



WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Acts Chapter 15

Lesson 12

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. How did the Lord speak to you through the study or lecture on Acts Chapter 14?
2. In Psalm 51:12a David prayed, *Restore to me the joy of Your salvation*. When we replace the joy of our salvation with rules, rituals, and regulations we not only lose the appreciation for what Jesus has accomplished, but our Christianity becomes burdensome. This was the same danger that Paul and Barnabas were concerned about. When certain men came from Jerusalem to the church in Antioch, they demanded that the Gentile believers live under strict adherence to the law. The response of the church in Antioch was to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to settle the matter.

Whenever you feel the joy of your salvation ebbing, it is essential that you take inventory of your life. Make sure you are not replacing simple faith in Christ with rules, rituals, and regulations! Always seek to maintain a rich appreciation for what Jesus has done for you. In so doing, you will continue to overflow with joy.

Read Acts 15 and write a title for each section below:

- a. Acts 15:1-11
 - b. Acts 15:12-21
 - c. Acts 15:22-34
 - d. Acts 15:35-41
3. As you commit your study time to the Lord, ask Him to renew the *joy* of your salvation. Write your prayer here.

They caused great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 15:3c

SECOND DAY: Read Acts 15:1-11

1. After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, *certain men came down from Judea*. What had these men *taught the brethren*? Acts 15:1
 - a. These men were called *Judaizers* because they taught that Gentiles must first become Jews and follow the law before becoming Christians. Read Galatians 5:2-6 and give an explanation why this was contrary to the cross.

2. Observe and comment on Paul and Barnabas' reaction to this. Acts 15:2a
 - a. What was then *determined*? Acts 15:2b

3. What did Paul and Barnabas do *on their way* to Jerusalem? Acts 15:3a
 - a. What was the response of the *brethren*? Acts 15:3b
 - (1) Contrast their response with that of the Pharisees' to this same news. Acts 15:4-5

4. The *apostles and elders* conferred on this *matter* (Acts 15:6). After *much dispute*, Peter stood to speak. Answer the following from his speech in Acts 15:7-11:
 - a. According to Peter, what did these men *know*? Acts 15:7

 - b. In Acts 15:8a what did Peter point out about God?

 - c. How did God acknowledge the Gentiles? Acts 15:8b
 - (1) Link Acts 10:45 with Ephesians 1:13-14 to note the significance of this.

 - d. What had God *made* evident? Acts 15:9

 - e. What was Peter's challenge to these believing Pharisees? Acts 15:10
 - (1) Affirm Peter's challenge by contrasting Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11:28-30 with Matthew 23:4.

 - f. In summary, what did Peter *believe*? Acts 15:11
 - (1) Connect this with Ephesians 2:8-9. Share your thoughts.

THIRD DAY: Read Acts 15:12–21

1. As the *multitude kept silent and listened*, what did Barnabas and Paul declare to them? Acts 15:12
 - a. How did their testimony validate Peter’s statement in Acts 15:8–9?

2. When Barnabas and Paul finished, James addressed the *men and brethren* (Acts 15:13). What was his first point? Acts 15:14
 - a. James affirmed that the *prophets* attested to this fact (Acts 15:15). From Acts 15:16–17 (Amos 9:11–12), what did the *prophets* declare about the Gentiles?
 - (1) Why was it necessary that James refer to what was *written* in Scripture? See 2 Peter 1:19.

3. Remark on the truth asserted by James in Acts 15:18.

4. What did James *judge* concerning these things? Acts 15:19

5. From Acts 15:20 note and comment on the four *things* the Gentiles were exhorted to *abstain* from:
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.
 - (1) Acts 15:21 suggests the reason for these guidelines was to keep peace between Gentile and Jew. Read Romans 14:19 to explain why this was a wise decision.

6. How do you see the Holy Spirit remedying this controversy?

FOURTH DAY: Read Acts 15:22–34

1. Once James came to a decision, what did it please *the whole church* to do? Acts 15:22

2. The *apostles* sent a *letter* with these men (Acts 15:23). Use Acts 15:24–29 to answer the following questions about this *letter*:
 - a. List those to whom the *letter* was addressed. Acts 15:23b

 - b. What was the effect upon those who were told they must be *circumcised*? Acts 15:24a

 - c. What did the apostles state about the men who brought this news? Acts 15:24b

 - d. Because of this situation, what *seemed good* to the church in Jerusalem? Acts 15:25, 27

 - e. From Acts 15:25b–26, how were Paul and Barnabas described?

 - f. To whom did it seem *good* to set forth guidelines for the Gentile believers? Acts 15:28a
 - (1) Why was this essential to emphasize?

 - g. Remark on the simplicity of the conclusion of this letter. Acts 15:29b

3. What did Barnabas, Paul, and the men from Jerusalem do when *they came to Antioch*? Acts 15:30
 - a. Comment on the response of the believers to this *letter*. Acts 15:31

4. Use Acts 15:32–34 to observe and note Judas and Silas' work among the church in Antioch.

5. Consider the work of the Holy Spirit in this entire situation. How does this speak to you?

FIFTH DAY: Read Acts 15:35–41

1. How did Paul and Barnabas strengthen the church? Acts 15:35
 - a. Share how you think this brought stability to the church.

2. What did Paul and Barnabas decide to do *after some days*? Acts 15:36

3. What was Barnabas *determined* to do? Acts 15:37
 - a. What was Paul's perspective? Acts 15:38
 - (1) Review Acts 12:25, 13:13 and comment further on this.

4. Record the result of Paul and Barnabas' difference of opinion. Acts 15:39a
 - a. What do you find interesting about this?

5. Use Acts 15:39b–41 to note how the conflict was handled by:
 - a. Barnabas

 - b. Paul
 - (1) How did God work in spite of their disagreement?

5. Although the argument over John Mark was unfortunate, use Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24, and 2 Timothy 4:11 to document their reconciliation.

6. Link this situation with Romans 8:28 and share your thoughts.
 - a. How is this an encouragement to you?

