



EXPAND

Acts 13-28

Conflict Management

Acts 15:6-35

A. THE PROBLEM IN ANTIOCH (15:1-5)

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. Romans 16:17

B. THE UNITY IN JERUSALEM(15:6-18)

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! Psalm 133:1

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14

C. THE SOLUTION (15:19-30)

... eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

D. THE RESPONSE - MOMENTUM (15:31-35)

... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:15-16

Discussion Questions

1. Read Acts 15:1-5. What was the major problem with the Judaizers demand for new believers found in these verses? Discuss.
2. Read Acts 15:6-18. This is the second major meeting of the church found in Acts. What are some major observations from the meeting? What can we learn from their process, attitudes, and unity?
3. Read Acts 15:19-30. What goal does James have when he speaks to the church, apostles, and elders concerning the issue they were discussing? What is the tone of James' comments?
4. Read Acts 15:31-35. What type of response do we see to the letter sent by the leaders of the church to the people in Antioch? What does their reaction teach us about spirit-led leadership in the church? Discuss.
5. How do the meeting in Acts 15 and the verses found in the outline encourage and challenge us as the body of Christ?
6. Pray together for unity in our relationships and the body of Christ as we walk together encouraging, discipling, and loving each other, as we reach the world for Christ.

Acts 15:6-35: The **apostles and the elders** were gathered together to consider this matter. ⁷ And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, ⁹ and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

¹² And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, (Amos 15:16f) ¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name (Isaiah 43:7; Jeremiah 14:9, Daniel 9:19), says the Lord, who makes these things ¹⁸ known from of old."

¹⁹ Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰ but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. ²¹ For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, ²³ with the following letter: "**The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.** ²⁴ Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, ²⁵ it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: ²⁹ that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

³⁰ So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. ³¹ And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. ³² And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. ³³ And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.



L.I.F.E. Group Leader's Guide

Main Idea: When conflict emerges in our lives how do we react? What principles can we learn personally and as the body of Christ from the apostles and elders as we watch them deal with conflict in the church?

Looking Back: Last week we focused on the miracle of Peter's escape from his incarceration and eventual appearance to the church praying with passion for his escape. If it wasn't for Rosebud's answering Peter's knocking at the gate, and Peter's continued knocking as she debated with the people praying about what she had seen, they may have missed the miracle that was standing right outside the gate. Did you see any miracles in your life and the lives of others this week?

Study Question #1: Read Acts 15:1-5. What was the major problem with the Judaizers demand for new believers found in these verses? Discuss.

WHY DID SOME STILL INSIST ON CIRCUMCISION? (15:1)

Centuries of religious training caused many to have a well-entrenched interpretation of Old Testament law. Though many Jews accepted Jesus as the Messiah, they still found it difficult to abandon what they had always believed. They saw Jesus' ministry as a supplement to, rather than a fulfillment of, Old Testament law (Mt 5:17). In their view, circumcision remained essential for a relationship with God. Paul's letter to the Galatians addressed this error. (Truthquest Study Bible)

Study Question #2: Read Acts 15:6-18. This is the second major meeting of the church found in Acts. What are some major observations from the meeting? What can we learn from their process, attitudes, and unity?

- **UNIFIED FOCUS** Key leaders were present and attentive - Apostles and Elders (6)
- **DIVERSE OPINIONS WERE SHARED** Leaders felt comfortable disagreeing about how to deal with the situation (7a)
- **EMPOWERED LEADERS STEPPED UP AND PROVIDED INSIGHT AND A SOLUTION**
 1. Peter's suggested change to the way the church does things amounts to a paradigm shift in both thought and belief. He persuades leaders to change by convincingly communicating what God is doing. Peter sees the need for change before others do. His perception, coupled with his credibility, keeps the church moving forward.(7-11)
 2. Paul and Barnabas shared their report about their success reaching the gentiles (12-13)
 3. James proposes a solution, a letter is developed, and a delegation is sent with a letter to be read to the Christians in Antioch (14-21)



Study Question #3: Read Acts 15:19-30. What goal does James have when he speaks to the church, apostles, and elders concerning the issue they were discussing? What is the tone of James' comments?

Goal: Unity in the church

Tone: Biblically Driven Truth, Humility, and Compassion

Through one document the Jerusalem church liberated Christians everywhere of terrible burdens and potential guilt laid on them by Jewish law. They exercised their influence and changed the course of church history. Power isn't always evil. The Jerusalem Council exercised positive influence on its generation; so can we. (Maxwell Study Bible)

Study Question #4: Read Acts 15:31-35. What type of response do we see to the letter sent by the leaders of the church to the people in Antioch? What does their reaction teach us about spirit-led leadership in the church? Discuss.

Study Question #5: How do the meeting in Acts 15 and the verses found in the outline encourage and challenge us as the body of Christ to handle conflict when it emerges in our relationships?

Praying Together: Pray together for unity in our relationships and the body of Christ as we walk together encouraging, discipling, and loving each other, as we reach the world for Christ.

Mission Challenge (Application): Email or text a leader in the church and let them know how much you appreciate their service in the church. Remind them that God is using them as an encourager as they use their leadership gifts for His glory.

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS (CRU)

- 1) What does this passage tell you about God and His Character?
- 2) What does this passage tell you about People?
- 3) What does this passage tell you about His relationship with people?
- 4) How might the Holy Spirit be prompting you to live differently?

