

Freedom from Expectations

Devotional Reading: [Acts 17:22–34](#)

Background Scripture: [Acts 15:1–21](#)

[Acts 15:1–11](#)

¹ Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

Key Text

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.—Acts 15:8–9

God’s Law Is Love

Unit 3: Christ Frees, Law Enslaves

[Lessons 10–13](#)

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize the viewpoint disputed by Paul and Barnabas.
2. Outline Peter's refutation of that viewpoint.
3. Describe how he or she will interrogate personal practices based on what is core to the gospel message.

Lesson Outline

Introduction

- A. Steps to Resolve Disputes
- B. Lesson Context: First-Century Judaism
- C. Lesson Context: The Jerusalem Council

I. Conflict Described (Acts 15:1–3)

- A. The Belief (vv. 1–2a)
- B. The Parties (vv. 2b–3)

II. Conflict Debated (Acts 15:4–6)

- A. Receiving (v. 4)
- B. Reminding (vv. 5–6)

III. Conflict Resolved (Acts 15:7–11)

- A. God's Work (vv. 7–9)
Level Ground
- B. Our Response (vv. 10–11)
Accepting Healing

Conclusion

- A. Seeking Resolution
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

How to Say It

Antioch *An-tee-ock.*

Barnabas *Bar-nuh-bus.*

Samaria *Suh-mare-ee-uh.*

Pentecost *Pent-ih-kost.*

Phoenicia *Fuh-nish-uh.*

Sidon *Sigh-dun.*

Theophilus *Thee-ahf-ih-luss* (*th* as in *thin*).

Introduction

A. Steps to Resolve Disputes

Conflict management is not a new practice. Sometimes people resolve conflict through conversation, debate, and allowances. Resorting to stonewalling, avoidance, or even advancing the conflict to a court of law can do little to reconcile those who find themselves in dispute.

One method (of many) to resolve conflict involves three steps. First, the parties in dispute are to be identified. Second, both sides must clearly understand the nature of their conflict. Third, the involved parties' shared values or common ground should be recognized. When mediators address these steps, an agreement that serves the interests of all conflicting parties can be reached.

Today's Scripture involves a conflict between parties of the first-century church. The Christian movement was just beginning, and believers had to work out conflicting perspectives on certain doctrines. The resolution in [Acts 15](#) sets an important precedent for the church and the identity of the people of God.

B. Lesson Context: First-Century Judaism

Most of Jesus' earliest followers were Jewish, and they still participated in many of the practices of Judaism. For example, until the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, Jewish followers of Jesus participated in some of the temple's ceremonies (examples: [Acts 3:1](#); [21:26](#)). Additionally, throughout the Roman Empire, Jewish believers continued to participate in the synagogues (example: [17:1–2](#)). Jews gathered in these buildings for worship and teaching from the Scriptures.

Some Gentiles had become highly regarded within their local Jewish communities, partly because of their support of synagogues (example: [Luke 7:1–10](#)). The book of Acts mentions one such individual: Cornelius, a Gentile who was "God-fearing" ([Acts 10:1–2](#), [22](#)). There is no indication that these Gentiles took up the requirements of Judaism. As a result, they were not considered "fellow children of Abraham" ([13:26](#)).

There were, however, some Gentiles who chose to convert fully to Judaism (see [Acts 13:43](#); compare [6:5](#)). Male converts were required to be circumcised—a painful, even dangerous, surgical procedure in the days of rudimentary anesthetics and no antibiotics. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (see [Genesis 17:9–14](#); compare [Exodus 12:48](#)). During the first century AD, some individuals had been teaching that Gentile followers of Jesus needed to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses (see [Galatians 6:12–13](#)). The reasoning for this position was that Israel had always been the distinct people of God. It was to Israel that God had revealed himself, given his law, and specified circumcision as the sign of his covenant. This group assumed that if God were making himself known to the nations, then the nations should be circumcised according to the Law of Moses.

C. Lesson Context: The Jerusalem Council

The book of Acts was written by Luke. Acts is the second of a two-volume work by Luke addressed to Theophilus ([Acts 1:1](#); see [Luke 1:1–4](#)). See the [Lesson Context from lessons 1 and 2](#) regarding details about the author, Luke.

