

ACTS

Bible Study

2018-2019



Lesson: 16
Acts 15

Read this week's scripture and answer the questions below. As you read, consider how these verses fit into what you are seeing or experiencing today. Prepare to share with your small group anything that jumped out at you, confused you, encouraged you, challenged or convicted you.

1. Spend some time in verses 1-5. A stubborn question rears its head. What is required for one to be saved? Consider how you might answer that question. Weigh your response against what we've learned from what we have read thus far in Acts. Pray for alignment today of the Father's will as revealed in scripture and your own.
2. Take time in verses 6-7. The apostles gather and debate heartily. Consider their example. How often do we gather with those we disagree with? How often do we debate, not seeking to win the argument, but to better know the will of God? Pray for courage today: to engage tough conversations. Pray for wisdom today: to navigate those questions in a way that honors God.
3. Read and consider verses 6-11, taking special notice of verse 11. Peter stands up for those who might have been considered outsiders; he proclaims salvation found in grace alone. Consider the ways the Pharisees, the Church today, we ourselves at outward evidence of faith? Is this fair or right? Pray for insight: a clear picture of how we are saved, what we are saved from, and what we are saved for.
4. Read and think on verses 12-21. Paul and Barnabas bear witness of signs and wonders. James draws the argument back to the scriptures. Through the many members (and perspectives) of this council, we see a larger more robust picture of what God's up to revealed. God is most fully known not individually but corporately.
5. Consider verses 22-35. See the byproduct of the council, of their discussion and debate. There is agreement (accord); there is encouragement; there is a challenge; there is an expansion of the Kingdom. What is the outcome of most of our debates? Is there clarity? Does God receive glory? We will contend with the world. Pray today that as we do so we will contend for the Gospel and that the outcome would not elevate our name but rather His: the name of Jesus.
6. Spend time in verses 36-41. Here we find a hard thing. Paul and Barnabas disagree and part ways. In the same instance we find a powerful encouragement. The Gospel workers have multiplied. In prayer today, thank the Lord for the ways in which He has faithfully used men and women to spread the news of His son's salvation. Surrender to him the hard things in your own life; ask that he might bring good from them and through them.
7. Today, consider what we have seen in the first 15 chapters of Acts. Scan the texts. What stands out to you? What has this text called you to do? Let these thoughts lead you to worship and to prayers for His leading.