

A GALATIANS DOCTRINAL LIBRARY

BOOKLET THREE

The Truth of the Gospel

When a Life Preaches a Different Sermon

Galatians 2:11–19

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The Series

These nine booklets are one argument from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Each volume takes a stretch of the letter and stays with one doctrine so the later books can build instead of repeat. The series is designed to be read in order however; you can read this booklet by itself.

The tone is help, not a contest with other teachers. Galatians was first a letter to people who had believed Christ and then been pulled toward a yoke that promised maturity while it stole peace. Many readers already know that wound. You were measured. You were managed. You watched a church keep Jesus in the vocabulary while defection from His sufficiency became the operating gospel.

Paul looks at that defection without cruelty toward the flock and without softness toward the message that entangled them. Severe where the Gospel is being changed. Patient where a believer is still learning. Always returning to one claim: Christ is enough.

These booklets are not a recruitment for a school. They are a reading of Galatians. The claim is not Reformed, Arminian, or dispensational. The claim is Paul's:

CHRIST IS ENOUGH.

Most volumes are broken into six parts; Booklet Eight has five. Scripture is quoted from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted. Where a booklet distinguishes the text of Galatians from an inference drawn from it, that distinction is intentional. Keep the text first.

The Nine Booklets

- **Booklet One — No Other Gospel (Galatians 1:1–10)**
The Gospel, and what happens when something is added to Christ.
- **Booklet Two — Not from Men (Galatians 1:11–2:10)**
The source of Paul's Gospel. No human being owns your access to God.
- **Booklet Three — The Truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2:11–19)**
Justification by faith and death to Law.
- **Booklet Four — Christ Lives in Me (Galatians 2:20–21)**
Union with Christ as the source of Christian Life.
- **Booklet Five — Why Then the Law? (Galatians 3:1–25)**
The purpose and duration of the Law. The tutor and its end.
- **Booklet Six — No Longer a Slave (Galatians 3:26–4:7)**
Sonship, adoption, Abba, and inheritance
- **Booklet Seven — Known by God (Galatians 4:8–31)**
Knowing God, and the pull of religious bondage
- **Booklet Eight — Stand Fast (Galatians 5:1–13)**
Liberty, circumcision, and the law obligation
- **Booklet Nine — Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:14–6:18)**
The Spirit, the fruit, and practical Christian life

This Booklet

Booklet Three takes the Gospel from source to table. The text is Galatians 2:11–19. Peter knew the truth and still drew back. Fear crossed the meal. The truth of the Gospel was not being walked out straight.

This volume takes up justification by faith and death to the Law. It does not rebuild the different-gospel argument of Booklet One or the source argument of Booklet Two. Those are assumed. What belongs here is the collision: a life that preaches another sermon, and the sentences that answer it—justified by faith in Jesus Christ, I through the Law died to the Law, I have been crucified with Christ.

Read this booklet if you have watched a leader keep the right words and change the table. Read it if you have been taught that standing with God still travels through performance after you believed.

When this volume ends, one question remains: if I died to Law, how do I now live? That is Booklet Four.

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A Word to the Wounded

Some wounds do not come from pagans. They come from a chair that moved. You were at the table. You belonged. Then someone important entered the room, and fellowship changed. No one had to announce that you were less accepted. The distance preached.

This booklet is written for that believer. Paul does not protect Peter's reputation at the expense of the people who watched him leave. He names fear. He names hypocrisy. He names the truth of the gospel. And he does it so that Gentile believers—and every later Christian pressured by religious approval—will not live as though Christ were *almost* enough.

A MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW.

How This Booklet Stands In The Series

Booklet Two ended with recognition. James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace given to Paul and gave the right hand of fellowship. Titus remained uncircumcised. They added nothing to Paul's Gospel. For a moment the controversy appeared settled.

This booklet examines how that decision was tested at a shared table in Antioch. It focuses on two doctrines: justification by faith in Christ rather than by works of the Law, and Paul's death to the Law in order to live to God. It does not rebuild Booklet One's Gospel definition. It does not reopen the independence chronology. It does not explain why the Law was given, or how Christ lives in the believer. Those belong later.

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Part One — When Your Life Preaches a Different Sermon

Chairs Preach

There are sermons we preach with words, and there are sermons we preach through chairs, tables, friendships, and distance — through those we welcome, those we avoid, those we treat as fully accepted, and those we quietly pressure to become more like us. Sometimes the sermon preached by our conduct is louder than anything we say from a pulpit.

Peter discovered that in Antioch. He did not stand before the church and announce that Gentiles must come under Moses. He did something much simpler. He changed tables. And Paul saw immediately that Peter's conduct was communicating something about the Gospel.

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...

Galatians 2:14, NKJV

That sentence controls this entire booklet. Not different personalities. Not a preference for Jewish food. Not ministry style. Paul says the truth of the gospel. Something Peter did contradicted something Peter knew. A person can know Gospel truth, believe it, teach it, and under pressure live in a way that communicates something different. That should humble every Christian. Especially every leader.

The Agreement Before The Confrontation

Booklet Two ended on what appeared to be unity. Paul had gone to Jerusalem. Titus, a Greek, remained uncircumcised. The pillars perceived the grace God had given Paul and gave the right hand of fellowship. Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles; Peter and the others would minister primarily among the circumcised. It would be easy to conclude: problem solved.

