

- How can we distinguish between theological convictions worth dividing over and personal preferences that should be surrendered for the sake of unity in the body of Christ?
- In what ways does the early church's handling of the circumcision controversy in Acts 15 provide a model for how modern churches should address theological disagreements?
- What does Peter's statement that we are saved by grace rather than by keeping the law reveal about the foundation of our relationship with God, and how does this challenge legalistic tendencies in our faith communities?
- How can we cultivate the practice of charitable listening in our church relationships, especially when we disagree strongly with someone's theological position or ministry preference?
- What role should personal testimony and experience play in theological discussions, as demonstrated by Paul and Barnabas sharing about the Gentile conversions, and how do we balance this with scriptural authority?
- How do we determine whether something that makes us uncomfortable in church is a matter of personal preference or a legitimate concern that needs to be addressed?
- In what ways might we be adding unnecessary requirements to the gospel message, similar to the circumcision requirement, that create barriers for people coming to faith in Christ?
- How does the concept of theological triage help us prioritize our energy and passion for the issues that truly matter while extending grace on secondary matters?
- What does it mean practically to value our relationships in the church more than being right, and how can we demonstrate this in our interactions with fellow believers?
- How can the priesthood of all believers shape the way we approach God in prayer, confession, and worship, and what freedoms does this doctrine provide that we might be taking for granted?

Unity in the Midst of Disagreement

Day 1: The Grace That Saves Us

Reading: Acts 15:1-11

Devotional: Peter's words echo through the centuries: "It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are saved." How often do we complicate the simple beauty of salvation? The early church faced pressure to add requirements—circumcision, following Jewish customs—to God's free gift. But grace means we cannot earn what Christ freely offers. Today, reflect on areas where you might be adding "works" to your faith. Are you trying to earn God's love through performance? Remember, you are saved by grace alone. Let this truth liberate you from religious striving and lead you into grateful worship. Grace is sufficient. Grace is enough. Grace is everything.

Day 2: Listening with Charity

Reading: James 1:19-27

Devotional: "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry." The early church's ability to navigate disagreement hinged on charitable listening. They didn't interrupt, didn't formulate responses while others spoke, didn't assume the worst motives. Instead, they created space for testimony, Scripture, and the Spirit's leading. Consider your relationships today—in your family, your church, your workplace. Are you truly hearing others, or simply waiting for your turn to talk? Charitable listening assumes the best about others' motives and seeks understanding before judgment. This week, practice being fully present when someone speaks. Put down your phone. Make eye contact. Listen as Christ listens to you—with patience, grace, and love.

Day 3: What's Worth Fighting For?

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11

Devotional: Not every hill is worth dying on. Paul urges the Philippians toward unity, humility, and considering others above themselves. The early church distinguished between essential gospel truths and personal preferences. They fought fiercely for the resurrection, the deity of Christ, salvation by grace. But they showed flexibility on cultural practices that didn't compromise the gospel. Today, examine your recent conflicts. Are you contending for core Christian truth, or defending personal preference? Jesus emptied Himself and took on human form—the ultimate act of setting aside personal rights for a greater purpose. When we confuse our preferences with God's commands, we create unnecessary division. Ask God for wisdom to know the difference between tier-one gospel issues and tier-four cultural preferences.

Day 4: The Ministry of Reconciliation

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Devotional: God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. In Christ, barriers fall—Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. The early church's decision to welcome Gentiles without requiring Jewish customs was revolutionary. It declared that in Christ, we are one. Today, who are the "Gentiles" in your life—those different from you whom God is calling you to embrace? Perhaps it's someone from a different generation, political perspective, or cultural background. God's reconciling work through Christ breaks down walls we build. We are ambassadors of this reconciliation, called to extend the same radical welcome Christ extended to us. Where is God asking you to tear down a wall today? Whom is He calling you to embrace with the same grace you've received?

Day 5: Unity in Diversity

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts." Imagine if every church member thought exactly alike, worshiped identically, and approached faith the same way. How boring! God designed His church with beautiful diversity—different gifts, perspectives, and expressions of faith. The early church's unity didn't mean uniformity. They agreed on essentials while allowing freedom in non-essentials. Today, celebrate the diversity in your church family. That person who worships differently than you? They're reflecting another facet of God's glory. The generation that prefers different music? They're bringing their unique offering. Unity doesn't require sameness; it requires love. As you gather with God's people, look for ways to appreciate differences rather than merely tolerate them. In our diversity, we more fully reflect the multifaceted wisdom of our Creator.

As you complete this devotional journey, remember: contend vigorously for the gospel, and show abundant grace in everything else. May the unity of the Spirit bind us together in love.