

Acts 15:1–21

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

James 1:22

MEMORY VERSE

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. **James 1:22**

If you had a choice to be right or to be kind, which would you be? We often have a natural desire to be right and will uphold our rightness even if it hurts the feelings of another. Sometimes our claims to being right cause a wedge to be driven between another party and us, which can last a lifetime. We've all heard people say, "I was right, he was wrong, and that's all that matters." But it's not all that matters! People deserve our love and respect even when they may be wrong.

Read Acts 15:1–21. In this passage, Jewish believers wanted Gentile converts to practice their faith like Jewish customs required. They were convinced they were right about this since it was part of the Law of Moses and they had practiced it this way for centuries.

James acted as the catalyst in this dispute. He did not judge one side over the other as right and the other wrong. He listened carefully to the arguments made along with the testimonies. Then he weighted the argument with Scripture, not rolling over the feelings and concerns of any, but seeking to point everyone to an understanding of God's perspective.

How often do we as parents react negatively to our children when they are caught in a dispute or even want to argue a point with us? Our temptation is to put them in their place when what they need from us is positive direction. This calls on us not to be reactionary, but to be listeners and ultimately agents of change in their lives.

FAMILY DEVOTION TIME

Connect . . .

Discuss traditions and customs the family has for certain days of the week or special holidays. Discuss: **Which customs and traditions could we easily throw off and not give a second thought toward? Which could start conflict in our household if one of us decided it had to go?**

Explore . . .

Family members share in reading Acts 15:1–21. Discuss: **Which side of this argument would you land on and why? How did James act as a catalyst for preserving unity in the end? Was there a progression in how he resolved the dispute? If so, what did he do?**

Transform . . .

Family members discuss how they, like James, could find themselves as those whom others look to for resolving disputes. Discuss: **What is the example of James we can follow in settling disputes at church, at home, among friends, and at work?**

Pray that your family members will seek to be catalysts in resolving disputes, understanding that their role is to help others find God's perspective rather than defending their own opinions.