Prior to the events in this lesson, Paul and Barnabas, leaders of the first-century church, had been traveling throughout Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). These travels are identified as Paul’s first missionary journey in AD 47–49 ([Acts 13:4–14:28](#)). The two visited various synagogues, where they taught from the Scriptures and preached the news of Jesus’ resurrection (example: [13:32–33](#)). They were not selective in choosing their audience; they preached to both Jews and Gentiles (see [14:1](#)).

After their journeys, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch ([Acts 14:26–27](#)), a city in modern-day Syria (not to be confused with another Antioch located in Pisidia; see [13:14](#)). Antioch in Syria was located approximately 300 miles north of Jerusalem.

The events of [Acts 15:4–29](#) depict a meeting sometimes called the “Jerusalem Council.” This meeting took place in approximately AD 51. This council was an early attempt to answer the vital question of how to incorporate Gentiles into the people of God. The church’s future depended on how the council answered this question.

I. Conflict Described

([Acts 15:1–3](#))

A. The Belief (vv. 1–2a)

1. Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Judea is the southern region of Israel. The area is mountainous; the largest city in the region, Jerusalem, is situated on a mountain top. A traveler *came down* in elevation when leaving Judea.

The identity of these *certain people* is unknown. Their journey from Judea took them to Antioch in Syria because it was there that Paul and Barnabas were ministering (see [Acts 14:23–28](#)). The visit to *the believers* in Antioch was seemingly unauthorized by the church leaders in Judea (see [15:24](#)). The visitors’ message was direct: male Gentiles must be *circumcised* to identify as part of God’s people. Because of this message, these visitors were likely either Jews or Gentile converts to Judaism.

During the time between the Old and New Testaments, circumcision had become a boundary marker for Jewish identity. And the first-century church had not entirely abandoned the practice. For instance, the apostle Paul circumcised Timothy because of the context into which the two were traveling (see [Acts 16:1–5](#)). At another time, however, Paul did not require circumcision for his associate (see [Galatians 2:3](#)).

The issue at hand was not *if* Gentiles would be admitted into the people of God. The church had already celebrated God’s work in Gentiles (example: [Acts 11:1–18](#)). Even the Old Testament prophets agreed that the incorporation of Gentiles into God’s people would someday occur (examples: [Isaiah 14:1](#); [56:6–7](#); [Zechariah 8:23](#)).

Instead, the issue was the *means* through which Gentiles entered the community of God’s people. The visitors argued that for Gentiles to be counted as God’s people, they would have to follow the law and *custom taught by Moses*. Their argument went as follows: since God provided the Law of Moses, then all people—Gentiles included—must keep that law to *be saved*.

2a. This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.

Paul—previously called “Saul” ([Acts 13:9](#))—was from the tribe of Benjamin (see [Romans 11:1](#)). He was educated by a notable rabbi (see [Acts 22:3](#)) and trained as a Pharisee (see [Philippians 3:4–6](#)). Before meeting Christ, Paul approved of the persecution and killing of members of the first-century church (see [Acts 7:59–8:3](#)). After his conversion experience (see [9:1–9](#)), Paul was accepted as a disciple of Jesus and was allowed to preach in the church (see [9:26–29](#)). Following a season in the city of Tarsus (see [9:30](#)), he returned to Antioch (see [11:25–28](#)).

Barnabas was the first to introduce Paul to the other apostles (see [Acts 9:27](#)). The two men had traveled together on a missionary journey throughout Asia Minor ([13:4–14:28](#); see [Lesson Context](#)). The two were identified as “apostles” ([14:14](#)) and, therefore, leaders in the first-century church.

That Paul and Barnabas expressed *sharp dispute and debate with* the visitors and their proclamation is unsurprising. The believers in Antioch had heard of the faith of Gentiles (see [Acts 14:26–27](#)). But the interlopers’ message contradicted preaching from Paul and Barnabas regarding justification by faith and the limits of the Law of Moses (see [13:38–39](#)).

B. The Parties (vv. 2b–3)

2b. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

The decision to send *Paul and Barnabas* and a *some other believers* reflects the respect held for the leaders in *Jerusalem*. Until *this question* of circumcision was answered, the believers in Antioch would withhold judgment—and their knives.

The apostles were the surviving members of the Twelve called by Jesus (see [Luke 6:12–16](#); compare [Matthew 27:5](#); [Acts 12:1–2](#)). *Elders* served in additional leadership positions in the church (see [Acts 14:23](#); example: [James 5:14](#)). The council is one of the few places in Scripture where these two parties are listed together as church leaders (see [Acts 15:4, 6](#), below; [15:22–23](#), not in our printed text; [16:4](#)).

