

## Marinating in God's Word:

Acts 15:1-32

In addition to the Coronavirus challenges, these months have also been filled with heightened concerns about racial divisions. These challenges will still be with us long after we have a Coronavirus vaccine. What are we as servants of Jesus to think and do in response? We're studying another time when the church dealt with tensions between groups.

For further reflection on your own or in a small group, consider these questions:

Have you ever been in a setting where you were in the minority? (gender, age, ethnicity, newcomer among old-timers, etc.) What was it like?

In the Old Testament era the Lord gave his people laws that helped them be unique (like kosher food laws and circumcision). So when Jesus broadened the reach of grace to reach all peoples, the question was obvious: Are kosher foods and circumcision still necessary? The council in Jerusalem had to decide. What was the rationale of each side?

The council did away with kosher and circumcision laws. Why? And the council imposed a few restrictions on the new Gentile believers. Why? Can you think of some common cultural practices in our day that are not appropriate for Christians? Why do you think this?

What do you see as the causes of racial divisions here in America? Do you believe the gospel of Jesus overcomes such divisions and brings unity? If so, how? How would you like to see such unity in our church? What are the barriers? How can we advance in that unity? How can our church help advance unity in Richmond?