

Learning to Work Through Dissension with Other Believers (Acts 15)

I. THE BACKGROUND (Acts 15:1-4)

¹ And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

² Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

⁴ And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

A. The _____ of Problem (1-2a)

- _____ concerns Biblical _____

- _____ concerns Biblical _____

¹⁵ "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

¹⁶ "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that `by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established¹."

¹⁷ "And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

- _____ concern Biblical _____

¹ Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things.

² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables.

³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

⁴ Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord¹; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

⁹ For to this end Christ died and rose¹ and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God¹."

¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

¹⁴ I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there* is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it* is unclean.

¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ For he who serves Christ in these things¹ *is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

¹⁹ Therefore let us pursue the things *which* make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it* is evil for the man who eats with offense.

²¹ *It* is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak¹.

²² Do you have faith¹? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he* does not eat from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin¹.

👁 **Observation:** Conflicts were a _____ occurrence within the New Testament church

🗨 **Principle:** We should not allow the presence of _____ to discourage us, as it is to be expected—it's normal.

B. The _____ to the Problem (2b-4)

Since the church at Antioch was a young church, they sent Paul and Barnabas, along with others, to the Jerusalem church in order to get their insight concerning the problem.

👁 **Observation:** _____ was not considered here. The question required an either/or answer.

🗨 **Principle:** We should not always consider compromise as a _____ option, as in the case of critical doctrinal issues.

👁 **Observation:** The Antioch Christians did not respond by _____ apart in some way, nor did they just gloss over the matter to maintain superficial unity. Rather they desired to know the truth concerning the matter. Their ultimate desire was to know the truth, and to follow it, not to "win".

🗨 **Principle:** Our goal in any dispute is _____ to "win", but to discover and yield to the truth.

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