What Do You Think?

How should believers discern which doctrines are essential and which are nonessential?

Digging Deeper

How should believers handle disputes regarding nonessential doctrines?

3. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.

Leaving *the church* in Antioch allowed Paul, Barnabas, and the others to visit churches en route to Jerusalem. The estimated 330 miles between the cities would have taken at least two weeks to travel on

foot. Because of the trip’s length, the travelers relied on the hospitality of other believers.

Phoenicia is the region of coastal plains located north of Galilee. It includes parts of the modern-day countries of Syria and Lebanon. City-states dotted the area in the first century AD, including Tyre (see [Acts 21:2–3](#)) and Sidon (see [27:3](#)). Followers of Jesus scattered to this region after the persecution began in Jerusalem (see [11:19](#)).

Further south, bordering the western banks of the Jordan River and extending to the Mediterranean Sea, was the region of *Samaria*. By the first century AD, Jews did not associate with Samaritans because of the former group’s perceptions regarding the latter group’s ritual cleanliness (see [John 4:9](#)). After Pentecost, however, the gospel infiltrated the region (see [Acts 8:9–24](#)) and led to the establishment of a growing church ([9:31](#)).

As the travelers proceeded through these regions, they proclaimed the news that God had welcomed *Gentiles* into his people. This welcoming occurred when the Gentiles experienced a circumcision of the heart (see [Ezekiel 44:9](#); compare [Romans 2:28–29](#)). Conversion is turning away from evil and toward God (see [1 Thessalonians 1:8–10](#)). The conversion of Gentiles demonstrated that God had kept his promise to Abraham regarding the blessing to “all peoples on earth” ([Genesis 12:3](#)).

II. Conflict Debated

([Acts 15:4–6](#))

A. Receiving (v. 4)

4. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

The message of Paul and Barnabas to the *Jerusalem* church focused on the work of *God* completed *through* the two of *them*. They likely reported on the conversion of Jews and Gentiles during their missionary journeys (see [Acts 13:1–14:27](#)). Through them, Jesus’ command that his disciples be witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” ([1:8](#)) was being fulfilled.

What Do You Think?

How will you tell the story of God’s work in your life as an act of encouragement to other believers?

Digging Deeper

Who will you tell your story to in the upcoming week?

B. Reminding (vv. 5–6)

5. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

The *Pharisees* were a *party* of first-century Judaism. They emphasized careful obedience to *the law of Moses* and its associated commentary and tradition (see [Lesson Context, lesson 1](#)). Their strict adherence to the Law of Moses and its interpretations made it understandable why these certain Christian Pharisees advocated for Gentile circumcision. Although the Gospels present the group as

antagonistic toward Jesus (see [lessons 1](#) and [2](#)), some Pharisees (like Paul himself; see [Philippians 3:4–11](#)) had *believed* in Jesus.

6. The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

This meeting to discuss the *question* of circumcision appears to have been held in private, contrasting the initial church-wide reception of the believers from Antioch ([Acts 15:4](#), above).

What Do You Think?

How should believers discern whether or not to bring in a mediator to help resolve a disagreement?

Digging Deeper

How would you respond to someone who says that believers should stifle disagreement altogether?

III. Conflict Resolved ([Acts 15:7–11](#))

A. God’s Work (vv. 7–9)

7a. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them:

Simon *Peter* was one of the twelve apostles selected by Jesus. As a disciple, he experienced testing of his faith (see [Matthew 14:22–32](#)), and he denied having known Jesus (see [Luke 22:54–62](#)). However, Jesus reinstated Peter (see [John 21:15–23](#)). As a result, Peter became a leading figure in the church, just as Jesus promised ([Matthew 16:17–19](#)). The book of Acts describes how Peter led the apostles ([Acts 1:15–26](#)), preached the gospel ([2:14–41](#); [8:14–25](#)), and worked miracles ([3:1–10](#); [9:32–35](#)).

7b. “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

God had chosen Peter to proclaim *the gospel* message to “the circumcised” (Jews; [Galatians 2:7–8](#)) and *the Gentiles*. It was part of the long-promised plan of God to offer redemption to all people who would *believe* (see [Romans 1:16](#)).

What Do You Think?

How can believers discern God’s call to serve as a cross-cultural missionary?

Digging Deeper

In what ways will you serve as a cross-cultural missionary to the various cultures in your neighborhood?

8. “God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

At this moment, perhaps Peter remembered his interactions with Cornelius, a Gentile who feared God (see [Acts 10:1–2](#)). After experiencing a vision ([10:9–16](#)), Peter went to the house of Cornelius and preached the message of Jesus’ anointing and resurrection (see [10:23–43](#)). The crux of Peter’s declaration was that “God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right” ([10:34–35](#)). Every person—Jew or Gentile—who believed in Jesus would receive

the forgiveness of sins (10:43). As Peter preached to these Gentiles, “the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message” (10:44). This gift was evidence of the Gentiles receiving the gospel message and their responding in faith.

Although Peter preached the gospel, *God alone knows the heart* of both Jews and Gentiles. The presence of *the Holy Spirit* in Gentiles served as evidence that their lives had turned toward God. This pouring out of the Spirit was *just as God did to Jesus’ disciples* at Pentecost (see [Acts 2:1–5](#)). The presence of God’s Spirit on Gentiles gave *showed* their inclusion into the people of God (example: [10:44–46](#); [11:15–18](#)).

What Do You Think?

How will you continue living in a way that reflects the presence of God’s Spirit?

Digging Deeper

What steps will you take to ensure that you are being attentive to the leading of God’s Spirit?

9. “He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

Peter clinched his argument: the Gentiles’ reception of God’s Spirit was the sign of their acceptance into God’s people. God does *not discriminate between Jews and Gentiles*. Gentiles did not need to become circumcised. Instead, God cleans the *hearts* of all people who express faith in Christ (see [Titus 3:5](#); [Hebrews 10:22](#)).

Faith is not merely a belief in a proposition. Rather, faith expresses trust and allegiance in Jesus as the Messiah and King. Such faith leads to a person being made right with God (see [Romans 3:21–25](#); [5:1](#); [Galatians 2:15–16](#); [5:4–6](#)). Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit because of their faith in Christ. Through faith, “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, ... slave nor free, ... male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” ([3:28](#); see [lesson 9](#)).

Level Ground

Indoor cycling classes are my favorite exercise. My coach motivates the class by setting difficult but attainable goals. While the coach is a professional, she still completes the same exercise as her students. Despite her experience and physical ability, she is held accountable to finish the same workout as the class. During class, we’re all the same.

An adage states that “the ground is level at the cross.” This statement speaks to the equality among believers. Regardless of a believer’s life situation or spiritual history, all believers are part of the “one body” of Christ (see [Romans 12:4–5](#)). Do you draw distinctions between yourself and other believers, or do you look for ways to serve that “one body”? Does [1 Corinthians 12](#) offer any guidance in this regard?

—M. E.

B. Our Response (vv. 10–11)

10. “Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that

neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?

The tendency of God's people to *test God* had occurred in Israel's past. Such testing highlighted distrust of God and his plans (examples: [Exodus 17:1–2](#); [Numbers 14:20–25](#); [Deuteronomy 6:16](#)). Requiring Gentile circumcision amounted to testing God's will for his people. It was a faulty assumption that God's gift of the Spirit was mistakenly poured out to the Gentiles (see [Acts 11:15–17](#)).

A yoke is a wooden beam that pairs livestock together so they can work efficiently. The imagery of a yoke can have positive connotations, such as the yoke promised by Jesus (see [Matthew 11:28–30](#)). In Jewish teaching, the term *yoke* was used to describe the peoples' keeping of the Law of Moses. People's responsibility to the law guided and restrained them. To require law-adherence, especially circumcision, was equivalent to *putting* the burden of *a yoke* upon *the necks* of Gentiles (compare [Galatians 5:1](#)).

Neither Jesus (see [Matthew 5:17](#)) nor the apostle Paul (see [Romans 3:31](#)) desired to abolish the Law of Moses. The law was considered good (see [7:12](#); [1 Timothy 1:8](#)) but inadequate for life and salvation (see [Galatians 3:21](#)). Such was not a new development in the first century. Certain limitations had marked the law since it had been received by Israel's *ancestors* (see [Romans 4](#)). If Peter's peers and ancestors could not *bear* the requirements of the Law of Moses, why would the Gentiles be expected to do so?

11. “No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

Peter ended with a reminder of the core of the gospel. Salvation comes only *through* one avenue: by *the grace of our Lord Jesus*. No human work, including following the Law of Moses, could save a person (see [Acts 13:38–39](#); [Galatians 2:14–17](#)).

