferences, put others first and manage disagreements that arise?

Will you strive for a 'you and me' collaboration, rather than a 'you vs me' division?

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit - You are perfect and never in dispute of the Other. Thank you for showing us through the Trinity how collaboration and love look like. Help us at each opportunity to choose collaboration over our own selfish preferences. We pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.