

## 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:

? - Describe the conflict that threatened to tear apart the early church?

? – Considering Acts 15:1 - What other things do people put in the blank : Unless you are \_\_\_\_\_ you cannot be saved... (What are some of the common, modern-day misconceptions about salvation? In what human elements do many people trust to save them?)

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**). 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**).

*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*

? - How did the events of the Jerusalem Council unfold?

? - What decisions were eventually reached? How/Why did the leaders reach their decision?

? - What were the restrictions James placed upon the Gentile believers? What reason did he have for placing any restrictions on a believer? List some hypothetical examples of how you might apply James’ restrictions in a contemporary situation.

? - Do the restrictions of verses 28–29 refer to salvation or fellowship? Read Romans 14:14–21. How does legalism differ from voluntary self-restriction due to the law of love?