

Reflecting on Acts 15

Study and Discussion Questions | August 28, 2022

Introduction: In Acts 15, members of the early church, particularly those of Jewish heritage, struggle to define the gospel apart from the observance of the law. Later on, Paul and Barnabas have a strong disagreement about John Mark's usefulness for ministry. In short, Luke presents us with case studies in confession and even conflict. Here is a summary of the lessons we learn from these stories:

Gospel grace is the foundation of our fellowship with God and one another.

1. **Read Acts 15:1-11.** In these verses, we find two groups of professing Christians divided on the definition of the gospel. Use this passage to answer the following questions from Pastor Tony Merida:

- Why do people have a difficult time embracing the gospel of grace?

Question continues on the next page.

- What “Jesus-plus” gospels have you heard taught? How might this passage help you formulate a response to these arguments?

- See verses 13-22a. Why is the use of Scripture important for mediating conflict?

2. **Read Acts 13:13; 15:36-41 and 2 Timothy 4:11.** One commentator assesses the conflict in Acts 15 in the following way: “Our judgment goes with Paul, but our hearts go with Barnabas.” Perhaps we could describe Paul’s perspective on John Mark as more “letter of the law” while Barnabas (known for his encouragement – Acts 4:36; 11:22-25) tends more toward the “spirit of the law.”

Question continues on the next page.

