

Life Group Discussion Questions

3-15-26

Read Acts 15:1-5

What are some modern “Jesus-plus” messages you’ve heard (Jesus plus baptism, denomination, politics, certain lifestyle markers, etc.)? How do they subtly creep into evangelical churches?

Paul and Barnabas argued vehemently (v. 2). When is it right for believers today to strongly confront false teaching, and when are we too quick to fight over lesser issues?

The church in Antioch sends Paul, Barnabas, and others to Jerusalem for counsel (v. 2–3). What does this teach us about seeking wise, broader counsel when our local church faces doctrinal conflict?

What additional requirements were the Pharisees putting on the Gentiles in order to be saved?

Why was this such a big issue for the church?

How can we discern the difference between a core gospel issue (like in Acts 15) and a secondary preference where we should show liberty and patience?

Read Acts 15:6-12

In verse 9 Peter says God “made no distinction” between Jewish and Gentile believers. Where do we today still tend to make unbiblical distinctions between believers (race, class, culture, education, worship style)?

Peter calls the law a “yoke...that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (v. 10). In what ways do Christians still try to put heavy “yokes” on others—or on themselves—today?

Verse 11 is a key statement: “We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”

What does it mean that grace is undeserved?

How would you explain this verse to someone who is trusting in being a “good person” to be saved?

The whole assembly listens to Paul and Barnabas report what God had done among the Gentiles (v. 12). What does this show about the value of testimonies and paying attention to God’s work today?

Read Acts 15:15-21

James interprets the situation by going to Scripture (vv. 15–18). How does this model a healthy way to settle disagreements in the church with clear biblical teaching?

How can we, in our church context, make sure that we deal with hard questions and issues with Scripture and not just tradition, personal opinion, feelings or majority vote?

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James quotes the prophets to show that God always intended to save the Gentiles (vv. 16–17). How does seeing God’s long-term plan for the nations increase your confidence in his sovereignty and mission today?

What are some ways churches today unintentionally “make it difficult” for people who are turning to God?

What principles for Christian freedom and loving restraint can we draw from these verses when it comes to gray areas (alcohol, entertainment, dress, etc.)?

How are some ways you have or could personally limit your own freedoms in love so that others might be helped rather than hindered in coming to Christ?

How could vs 20-21 help us in being sensitive to the conscience of others when we live and minister in other cultures?

If James were writing to our church today with the same heart—to preserve the gospel and promote fellowship—what kinds of “essentials” and “courtesies” might he encourage us to practice?

How does Acts 15 help you explain to an unbelieving friend that Christianity is not about “cleaning up your life first,” but about coming to Jesus by faith and then being changed?

As a group, what can you do practically to become a community where outsiders sense that the path to God is clear—repentance and faith in Christ alone—and not cluttered with cultural or traditional barriers?

What can you take away from these verses to apply in your life this week?