



# Acts: God in Action through Us

## Acts 15:1-35 Conflict and Unity

### *Discussion starter:*

When Christians disagree about important issues, what should they do?

### **Read Acts 15:1-35**

This is a passage about conflict resolution

1. What is the issue? Why is this issue important?
2. What might have happened if Paul and Barnabas just ignored whatever the apostles in Jerusalem thought, and instead just carried on preaching the gospel to gentiles throughout the Roman Empire, telling them they were free from all obligations to the Law of Moses?
3. From start to finish, outline the steps the apostles took in resolving this conflict. What can we learn from this process?
4. What were the key arguments put forward that won the day for Paul's position?

When the conclusion is finally agreed, we see that there are a few concessions to the consciences of the Jews that are included-- some food laws and abstaining from sexual immorality. We obviously have not heard everything that was said at the Council of Jerusalem but it would appear that Paul and Barnabas agreed to these conditions. The ban on sexual immorality is really just echoing the teaching of Jesus and we're not surprised that this instruction is there. But what about the food laws? The reason given for this is in verse 21. It would seem that because the Jewish food laws were widely known and practiced throughout the Roman Empire, it would not be too onerous for the Christian Gentiles to keep these simple rules and it would promote fellowship and the sharing of meals across the diverse Christian community.

5. What 'false barriers' might new believers encounter today in our church?
6. When have you been involved in a disagreement about gospel truths (matters that are central to what is essential for salvation)? If such a discussion arose now, what would you do in order to resolve it?
7. Do you think that 'agreeing to disagree' on gospel truths builds Christian unity or undermines it?

### *Suggested prayer time:*

Pray that our church might have great clarity and unity around the gospel.

Note: this is our final study in this series for now.