



discussion starters.

March 21st | The Main Thing

We invite you to take the content of our Sunday Morning worship hour, and discuss with a friend, your family, or your LIFEgroup each week. This is meant to be a guide for your discussions and can be used as a launching point or complete study outline. Feel free to choose all, many or even just one that will work best for your LIFEgroup.

SUMMARY.

When we remember who God is and who we were, we are in the right place to welcome anyone turning to God. In many areas of life, it's easy to lose sight of the most important things and drift to a place we didn't intend to be. If the church in Acts 15, and every church afterward, including ours, is going to navigate this tension of grace & truth, we are going to need to keep one eye on God's sovereignty. This is God's church, God's Kingdom, God's world. The early church was afraid of bringing in a bunch of people who didn't eat, dress, look, think, act right... but Peter reminded them that this is God's choice, His church, & only He can see and purify hearts. We need to remember how we each received grace & forgiveness from God, while we're still sinners and even as we continued to be. If we are going to be in the right place to navigate this tension of grace & truth, we need to keep one eye on our own sin. To humbly remember what God did for me, and what He can do for others. This is both a church wide, organizational, community thing, but it's also an individual thing as well. When we remember who God is & who we were, we're in the right place.

A SCRIPTURE TO READ.

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. 5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses." 6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." 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[a] has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: 16 "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, 17 that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'[b]—18 things known from long ago.[c] 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.'" The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers 22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. 23 With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. 24 We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25 So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Galatians 1:10 (NIV)

Farewell.

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others."

1 Corinthians 10.23-24(NIV)

B QUESTIONS TO ASK.

- 1** Where do we find evidence of this battle for power in our relationships, workplace, community etc.?
- 2** What changes happen in us, and our interactions, when we humbly admit and recognize that "God's power does not depend on my power"?
- 3** What are some areas of your life, that you have "power"? Which ones might you need to steward that power in a healthier way, and in submission to God's Authority and power in the situation?

C APPLICATION | CHALLENGE.

What is God speaking to you about?
What is He calling you to do about it?

We would love to hear your highlights from this discussion so please email us at office@avonwesleyanchurch.com or text us at 585-622-4575.

D ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES.

Visit our webpage www.avonwesleyanchurch.com/lifegroups for more resources and to watch bonus content.

These additional resources may include videos from The Bible Project, worship songs, and others for our younger kids.

E QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES WITH KIDS

**1**

Pastor Pete talked about 2 sight markers. Why should we keep our sight on God's Sovereignty and our sin?

2

When we keep these in our sight, how does it change how we look at other people?

3

What reminders did the early church need about approaching the Gentiles and sharing The Gospel with them?

4

Are people accepted by God before or after they begin to "act" like a Christian? How does this impact how we approach those who act differently than we do?