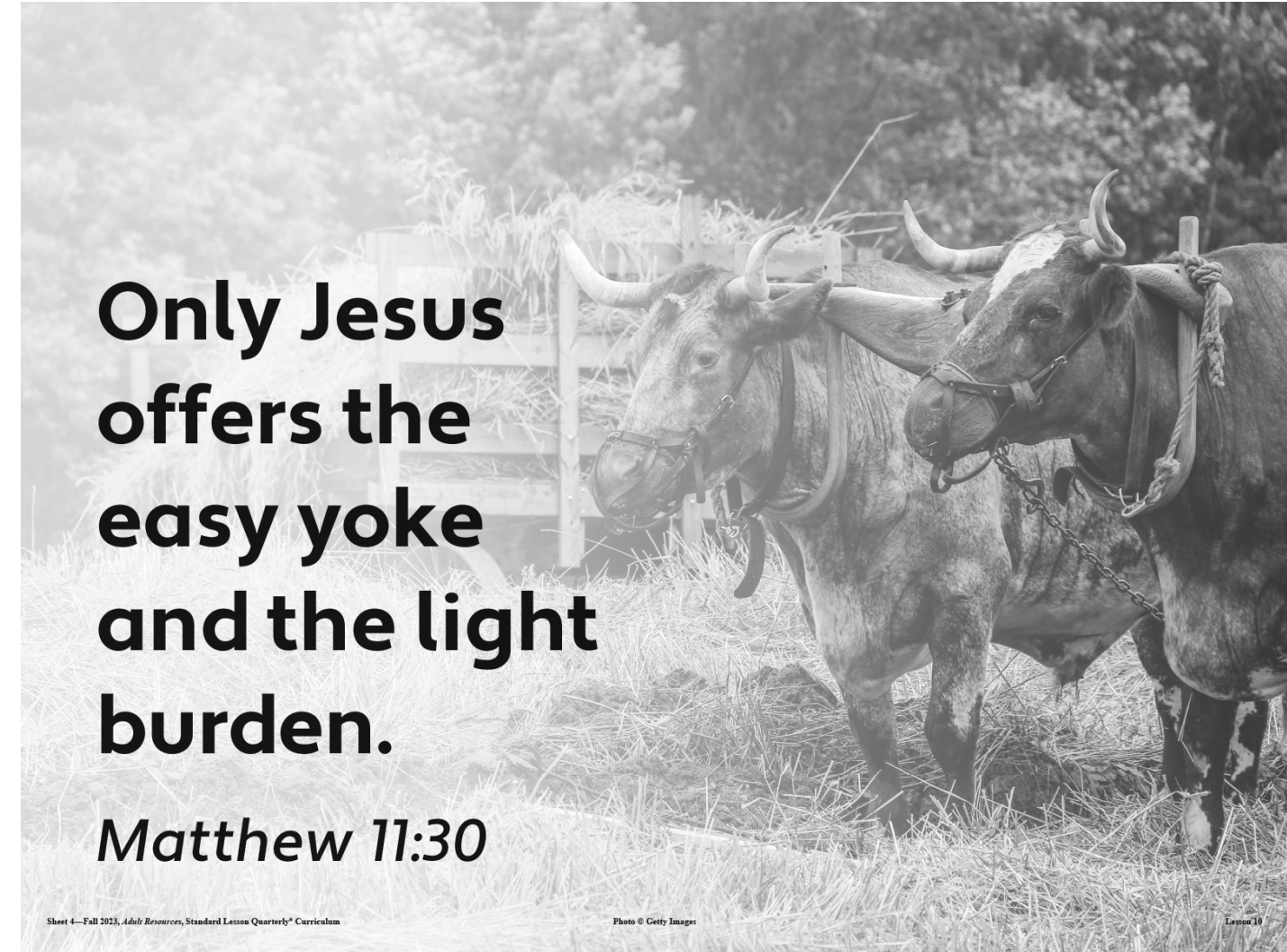
Accepting Healing

As a high school freshman, I suffered my first concussion during an out-of-control game at youth group. As we played, I felt the sharp pain of someone's knee slamming into my head. Doctors advised me to avoid mental stimulation, which would slow the healing process.

I spent my recovery resting and avoiding basic activities. However, even rest had its limitations! I thought maybe I needed to push through the headaches and get accustomed to the pain. The recovery tested my patience. I wanted to do more to speed up the healing process. However, *nothing* is what was required of me.

