

September 9/10, 2006

Study Questions

The Unstoppable Church

Grace For All

Acts 15:1-35

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Opening Discussion

1. What is legalism, and why has it been such a problem in the church for 2000 years?
2. What is the difference between legalism and conviction or obedience?

Are having rules, standards or convictions necessarily a form of legalism? Why or why not?

3. Does grace mean we are free to do as we please regardless of how it affects others, especially in the body of Christ?

Bible Study

1. Read Acts 15:1-35. What was the problem according to 15:1-5? (See also Acts 11:1-3.)
2. Compare Acts 15:1-5 with Galatians 3:1-3; 5:1. In what ways have you experienced legalism in your own spiritual journey?

What was at stake for the church?

How serious is this problem of legalism in the church today?

3. What is Peter's argument in Acts 15:6-11? (Review Acts 10 for details.)
4. What is James' argument in Acts 15:13-19?
5. What do we learn if we put the argument of Peter together with the argument of James for sorting out major doctrinal disputes?
6. Why did James and the Council conclude the Gentile believers should abstain from certain things?

What is the point of Acts 15:21?

How do we balance that with Paul's words in Galatians 5:1? (See I Corinthians 8:1-13 for further discussion on this issue.)

7. What was the Council's final conclusion about the means of salvation and sanctification (that is, growth after salvation)?

This text seems so clear. Why has this problem plagued the church for 2000 years?

Application

1. How do we avoid allowing legalism to creep into our own lives and return us to bondage rather than freedom in Christ?

In what way can your small group help you walk free?

2. What are some areas of freedom in the church today that could cause unnecessary conflict if exercised?

At what point do we determine that the unity and mission of the church is more important than our personal freedoms?

3. Is there a specific area of your life where you may want to rethink your exercise of freedom because of the affect on other believers?