

Sermon Notes

"Saved by Rule-Keeping?"

Acts 15

February 24, 2019

c. How can we remind ourselves to require of new believers only what God requires?

d. Missionaries still have to decide what aspects of people's lifestyles are inconsistent with Christianity and what aspects are acceptable even if they appear strange to Westerners. Can you think of any examples?

e. To what extent are your lifestyle and religious customs required for all Christians, and to what extent are they just cultural and personal preferences? Think of some specific examples. How should this distinction affect the way you view the practices of other Christians?

Let's Pray:

For our missionaries:

Tandala Medical Fund, Africa

Pray for doctors, nurses, and staff as they minister physically and spiritually to the patients at Tandala Hospital.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of 02-24-19

Questions adapted from Phyllis J. Le Peau, Acts: Seeing God's Power in Action, A LifeGuide Bible Study, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2002, pp. 47-48; James Galvin, ed., et al., New Testament Lesson Maker, NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1992, pp. 206-207; Karen Lee-Thorp, ed., Acts: Life Change Series, NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1987, pp. 128-132.

Getting Started:

1. What is most challenging to you about enforcing rules?

Digging Deeper:

2. Read Acts 15:1-35.

- a. Describe the conflict that arises between believers in this passage. How was the problem of this council larger than the issue of circumcision?

- b. Why did Peter support the Antiochene position? List his key reasons (15:6-11).

- c. What evidence did Paul and Barnabas offer to defend their view that Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews (15:4, 12)?

- d. How did James summarize his views (15:13-21)?

- d. Describe the steps that were taken to resolve this conflict and the spirit of those involved.

- e. When dealing with difficult issues, what do we need to include in the decision-making process?

3. "We so easily push our preferences on others. We assume they will either do things our way or they are unspiritual. We too often put others through the paces of our own heritage before we fully accept them as brothers and sisters. Sadly, sometimes a church will radiate more of this than the gospel." (R. Kent Hughes, Acts: The Church Afire, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 1996, p. 196).

- a. According to the council, what is necessary for salvation (15:9-11)? What isn't necessary?

- b. What beliefs or practices do Christians add to the gospel?