Peter summarized the gospel message: salvation is through grace by faith. There is nothing we can do to better our chances of receiving salvation. We simply have to trust that God will heal our hearts. Do you believe that reality, or do you try to add requirements to God's gift?

—M. E.



**Only Jesus
offers the
easy yoke
and the light
burden.**

Matthew 11:30

Sheet 4—Fall 2023, *Adult Resources, Standard Lesson Quarterly*® Curriculum

Photo © Getty Images

Lesson 10

Visual for [Lesson 10](#). Point to this visual as you discuss the lesson commentary associated with [Acts 15:10](#).

Conclusion

A. Seeking Resolution

People try to hide conflict by avoiding or ignoring it altogether. Maintaining a facade of peace regardless of the underlying discord can be a severe failure. Evading problems usually makes the conflict worse.

The leaders of the first-century church did not dodge conflict regarding the question of Gentile circumcision. Instead, they resolved the dispute while staying faithful to the gospel. God's plan for salvation is beyond human expectations. We are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and not through our heritage or achievements!

B. Prayer

God of salvation, thank you for showing your mercy. Help us welcome as we have been welcomed and love as we have been loved. Show us how we can proclaim to others your plan for salvation. In the

name of Jesus. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

Celebrate God’s merciful gift of redemption!

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible Student](#) (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the [NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition](#)).

Into the Lesson

Divide the class into two teams for a debate: **Team Pie** and **Team Cake**. Give teams five minutes to develop arguments for why their group’s namesake is a better dessert. Each team will have two minutes to present their argument. Give time for each team to provide counterarguments and a defense.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Which Is Better?” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners complete it individually in a minute or less before discussing conclusions with a partner.

After either activity, say, “Believers have engaged in other debates that are more significant and harder to resolve. In today’s lesson, let’s consider the significance of an early debate of the first-century church and the implications of that debate for our faith.”

Into the Word

Divide the class into three groups: **Circumcision Group**, **Paul and Barnabas Group**, and **Peter Group**. Distribute handouts (you create) of the questions below and allow 10 minutes for groups to answer the questions.

Circumcision Group: Read [Acts 15:1–2](#), [5](#). 1—What was the viewpoint of the visitors and Pharisees regarding circumcision? 2—How do the events described in [Acts 10:1–11:18](#) address that viewpoint? 3—What would be a modern-day equivalent to their viewpoint?

Paul and Barnabas Group: Read [Acts 15:1–4](#). 1—Why did the viewpoint regarding circumcision cause Paul and Barnabas to have “sharp dispute and debate” ([Acts 15:2](#))? 2—How does Paul’s corrective to the church in Galatia ([Galatians 5:1–12](#)) apply to the situation described in [Acts 15:1–11](#)? 3—What would be a modern-day equivalent to Paul’s corrective?

Peter Group: Read [Acts 15:6–10](#). 1—How would you summarize the main points of Peter’s speech? 2—How do these points and the events of [Acts 10:1–11:18](#) refute the message of the visitors and the Pharisees? 3—How is Peter’s speech applicable for modern-day believers?

Reconvene the class and ask a volunteer to read [Acts 15:11](#) aloud. As a whole class, create a para-

phrase of the verse. Write that paraphrase on the board. Allow time for learners to share new insights before working as an entire group to create a conclusion to settle the viewpoint from [Acts 15:1](#).

Option. Ask a volunteer to read aloud [Acts 15:5–11](#). Have the class reenact the story from [Acts 10](#) that Peter likely referred to in [Acts 15:7–9](#). Choose volunteers to play the roles of Cornelius, his messengers, the angels, Peter, God, and a narrator. The volunteers may improvise the story or read directly from Scripture. After reenactment, ask the following question for whole-class discussion: “What part of this story impacted you the most and why?”

Into Life

Write the following questions on the board:

1. *How do believers strengthen their faith?*
2. *Why do we do these things?*
3. *Are these practices necessary to be a Christian?*

Ask volunteers to give answers to each question, and write those responses on the board. Distribute paper and pens to learners. Ask learners to write down any personal faith practices that they do. Then ask learners to write down how they will interrogate these practices to determine which are core to the gospel message.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “My Personal Practices” activity from the activity page. Have learners complete it as a take-home activity. Remind the class that they will have an opportunity to discuss their responses at the beginning of the next class.