

Acts Series

Lesson #109

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Acts of the Apostles “To the end of the earth” Acts 1:8

Grace: The Law of Love Acts 15:22–41



Acts 15:22, “Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.”

Acts 15:25, “it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,”

Acts 15:28, “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:”

Law of Love

John 13:34, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Law of Love

John 15:12, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

John 15:17, “These things I command you, that you love one another.”

Law of Love

Rom. 12:10, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;”

Rom. 13:8, “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

Gal. 5:13, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

**Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:12, 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22;
1 Peter 3:8; 4:8; 1 John 3:11; 3:23; 4:7, 11, 12;
2 John 5**

Acts 15:20, “but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.”

Acts 15:29, “that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

Acts 21:25, “But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

ἀλίσγημα *alispēma* “pollution related to idols”

Describes spiritual uncleanness, contamination, defilement as a result of participation in idolatry.

Often the phrase is simply reduced to “idolatry” and occurs seven other places in the New Testament (1 Cor. 8:1, 4, 7, 10; 10:19; Rev. 2:14, 20).

Each passage also relates to food contextually.

Conclusion: This is an issue related to the weaker brother issue of eating food sacrificed to idols.

πορνεία *porneia* “sexual immorality”

Most New Testament passages relate to some form of sexual immorality, with some exceptions in Jn. 8:41; Rev. 2:21, 14:8; 17:2, 4; 18:3; 19:2

In the Septuagint (LXX) *porneia* is used about 50 times, mostly as a description of unfaithfulness to God, spiritual adultery, or idolatry.

Context determines whether it is a moral problem or a problem similar to the idolatry perception problem.

αἷμα *haima* “blood; bloodshed”

Usually used in relation to murder, or eating meat improperly drained of blood.

πνικτός *pniktos* “choked”

Connected to Mosaic regulations prohibiting the eating of animals which did not have their blood properly drained. This type of sacrificial killing was common in pagan sacrifices.

Conclusion:

The source of the prohibitions was related to Jewish social custom shaped by a combination of rabbinic teaching, the Mosaic Law (Lev. 17–18), and/or the Noahic Covenant.

These three influences together had developed a mentality among the Jewish-background believers where certain social and eating practices by Gentiles were a problem for the Jews. Not a theological problem, but a cultural problem.

These prohibitions “should be viewed not as dealing with the principal issue of the council but as meeting certain practical concerns; not as being primarily theological but more sociological in nature; not as divine ordinances for acceptance before God but as concessions to the scruples of others for the sake of harmony within the church and the continuance of the Jewish Christian mission.”

~Richard Longenecker

Solution:

The Law of Love: Don't let non-essentials become a cause for division and schism.

Acts 15:32, “Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.”

παρακαλέω

parakaleō

aor act indic 3 plur

to urge, exhort,

comfort

ἐπιστηρίζω epistērizō

aor act indic 3 plur

to strengthen, support

Acts 14:22, “strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ ”

Acts 15:41, “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Acts 16:40, “So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.”

Acts 18:23, “After he had spent some time there, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.”

Acts 15:34, “However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.

Acts 15:35, “Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”

Acts 15:36, “Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’

Acts 15:37, “Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

Acts 15:38, “But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.”

Acts 15:39, “Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus;”

παροξυσμός *paroxusmos*

Noun nom masc sing

**sharp disagreement; intense
excitement;**

Acts 15:40, “but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.

Acts 15:41, “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Acts 15:41, “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

ἐπιστηρίζω *epistērizō*
pres act ptcp msn
to strengthen, support