



**Preparing for Small Group:** Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
  - (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
  - (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
  - (4) What does God want me to know?
  - (5) What does God want me to do?
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**“Is Grace Enough?”**  
Acts 15:1-35

**Main Idea:** God affirms that true faith in Jesus is truly enough for true salvation.

ANSWERS to the big question: *Is grace enough?*

**There are those who argue that grace isn't enough (1-5).**

From the very beginning, there were those who argued that grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ was not enough to lead to salvation. In the early church, the argument against the sufficiency of grace developed from within the church, stemming from Jewish believers who argued that Gentiles who believed in Jesus must also be circumcised and must follow the Law of Moses in order to be saved. Their argument was profound because their argument cut to the very heart of the Gospel of grace, which argued that God's grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ led to forgiveness and salvation in the life of a believer. These grace detractors argued that faith in Jesus wasn't enough for salvation. They argued that Gentiles must also become functional Jews in order to be saved, adding works — what people do — to grace — what God does for undeserving people! Their argument was causing a tremendous amount of confusion and unrest. Nothing has changed. There are still those who argue that grace isn't enough, and their arguments still cause unrest and confusion where there ought to be rest and peace in the grace of Jesus.

1. In what ways do some people still argue today that grace isn't enough for salvation? What other requirements do some people add to faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Have you ever been upset and confused about your salvation because of some sense that you needed to do more than just receive Jesus as Lord in your life by faith in order to be saved? If so, share your testimony of that struggle.
3. While works aren't required to earn salvation, are works expected in the life of someone who is truly saved by God's grace? Why, or why not? What does God's Word say?

**The testimony of God's people and God's Word argues that grace is enough (6-18).**

While there was much debate about the argument of the grace detractors, God's Word records the words of four important men of grace: Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James. The first three men shared their testimonies of God's grace, which they witnessed in the lives of Gentile believers. Everyone knew Peter, who was the de-facto leader of the Jerusalem church, and God used Peter to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Through that

experience in the house of Cornelius, God made it clear that His grace through faith in Jesus was extended to the Gentiles in the same way that it was extended to the Jews. Second, Paul and Barnabas shared their testimony about the many ways that they witnessed the grace of God in the lives of the Gentiles during their missionary work. Finally, James testified from God's Word — primarily from the Old Testament prophet Amos — to point to God's design all along for His grace to extend to the Gentiles. From the testimony of God's people and God's Word, the case was decisively made that grace was enough! God's Word hasn't changed, and the testimony of God's people is still the same: God's grace is enough!

1. How have you experienced God's grace in your life and/or witnessed God's grace in the lives of others? Share your testimonies.
2. Why are personal testimonies of God's grace in our lives so powerful?
3. Read Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; 26:1-5; and 28:10-17. From the beginning, what was the scope of God's redemptive plan? What are other passages in the Old and New Testaments that continue to reinforce the scope of God's redemptive plan through Jesus?
4. What does this passage in Acts tell us about the importance of using Scripture to resolve conflict in the church? Discuss.

**It's no trouble to display grace when true grace has truly saved your life (19-35).**

The conclusion was clear: Grace was enough, so don't trouble the Gentiles anymore with anything else that's needed for their salvation. But if that's the case, then why does James seem to do just that? The answer is clear: Believers should simply display in their lives the true grace of God that they had received. The list makes sense given the context and the issue of the need for unity between the Gentile and Jewish believers. The Gentile believers were coming out of a pagan culture that was saturated with idol worship and temple prostitution. The request to abstain from things polluted by idols and from sexual immorality wasn't given as a requirement for salvation; rather, the request was given as a display of salvation. It was a simple call to obey the God of grace who had saved them by His grace! As far as mentioning abstinence from things strangled and blood, this was likely a request related to an accommodation on the part of the Gentiles in order to bring unity and fellowship between Jews and themselves. In other words, it was a request to enable the Jews and Gentiles to sit, to eat, and to fellowship at the table in unity. It was a call to display grace, and Acts 15:31 makes it clear that the call was no problem! The Gentiles rejoiced that the sufficiency of grace was defended!

1. Why was the list of requests considered to be no trouble for the Gentile believers? What is the lesson or application of this list for Gentile believers today?
2. What does the list teach us about mutual submission in the church out of reverence for Christ? What does the list say about the value and importance of unity in the church?
3. While works were not required for salvation, it's clear that there are expectations in the lives of believers after they have received salvation through God's grace. What does this passage teach us about the way that grace and works work in the life of a believer?
4. In what ways do you need to obey God in your life? In what ways do you need to mutually submit to other believers out of reverence for Christ and for unity in the body of Christ? Discuss, and then pray for these things in your lives and in our faith family.