

The New Humanity #5

READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.

Monday, 6/2/08 – Read Acts 15:1-5

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: What have you been told is required to become a Christian? Try to remember all the different things you have been told. ... Sometimes people (for their own purposes) make mistaken or exaggerated claims about the requirements of Christian faith. ... In the earliest days of the Christian church, some Jewish Christians told the Gentile Christians that they had to observe all the requirements of the Jewish law if they were going to be Christian. Notice the conflict and tension that underlies this passage. Have you ever felt that tension? How did you handle it?

Tuesday, 6/3/08 – Read Acts 15:6-8

My Observations _____

A Question to Answer: The principal leaders of the church met, considered the controversy, and debated the issue. What do you think of their process? Is this a good way to deal with a controversial issue? ... Do we routinely do this today? Or do we (at least sometimes) try to avoid difficult issues for fear of the conflict they may create? ... What do you think is the best way to deal with controversy within the church?

Wednesday, 6/4/08 – Read Acts 15:7-11

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Notice particularly verse 11. Notice that Peter says that the Gentiles and the Jews are both saved by the GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Grace is the unearned gift of God's astounding love. There's no distinction between Gentiles and Jews: both are saved by grace through faith (trust). There are no other requirements. ... What do you think of this? Do you think that Peter is right? ... Why do you think that people want to impose additional requirements?

Thursday, 6/5/08 – Read Acts 15:12-21

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: James, Jesus' brother and the head of the church in Jerusalem, stated the conclusion of the council - that the Gentile Christians would not be required to obey Jewish law and customs. ... What do you think of their decision? Is this the way you would have decided the controversy? Or would you maybe have looked for some "middle ground," some compromise? ... What do you think would have happened to Christianity if the Jerusalem Council had decided that Gentile Christians must also become Jews?

Friday, 6/6/08 – Read Acts 15:22-29

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Next the council created a plan for communicating their decision! How many plans and projects founder because they are not communicated well? ... In your own life, do you find it easy or difficult to make sure that thorough communication happens? ... When the issues are

controversial, communication is of course much more difficult. ... Is there someone you need to communicate with? Is there some conflict or unresolved tension that needs your communication? Will you undertake to do that, if possible, this week?

Saturday, 6/7/08 – Read Acts 15:30-35

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Follow through! The Jerusalem Council actually implemented their plan. It's good to have good intentions. But resolution only happens, relationships are only reconciled, when we follow through and put our good intentions into action. ... In your life, is there some good intention that still needs action and follow through? Do you know what's holding you back? Will you commit to summon the courage to implement your good intention?

Sunday, 6/8/08 – Read Ephesians 2:13-16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: One of the most awesome miracles of the first Christian generation was the discovery of God's New Humanity -- that Gentiles and Jews, people who had been hostile toward one another for generations, found themselves in authentic community together ... because of Christ. ... What hostile groups do you think God is drawing together into the New Humanity today?

My Faith Journal, June 1, 2008

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ReForming

What do I want to remember out of today's message?

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

What action do I intend to take as a result of today's message?