

## Scripture

Acts 15:1-21

## Ice Breaker

1. When was the last time you moved? Do you still have anything that you haven't unpacked yet?
2. What is something you were doing three months ago before the pandemic began that you are not doing now and would like to be doing? Or is there something you have started doing that you enjoy?

## Going Deeper

1. Read Acts 15:1-11.
2. What were some of the expected, extra-biblical things you were supposed to follow in the church where you grew up? Or when you became a Christian?
3. Are you more comfortable doing things the way they always have been done? Or are you more comfortable trying different ways of doing things? Why?
4. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas disagreed with the men who came from Judea?
5. If you were a Gentile hearing that these regulations were required, how would you feel about your new-found faith?
6. As a strict Jew, why would these rules be vital to you?
7. How would you describe Peter's struggle with this issue?
8. Knowing that Paul had been a Pharisee, and Peter had a strong desire to keep to the law (10:14), how would their testimony carry that day?
9. Read verses 12-21.
10. James was a Jew. He likely followed the law his whole life. He was also the brother of Jesus. What caused him to change his mind about the issue being discussed?
11. What might have been the danger if James stood up and said, "Listen, we need to do things the way we have always done them"? Why was what the council decided so significant?
12. Do you think it was easy for the church to follow the new instructions of the church council? Why would it have been essential for the regular church attenders to embrace this change in perspective?
13. When a change is imposed on you, do you find it easy or challenging to follow?
14. While this passage is dealing specifically with changes that the early church had to navigate, we too can learn from the wisdom the early church leaders in how we can choose what to continue doing in our life, and what we can, and maybe should, discard. Whenever we encounter change, we have an opportunity to adjust how we live "normal" going forward. For the early church, they decided they needed to change how difficult they had made it for people to connect to God.

What are some things you would like to change in your life so that your next normal is the best it can be?

15. What are some things in your life you think are essential and you don't want to lose?
16. What can we do to not make it difficult for people to turn to God?