

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 24, 2007

Passage: Acts 15:1-35

Memory Passage: Galatians 2:21

**TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 15:1-5.** What conflict arose in the church at Antioch? Where did this conflict come from?
- (b) How did Paul and Barnabas respond to these teachers? Why was this so serious (Galatians 1:6-10)?
- (c) According to Paul, what would he consider the heart of the gospel message (Galatians 2:16-21)?
- (d) Why did they go to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-2)? How did the church in Jerusalem respond to Paul and Barnabas's report?
- (e) How was the issue of Christian liberty part of their concern (Acts 15:5 and Galatians 2:4; Galatians 5:1)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 15:1-5 and Galatians 2:21. What is the heart of the gospel message? How does adding anything to it really take away from it? Does true salvation require any works to be saved? Does it require any works to stay saved? What is the one essential in the gospel? Thank God that His grace completely saves all who believe.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 15:6-11.** How does Luke describe the initial discussions about this matter (Acts 15:7)?
- (b) What proof did he give that God had accepted the Gentiles solely on the basis of their faith?
- (c) How did God “purify their hearts” (Acts 13:38-39; Hebrews 9:13-14)? How does Paul emphasize this in Galatians 3:2?
- (d) What did Peter remind the Jewish believers about the law (Acts 15:10; Matthew 23:4)? Is anyone able to be justified by keeping the law? Explain (Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 2:16)? How were they “testing God” by adding to the gospel?
- (e) How did Peter say people are saved (Acts 15:11; Ephesians 2:7-9; Titus 3:4-7)? Why didn't Peter say, “*they* shall be saved in the same manner as *we*?” What is he emphasizing?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 15:6-11 and Romans 3:19-20. What is the purpose of the law? Can anyone be made righteous by keeping the law? Why not? What does the law do then? What term does Peter use to describe the law? How were these Jewish believers taking away the grace of salvation? Pray for someone who needs to know the Lord. Pray that their eyes might be opened to see God's grace in salvation.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 15:12-18.** Who spoke next and what did they report? Why was the working of miracles also important to confirm the reports (Hebrews 2:3-4)?
- (b) Who responds next? What was his position in the church (Galatians 2:9)?
- (c) What proof does he use in his argument (Acts 15:15)? What additional proofs does Paul give in Romans 15:8-12 and Romans 10:19?
- (d) What was the purpose of bringing in the Gentiles according to Acts 15:17? How do the following passages confirm this: Isaiah 11:10; Zechariah 2:11; and Malachi 1:11?
- (e) Does this approach eliminate Israel (Zechariah 8:20-23; Romans 11:1-11)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 15:12-18 and Isaiah 49:6. Why did God choose Israel? Did the response of the Gentiles change God's plan of fulfilling it? What evidences did Peter, Paul and James give for God including the Gentiles? Why has God included us? Pray that we might be obedient to God's calling for us to be a light to lead others to Christ.

### DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 15:19-29.** What did James say that they should not do? How does he describe salvation in Acts 15:19 (also Acts 26:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:19)?
- (b) What things did they ask the Gentiles to abstain from? What reason did James give in Acts 15:21? What does this tell us about the reason behind this request (1 Corinthians 10:32-33; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)?
- (c) How did the elders, the apostles, and church respond to what James had said? What did they deny in Acts 15:24? Why was this important (Acts 15:1-2)?
- (d) What did they say “seemed good” to them and the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28-29)? Are these absolute requirements? Are they required for salvation?
- (e) What is the purpose of Christian freedom (Galatians 5:1, 9, 13)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 15:19-29 and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Talk about our freedom in Jesus. What has he set us free from? Why have we been set free? Does this allow us to do whatever we want? What are some reasons that we as believers should restrict our freedom in Christ? Pray that God will give you wisdom to know when to set aside your freedoms for the sake of the gospel.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Acts 15:30-35.** What was the response of the church at Antioch when they received the letter from Jerusalem? Why were they encouraged by it?
- (b) Where were Judas and Silas from? What did they do at Antioch? How would this have also encouraged the church?
- (c) What phrase does Luke use to show the decision of Silas to stay at Antioch (also in Acts 15:25, 28)? How is this a part of discovering God's will?
- (d) What did Paul and Barnabas continue to do at Antioch after Judas and some of the others returned to Jerusalem? Were they the only ones teaching (Acts 15:35)?
- (e) What does this teach us about the priority of teaching in the church (Acts 11:25-26; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:11-13)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 15:30-35 and Hebrews 10:24-25. What is encouragement? How did the message of this letter encourage the believers at Antioch? How else were they encouraged? What are some ways that we can encourage one another in the church? Pray for a specific person who needs encouragement. Ask the Lord to show you how you can encourage some in Christ.

**DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

*Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* Read Acts 15. What would you say is the "heart of the gospel?" How does adding anything to the gospel take away from what Jesus has done? How does the grace of God encourage us as believers? Pray for your church services tomorrow that the heart of the gospel might be clear to all who come.

**DATE:** June 24, 2007

**PASSAGE:** Acts 15:1-35

***The Heart of the Gospel***

*"...that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved ..."*