

January 25, 2026

Study Guide

Acts 13–20 – *Mission Possible*

Acts 15:1–35 — *Grace in the Middle of Disagreement*

Big Idea:

Disagreements don't have to divide the church. When we lean into Jesus, listen well, and cling to grace, even conflict can move the mission of God forward.

Opening Reflection

1. Think about a time you experienced disagreement in a church setting.
 - What was the issue about?
 - How was it handled?
 - What was the outcome?
2. Why do disagreements—especially theological or cultural ones—feel so threatening in church communities?

The Question: Faith Alone or Faith Plus? (Acts 15:1–5)

3. What concern do the men from Judea bring to Antioch?
4. Why would circumcision have seemed *reasonable* or even *necessary* to Jewish believers?
5. According to verses 1 and 5, what is ultimately at stake in this disagreement?
6. How does this same question still show up in churches today?
 - What kinds of “add-ons” to faith in Jesus do we sometimes expect?
7. Why is the difference between “**works as evidence of faith**” and “**works as a requirement for salvation**” so important?

The Testimony: Listening to God at Work (Acts 15:6–12)

Peter’s Testimony

8. How does Peter describe God’s work among the Gentiles? (vv. 7–9)
9. What strong statement does Peter make in verses 10–11 about grace and the Law?
10. Read **Galatians 2:11–14**.
 - What does Peter’s willingness to speak up here teach us about humility and repentance in leadership?

Barnabas and Paul’s Testimony

11. Why is it significant that Barnabas speaks before Paul?
12. What role do stories and testimonies of God’s work play in resolving disagreement within the church?

The Verdict: Unity Without Uniformity (Acts 15:13–21)

13. What is James's final decision in verse 19? Why is that statement so important?
14. How does James use Scripture (Amos 9:11–12) to support the decision?
15. Why does James still give instructions about certain behaviors if salvation is by grace alone?
16. How do these instructions balance **freedom in Christ** with **love for fellow believers**?
17. What does this teach us about handling secondary or cultural issues in the church?

Our Question: Examining Our Hearts

18. Do you believe—practically, not just theologically—that faith in Jesus alone is enough for salvation?
19. How do your expectations of others reveal what you really believe about grace?
20. How would you honestly respond in these situations?
 - A new believer whose lifestyle or appearance makes you uncomfortable
 - Someone with political views very different from yours but genuine curiosity about Jesus
 - A person with a complicated moral past who experiences a radical conversion
21. Reflect on this question:
“Is my moral agenda ever greater than my Gospel agenda?”

Our Answer: Living Out Grace

22. What does it look like to be a church that is clear on truth but rich in grace?
23. Why is grace *not* an excuse for sin, but still the only means by which sinners are saved?
24. How does Peter's statement in Acts 15:11 summarize the heart of the Gospel?
25. C.S. Lewis said grace is the most distinctive element of Christianity.
 - Why do you think grace is so easily lost or blurred in church life today?

Closing Application

26. What is one way God may be calling you to:
 - Lean in rather than pull away
 - Listen rather than react
 - Extend grace rather than demand conformity
27. How can your life make it **easier—not harder—for people to turn to God?**