SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

REFLECTION JOURNAL · FIVE DAYS

Acts

Chapter 15

Saved Through Grace, Just Like Them

MEMORY VERSE · ACTS 15:11

"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO _____

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This week in Acts 15

Some men told new believers, “you cannot be saved” unless they added something to Jesus. This week God settles that question for you: you are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, the same way as every other man who trusts Him. And then He shows you how grace teaches very different men to live together.

How to use this journal

1. Each day, read the passage slowly — out loud if you can.
2. Answer the **Observe** question from the text before you write what it means.
3. Write honestly on the **Reflect** questions. No one grades this.
4. Do the **Respond** step today, not someday. Say the memory verse.
5. Bring this journal to the group. The last page is for the table.

The full Deep Dive, the O·I·A study and the slides for this chapter are on the Acts study page.

WHERE I AM AS I START THIS CHAPTER

What is going on in my life right now that I want to bring to God this week?

DAY 1 OF 5

Nothing Added

READ · ACTS 15:1–5

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did the men from Judea say a Gentile had to do to be saved, and what did the believing Pharisees say was "necessary" (15:1, 5)?

REFLECT

What have you quietly added to Jesus — a clean date, a good week, church attendance, a promise to do better — as if it made you more acceptable to God (15:1)?

REFLECT

Paul and Barnabas had "great dissension and debate" rather than let the gospel be changed (15:2). Where do you need the courage to say plainly that Jesus is enough?

RESPOND — TODAY

Write down one thing you have been treating as your "ticket" with God, cross it out, and write beside it: "saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11).

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ACTS 15:11)

DAY 2 OF 5

No Distinction

READ · ACTS 15:6–11

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

According to Peter, what did God give the Gentiles, what distinction did He make, and how did He cleanse their hearts (15:8–9)?

REFLECT

God "made no distinction between us and them" (15:9). Which man, because of his record, his background or his habits, do you secretly treat as less of a Christian than you?

REFLECT

Peter called the Law "a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" (15:10). What heavy yoke are you still trying to carry to make God happy with you?

RESPOND — TODAY

Pray Peter's words out loud: "we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11), and then reach out to the man you named and treat him as your brother.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ACTS 15:11)

DAY 3 OF 5

What God Did and What God Said

READ · ACTS 15:12–21

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did Barnabas and Paul report, and what did James say the words of the Prophets agree with (15:12–15)?

REFLECT

The council listened to what God had done and then checked it against what God had said (15:12–15). When your feelings tell you something about God, how do you test it against His Word?

REFLECT

James said, "we do not trouble those who are turning to God" (15:19). Is there a man just starting out with Jesus whom you have burdened with your rules instead of encouraging?

RESPOND — TODAY

Before you make one decision today, open your Bible and read a passage that speaks to it — let Scripture have the last word.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ACTS 15:11)

DAY 4 OF 5

Only What Is Necessary

READ · ACTS 15:22–35

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did the letter say "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" and how did the church in Antioch respond when they read it (15:28–31)?

REFLECT

The Gentiles were asked to give up a few things for the sake of their Jewish brothers (15:20, 29). What freedom of yours might trip up a weaker brother — and are you willing to set it aside?

REFLECT

The church "rejoiced because of its encouragement" (15:31), and Judas and Silas "strengthened the brethren" (15:32). Who in your life needs a word of encouragement from you this week?

RESPOND — TODAY

Send one man a short message of encouragement today — a verse, a prayer, or simply "I see God working in you."

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ACTS 15:11)

DAY 5 OF 5

When Good Men Disagree

READ · ACTS 15:36–41

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Why did Paul refuse to take John Mark, and what happened between Paul and Barnabas as a result (15:37–40)?

REFLECT

Paul and Barnabas had "such a sharp disagreement that they separated" (15:39). Is there a broken friendship or partnership in your life where you need to own your part?

REFLECT

Mark had "deserted them in Pamphylia" (15:38), yet later Paul called him "useful to me for service" (2 Timothy 4:11). Who have you written off that God may not be finished with?

RESPOND — TODAY

Take one step toward peace today — a call, an apology, or a prayer for the man you fell out with, by name.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ACTS 15:11)

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS

Questions for the table

FOR THE GROUP · 1

The question in Acts 15 started with "you cannot be saved" (15:1) and ended with "saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus" (15:11). What extra rules do men in recovery or in prison often feel they must keep to be accepted by God or by church people?

FOR THE GROUP · 2

The council found "one mind" by telling what God had done, listening in silence and opening the Scriptures (15:12, 15, 25). How can our group handle disagreements the same way?

FOR THE GROUP · 3

Barnabas kept believing in Mark when Paul would not (15:37–39). When is it right to give a man a second chance on the team, and when is it wise to wait?

MY PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You that I am saved through Your grace and nothing I add, so today I lay down…

CUT OUT · CARRY IT · ACTS 15:11

"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."