

# BLUEPRINT

## Acts 15

### Pastor Arnold Bracy

**Conflict** – Difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goal or desires.

#### I. Identify the Issue

<sup>1</sup> Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised in accordance with the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." <sup>2</sup> Paul and Barnabas disagreed greatly and debated with them, so it was determined that Paul and Barnabas and some of the others from their group would go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders [and confer with them] concerning this issue. <sup>3</sup> So, after being supplied and sent on their way by the church, they went through both Phoenicia and Samaria telling in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they brought great joy to all the believers. <sup>4</sup> When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received warmly by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported to them all the things that God had accomplished through them. <sup>5</sup> But some from the sect of the Pharisees who had believed [in Jesus as the Messiah] stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise the Gentile converts and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

**Acts 15:1-5 AMP**

#### II. Get the Proper Perspective

<sup>6</sup> The apostles and the elders came together to consider this matter. <sup>7</sup> After a long debate, Peter got up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the message of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> And God, who knows and understands the heart, testified to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; <sup>9</sup> and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith [in Jesus]. <sup>10</sup> Now then, why are you testing God by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to endure? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that we are saved through the [precious, undeserved] grace of the Lord Jesus [which makes us free of the guilt of sin and grants us eternal life], in just the same way as they are."

**Acts 15:6-11 AMP**

### III. The Resolution

<sup>23</sup> “The apostles and the brothers who are the elders, to the brothers and sisters who are from the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, Greetings. <sup>24</sup> Since we have heard that some of our men have troubled you with their teachings, causing distress and confusion—men to whom we gave no such orders or instructions— <sup>25</sup> it has been decided by us, having met together, to select men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup> men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup> So we have sent Judas and Silas, who will report by word of mouth the same things [that we decided in our meeting]. <sup>28</sup> For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place on you any greater burden than these essentials: <sup>29</sup> that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from [consuming] blood, and from [eating the meat of] things that have been strangled, and from sexual impurity. If you keep yourselves from these things, you will do well. Farewell.”

**Acts 15:23-29 AMP**

### IV. The Big Disagreement

<sup>36</sup> After some time Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers and sisters (believers) in every city where we preached the message of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” <sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas wanted to take [his cousin] John, who was called Mark, along with them. <sup>38</sup> But Paul kept insisting that they should not take along with them the one who had quit and deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> And it became such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took [John] Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. <sup>40</sup> But Paul chose Silas [who was again in Antioch] and set out [on his second journey], commended by the brothers to the grace and favor of the Lord. <sup>41</sup> And he traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

**Acts 15:36-41 AMP**

### V. What does this blueprint show today’s Church?

- a. There is no compromise with the Gospel message. Nothing added nothing taken away. (John 14:6)
- b. Unity of the Church body through love. (John 13:34-35)

<sup>20</sup> “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me <sup>24</sup> “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. <sup>25</sup> “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

**John 17:20-26 NIV**

*“In the final hours of Jesus’ life he did not pray that his followers would always be happy, that they would never suffer or that their rights would always be defended. Jesus prayed that his followers would get along with one another. There are 21 epistles or letters in the NT. Every one of them contains at least one command to live at peace with one another.”*

-Ken Sande