

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, September 3, 2017

**Firm Conviction and Careful Compromise
A Study of Acts 15:1 to 16:5**

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We all have two lists, whether they're written down or not. One list is labeled "Firm Convictions." In this list belong all the things we should never abandon. The other list is labeled "Careful Compromises." In this list belong preferences you're willing to adjust for the sake of relationships. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ Give some examples of what belongs in each list
- ❖ What happens when something that really belongs in the "Convictions" list gets put in the "Compromises" list?
- ❖ What happens when something that really belongs in the "Compromises" list gets put in the "Convictions" list?

For the sake of our mission and our fellowship, we need to know what to make *much* of and what to make *little* of. So we need to see how the church in Acts dealt with their first controversy. Use your sermon notes to complete the blanks as you come to them in your discussion.

**First: For the sake of our mission,
I will make *much* of _____.**

Read Acts 15:11.

Pastor Tom led us to circle 5 words in Acts 15:11. As a group, recall the significance of each word to the central message of the gospel:

- ❖ "Saved." What are we saved *from* and *for*? Why are some Christians hesitant to use the word "saved" today?
- ❖ "We." Why is it important to remember that *we* have to be saved, not just *them*?
- ❖ "Jesus." How did he make a way? Is there another way?

- ❖ “Grace.” Why is grace good news?
- ❖ “Believe.” Someone has said that the message of every religion other than Christianity is spelled “D-O” but the message of Christianity is spelled “D-O-N-E.” What’s the difference?

The gospel is so important to guard and protect. It isn’t just the “front door” we enter to begin the Christian life. The story of the cross informs how we’re to live all of life!

- ❖ Read Ephesians 4:32. What does the story of the cross instruct us to do about personal hurts?
- ❖ Read Ephesians 5:23-27. What does the story of the cross instruct husbands to do in relation to their wives?
- ❖ Read Matthew 20:25-28. What does the story of the cross instruct us to do in relation to fellow church members?
- ❖ Read 2 Corinthians 8:7-9. What does the story of the cross instruct us to do in relation to our money?

**Second: For the sake of our fellowship,
I will make *little* of _____.**

Read Acts 15:19-21.

It was James, the brother of Jesus who said these words. He said that they should “not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” What were some of the difficult things that some Jewish Christians wanted to require of Gentile Christians? (Answering this might require some prior Bible knowledge.)

Even though he didn't want to burden the Gentiles with unnecessary rules, James went on to request four things of the Gentiles. What were they?

According to Paul's letters, three of these four things were inconsequential. That is, you could observe them out of respect for the sensibilities of others, but observing them was of no consequence to your relationship to God. So why were Gentiles urged to observe them in the first century?

According to Paul's letters, one of these four things--"sexual immorality"--was offensive to God. So why was it included on the list of behaviors Gentiles needed to avoid out of respect for Jewish sensibilities?

What additions to the Gospel might a new believer encounter in some church, maybe even ours? What should you do about that?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests