

Acts 15 Discussion Guide

General Discussion Questions:

- What statement or illustration from the message stuck out to you and why?
- What attributes of God were on display in the passage?
- What encouraged you?
- What point of action/application did you walk away with?

Topics for Discussion:

- The Early Church
- The Jerusalem Council
- The Gospel
- Grace Alone
- Pride, Prejudice, & Division

Discussion Questions:

? - In what ways has controversy help to clarify/ purify the church ?

? – What is the Gospel?

? – What is NOT? Describe some false views regarding justification.

? - What is the problem with being saved by (Justified) by the law?

Discuss: Grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!

“To add anything to Christ as being necessary to salvation, say circumcision or any human work of any kind, is to deny that Christ is the complete Savior, is to put something human on a par with him, yea to make it the crowning point. That is fatal. A bridge to heaven that is built of 99/100 of Christ and even only 1/100 of anything human breaks down at the joint and ceases to be a bridge.” – R.C.H. Lenski

Paul wrote: “The one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (**Rom. 4:5**) and “man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law (**Rom. 3:28**). The Bible clearly states over and over again that works are unable to secure salvation.

“By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (**Rom. 3:20, 10:1-4; Gal. 2:16**). Salvation is “not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness” (**Titus 3:5**). God saved us “not according to our works” (**2 Tim. 1:9**). Salvation is based entirely on God’s doing so “that no man should boast before God” (**1 Cor. 1:29; Rom. 4:2**).

The total cleansing of our sins was performed by the one-time sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross! (**Gal. 2:1-11; 1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:1-11; Romans 8:1**). Dustin said the morning “Jesus kept the law, but still suffered under the weight of it!”

Remember, Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise!” (Luke 23:43).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness” (**1 John 1:9**). “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life” (**John 5:24**).

- **Romans 3:20-25, 28; 4:2-5; 10:1-4, 9-10; 11:6 - Galatians 3:10-11 - Ephesians 2:8-9 - Philippians 3:8-9 - 2 Timothy 1:9 - Titus 3:5**

Throughout its history, the church’s leaders have met to settle doctrinal issues. Historians point to 7 ecumenical councils in the church’s early history, especially the Councils of Nicea (a.d. 325) and Chalcedon (a.d. 451). Yet the most important council was the first one—the Jerusalem Council—because it established the answer to the most vital doctrinal question of all: “What must a person do to be saved?” The apostles and elders defied efforts to impose legalism and ritualism as necessary prerequisites for salvation. They forever affirmed that salvation is totally by grace through faith in Christ alone. – Mac. Study Bible

? - Why did Dustin say, “when the Gospel is at stake, we fight!”?

? - How are the two conflicts in Acts 15 different!?

? - What principles for conflict resolution among believers do you see in chapter 15? Which ones can you use this week? How?

In regard to the conflict over John Mark, notice:

In both cases God’s work was extended and the new teams evidently were both very effective. Barnabas was able to recover and rebuild the life of Mark whom Paul later referred to as one whom he appreciated (cf. Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11). In the meantime, Paul was able to develop the qualities which he had observed in Silas.

The Lord of the church must be seen as sovereignly operating over and above the affairs, and even the disputes, of men.¹

? - Look at Romans 12:18 where Paul instructs us, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18).

? - Read Romans 12:9-21. What five principles can be applied when you have been offended.

? - List the three principles from Ephesians 4:25-32 for restoring peace in a damaged relationship.

RESOURCES:

<https://www.challies.com/articles/the-beginner%E2%80%99s-guide-to-conflict-resolution/>

conflict resolution insights:

1. Anger must be expressed only in ways acceptable according to the Word.
2. Forgiveness must be based upon the example of God’s forgiving us.
3. The power of the tongue must be recognized and restrained.
4. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential in order to demonstrate Christ-like character.
5. True biblical love requires sacrificial living.

¹ Edward E. Hindson and Woodrow Michael Kroll, eds., [*KJV Bible Commentary*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 2170.