



Beyond Walls

September 14 & 15, 2013

[Acts 15:1-35](#)

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.

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."

19 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 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. 21 For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath." (Acts 15:1-4, 12-14, 19-21 NIV)

Consider & Discuss

1. What are some of the obstacles that churches and Christians put in the way of people's spiritual journey? Which ones have you personally encountered?
2. Read [Acts 15:1-35](#). What strikes you about this passage?
3. Why do you think the Pharisees wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised? Beyond the obvious physical discomfort, why do you think Paul was so upset with that?
4. Do you think that the requirements of verse 20 are inconsistent with the rest of the passage? If not, how do they differ from circumcision?
5. How would you explain the concept of salvation by grace through faith apart from works? How do you think moral living relates to our salvation?
6. How do you think we can avoid putting unnecessary obstacles in the way of people's spiritual journey while still maintaining a commitment to the truth of the Bible?

Live It

1. What next step in your spiritual journey can you take this week?
2. Prayerfully consider how you can get more involved in the ministry of Renaissance.