

Life Group Discussion Questions

Acts 15:22-41

(vv. 22–35)

Why was it so important for the Jerusalem church to send an official letter and trusted men (Judas and Silas) rather than just letting Paul report back on his own?

The four prohibitions (food sacrificed to idols, blood, strangled meat, sexual immorality) don't help save a person but show grace to fellow believers. How do these instructions balance Christian freedom with loving sensitivity to others' consciences?

What parallels can you think of today where believers may technically have freedom in Christ, yet love would call them to limit that freedom for the sake of weaker brothers and sisters (for example, in areas like entertainment, alcohol, or cultural practices)?

(vv. 36–39)

Paul and Barnabas had a “sharp disagreement” over John Mark that led to separation. Why might Paul, from his perspective, have felt it was unwise to take Mark again (see his earlier desertion in Acts 13:13)? Why might Barnabas, the “son of encouragement,” have felt strongly about giving Mark another chance? (Note that they were cousins)

What does this incident teach us about the reality that even mature, godly believers can have serious disagreements? How might this help you adjust your expectations of Christian leaders and friends?

Do you think one of them was clearly “right,” or do you see this as a clash of different spiritual priorities (dependability vs. restoration)? How does the rest of the New Testament (for example, Paul later calling Mark “useful”) affect your view of this disagreement?

Have you ever experienced a painful disagreement with another believer? Looking back, what do you think you handled well, and what would you do differently now in light of Acts 15?

Handling Conflict in a Christlike Way

Compare how the church handled the doctrinal conflict with the Judaizers and how Paul and Barnabas handled their personal disagreement. What differences do you see between the two?

What biblical principles would you bring to bear when you find yourself in a sharp disagreement with another Christian (for example, humility, gentle speech, listening, seeking counsel, prioritizing the gospel, willingness to forgive)? Which of these is hardest for you in the moment of conflict?

Look at these key principles for conflict resolution

1. Approach with Prayer and Humility

Phil 2:3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Before engaging another person, we need to pray for the right mindset and heart.

2. Seek Direct and Honest Communication

Matthew 18:15, "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

Eye-to-eye communication done in a private often reduces misunderstandings.

By sharing concerns directly and calmly, individuals can avoid gossip and clarify issues.

3. Involve Witnesses If Necessary

Matthew 18:16 But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. This step brings additional perspective, helping ensure fair treatment and accountability. It is designed to preserve truth and protect both sides from false claims or emotional biases.

4. Prioritize Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Forgiveness prevents bitterness from taking root and provides a path to genuine restoration.

5. Practice Love and Patience

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. Patience and kindness de-escalate tension and illuminate the value of the other person even in the midst of disagreement.

6. Strive for Peace and Unity

Romans 12:18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

While not all disagreements end in full agreement, believers are called to strive for peace as much as they can.

Of these 6 steps which one is the easiest for you? Which one is the hardest? Why?

How can we guard our hearts from bitterness and gossip when we become aware of disagreements or separations between Christian leaders we respect? What does it look like to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" even when we do not know all the details?

(vv. 39–41)

Even though this disagreement was painful, God used it so that two missionary teams went out instead of one (Paul with Silas, Barnabas with Mark). How does this encourage you about God's sovereignty over messy situations in the church and in your own life?

Think of a conflict in your past. Can you now see any ways God brought good out of that situation—growth, new ministry opportunities, deeper humility, restored relationships?

What is one way these verses challenge you?

Is there anyone you need to talk to, forgive, or seek reconciliation with? What would be a first step of obedience this week?