

In what areas of your life have you confused what is comfortable with what is correct, and how might this be affecting your relationship with God?

What cultural practices or preferences have you unknowingly added to the gospel message, making it a heavier burden for others to carry?

How can we discern between essential gospel truths and non-essential cultural expressions when sharing our faith with others?

Peter testified to what God was doing rather than his own opinions or preferences. When have you witnessed God working in ways that challenged your expectations or comfort?

The council in Acts 15 studied Scripture together rather than individually. How does reading and interpreting the Bible in community help us avoid blind spots in our understanding?

What does it mean that we are saved by the same grace rather than by worshiping the same way, and how should this shape our attitudes toward Christians from different backgrounds?

How can the church maintain internal harmony among diverse believers while remaining appropriately dissonant with the surrounding culture?

James concluded that Gentiles did not need to become Jews but both groups needed to reject idolatry and show compassion. What modern equivalents of this principle should guide our church communities today?

In what ways might you be requiring others to follow Jesus in a manner that makes you comfortable rather than simply pointing them to the grace of Christ?

How can we make the gospel as accessible as God himself has made it without compromising the truth or adding unnecessary requirements?

5-Day Devotional: Playing the Melody of Grace

Day 1: The Melody God Is Playing

Reading: Acts 15:6-11

Devotional: Peter's testimony reminds us that God is always at work, often in ways that challenge our expectations. He didn't ask the early church what they thought should

happen—He showed them what He was already doing. The question for us today is: Are we listening? God's grace is the primary melody, and sometimes we're so focused on our own preferences that we miss His beautiful composition. Take time today to ask God to help you see where He's working, even in unexpected places. Listen for His melody before adding your own notes. God's grace makes no distinction—He cleanses hearts by faith alone, and that truth should fill us with wonder and humility.

Day 2: Checking the Sheet Music

Reading: Amos 9:11-12; Isaiah 45:20-23

Devotional: James didn't settle the dispute with his opinion—he opened the Scriptures. The prophets had already declared that God's restoration plan included all nations coming to Him as they are, not by conforming to one culture but by receiving the same grace. This teaches us that personal experience must align with God's Word. We need both: testimony of what God is doing and the truth of what God has said. When these harmonize, we find clarity. Today, consider: Am I interpreting my experiences through Scripture, or am I interpreting Scripture through my experiences? Let God's Word be the standard that tunes your heart to His purposes.

Day 3: Laying Down the Backpack

Reading: Galatians 5:1-6

Devotional: Paul echoes Acts 15 when he warns against adding burdens to the gospel. Christ has set us free—not free to do whatever we want, but free from the crushing weight of earning God's favor through performance. What are you carrying in your gospel backpack? Politics? Preferences? Religious performance? Cultural expectations? These things aren't necessarily bad, but when they become requirements for following Jesus, they obscure grace. The only thing that counts is "faith working through love." Today, prayerfully examine what you've added to Jesus. Ask God to help you distinguish between the essential melody of grace and the cultural instruments that can play it without becoming it.

Day 4: Harmony Within, Dissonance Without

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16

Devotional: The early church discovered that unity doesn't mean uniformity. Different people, languages, and preferences can all play the same song of grace. But this harmony within the church creates a beautiful dissonance with the world. We're called to "maintain the unity of the Spirit" while rejecting idolatry and selfish living. To unbelievers, our lives might smell like death—a reminder of what they're running from. To those being saved, we're the fragrance of life. Don't be discouraged when following Jesus makes you feel different. That's the point. Today, ask: Am I pursuing harmony with other believers even when they're different from me? Am I willing to be dissonant with the culture for the sake of Christ?

Day 5: One Lord, One Faith, One Symphony

Reading: Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional: God doesn't want a solo performance—He's composing a symphony. Every believer is a different instrument with a unique part to play, but we're all performing the same masterpiece of grace. When we play together, we create something far more beautiful than any of us could alone. This requires humility, listening, and sometimes laying aside our preferences for the sake of unity. The result? Joy, encouragement, and strength—exactly what Acts 15 describes. Today, consider how you can contribute to the harmony of your church family. Are you playing your part faithfully? Are you listening to others? Remember: we understand Scripture better together than alone. Let's tune our lives to the melody of grace and play it beautifully, together.