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Belonging  
Acts 15:1-21

Q. Where do you belong? Organizations? Clubs? Unions? Trade Groups?  
Small Groups? Church?

Q. What is required to belong to Jesus? The Body of Christ?

Acts 15:1&2 *Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.*

### The Big Question: \_\_\_\_\_?

Acts 15:1,5 *Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." (in Jerusalem) 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."*

### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ says who belongs.

Acts 15:6-12 *The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." 12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.*

- "Much Debate"
- Peter's Answer -

### II. The \_\_\_\_\_ says who belongs.

Acts 15:13-21 *After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. 15 With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 16 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, 17 SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' 18 SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. 19 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. 21 For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."*

- James' Answer -

### III. The essentials of belonging.

Acts 15:22-29 *Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas-- Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, 23 and they sent this letter by them... 28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."*

Why Belong?

Point:

### Doggy Bag: Something to take home and chew on!

1. Where do I belong?
2. How does my attitude in life reflect a desire for autonomous solitude?
3. When do I experience a desire to deeply belong to others?
4. What would it be like to hear the Holy Spirit say, "I belong to God"?
5. What are the essentials that I must give up or take on to belong deeply to God?



If you'd like to talk personally and confidentially w/ Pastor Todd about your relationship with Christ, please email [pastortodd@thevineva.org](mailto:pastortodd@thevineva.org) or call 703.819.7795 to set up an appointment.