















# ACTS



*The Story of the Church*

<sup>1</sup> 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.” <sup>2</sup> 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.

ACTS 15:1-2 NIV

# Maintaining Common Unity:

- Address tension promptly & directly

15 “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

16 But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.

17 If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

MATTHEW 18:15-17 NLT

14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

JAMES 3:14-17 NIV

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.

ACTS 15:5-7 NIV

<sup>8</sup> God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. <sup>9</sup> He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> 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? <sup>11</sup> No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

ACTS 15:8-11 NIV

# Maintaining Common Unity:

- Address tension promptly & directly
- Anchor heart in the Gospel

6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

DEUTERONOMY 30:6 NIV

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13 When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. 14 Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

ACTS 15:12-15 NIV

16 “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,  
17 that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even  
all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord,  
who does these things’— 18 things known from  
long ago. 19 “It is my judgment, therefore, that we  
should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are  
turning to God.

<sup>20</sup> Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. <sup>21</sup> For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

<sup>22</sup> Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

# Maintaining Common Unity:

- Address tension promptly & directly
- Anchor heart in the Gospel
- Respond to grace with obedience

30 So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32 Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. 33 After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

# Maintaining Common Unity:

- Address tension promptly & directly
- Anchor heart in the Gospel
- Respond to grace with obedience
- Encourage & stir up one another

12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

14 We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

HEBREWS 3:12-14 NIV

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.  
24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

HEBREWS 10:23-24 ESV

35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord. 36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

<sup>39</sup> They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. <sup>41</sup> He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

ACTS 15:39-41 NIV

**6** Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living?

**1 CORINTHIANS 9:6 NIV**

**11** Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

**2 TIMOTHY 4:11 NIV**

<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

1 PETER 4:8 ESV

# Maintaining Common Unity:

- Address tension promptly & directly
- Anchor heart in the Gospel
- Respond to grace with obedience
- Encourage & stir up one another