Galatians does not allow us to stop there. Theological agreement in a meeting does not necessarily mean every implication of that agreement has settled deeply into the heart. Soon Peter comes to Antioch, and something happens around a meal that exposes how unresolved the tension still was.

God was working through Peter and through Paul, among Jews and among Gentiles. This story is not good Paul versus evil Peter, and it is not Paul versus Christ's

real apostles. Peter belonged to Jesus. Peter had seen the risen Lord, preached at Pentecost, and already been corrected by God concerning Gentiles. That history makes what happens next more serious. Peter was not acting from complete ignorance. He knew something.

Peter Already Knew

Before Antioch there had been Cornelius. God prepared Peter through the vision of the sheet. Peter entered a Gentile house and said, *“You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean”* (Acts 10:28). While Peter was still preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on those who heard. God did not wait for circumcision. God did not require Cornelius to become Jewish before giving him the Spirit.

When Peter later defended himself in Jerusalem, he concluded, *“If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”* (Acts 11:17). That was Peter. He knew Gentiles could receive the Spirit. He knew Gentiles could be accepted by God. God Himself had demonstrated it. And yet later, Peter moved his chair.

Part Two — Fear Crossed the Table

I Withstood Him To His Face

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed.

Galatians 2:11, NKJV

Paul does not protect Peter's reputation at the expense of the text. Neither should we. Peter was wrong. That does not mean Peter was evil, that he abandoned Christ, or that his entire ministry should be dismissed. It means Peter was wrong. Because we love and respect Peter, we should be willing to say exactly what Scripture says about him.

The church is not protected by pretending godly leaders are incapable of error. It is protected when Christ remains above every leader. Peter himself would belong nowhere else. Godly people can be wrong. Sincere believers can be wrong. Experienced leaders can be wrong. People with extraordinary histories with God can be wrong. Peter proves it. That should produce humility, not cynicism. The question is not whether a godly person can ever be wrong. The question is what happens when Scripture exposes it. Do we protect the person, the institution, the tradition—or the truth of the gospel? Paul chose the Gospel.

Before Certain Men Came From James

for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Galatians 2:12, NKJV

Stop at the first clause. Before these men arrived, Peter ate with Gentiles. Not merely preached near them. Not merely tolerated them. He ate with them. Table fellowship was personal, ordinary, and relational. Jews and Gentiles were sharing fellowship because both belonged to Christ. Then certain men came from James, and everything changed.

THE TEXT SAYS

The men came from James. That connection belongs in the text. We should not erase it. James mattered. Jerusalem mattered. The men's arrival carried enough weight that Peter changed his behavior.

THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY

James sent these men with instructions to command Peter to stop eating with Gentiles. That sentence is not in Galatians. We do not need to invent it. Later evidence will raise serious questions concerning James, Moses, Jerusalem, and believing Jews. We should allow that evidence to accumulate. Here the explicit facts are already powerful: the men came from James; Peter had been eating with Gentiles; their arrival changed Peter's behavior; Paul tells us why.

The Motive Paul Names Is Fear

Not new revelation. Not a new command from Christ. Not a theological discovery. Fear. Peter looked at the men who had arrived, and the man who had previously eaten with Gentiles withdrew and separated himself. The Gospel had not changed. Peter's circumstances had and fear changed his behavior.

Fear can move the body before it changes the doctrine. You may know something is true and begin acting as though it is not, because someone important enters the room. That is Peter at Antioch. Fear moved him where truth had not.

Peter did not fear random strangers. He feared, *“those who were of the circumcision.”* These men represented religious history, Moses, Jerusalem, expectations, and approval. Perhaps Peter could imagine the report traveling back. We should not claim to know every thought he had. Paul gives us enough: Peter was afraid. Fear produced separation, and separation began preaching theology.

Peter's Chair Preached A Sermon

Imagine being a Gentile believer at that table. Peter has been eating with you—the apostle who walked with Jesus, preached at Pentecost, and entered Cornelius's house. Then men arrive from Jerusalem. Peter looks at them, gets up, and moves away. No sermon is necessary. The Gentile believer watched. What does the behavior say? Perhaps Peter's Jewishness makes him more acceptable than I am. Perhaps these men from Jerusalem know something I do not. Perhaps I have Christ, but I still lack something. Perhaps if I want full fellowship, I need to live more like a Jew.

Peter never has to say, become Jewish. His conduct creates the pressure. That is why Paul later asks, *“why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” (Galatians 2:14).* The compulsion came through conduct. The system can teach through who is welcomed, who is avoided, who can participate, and who must change—even without a formal doctrinal statement.

Leaders should hear this carefully. If the pastor treats someone as unacceptable, people may assume God finds him unacceptable too. If an elder distances himself because

someone violates a religious preference, others may conclude God requires the same separation. We can become false representatives of God's attitude toward people without intending to. Peter's withdrawal taught something false about the Gentiles' place in Christ. Paul saw it.

Even Barnabas

And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Galatians 2:13, NKJV

Peter's movement did not remain Peter's private problem. Others followed. That is what leadership does. It multiplies. Then, "*even Barnabas was carried away*." That may be one of the saddest phrases in the passage. Barnabas had traveled with Paul, seen Gentiles believe, and defended the Gentile mission. And yet even Barnabas was carried away.

Proximity to conviction is not conviction. You can travel with someone who possesses deep conviction without possessing the same conviction yourself. You can agree in the classroom and retreat under social pressure. Pressure reveals whether a truth has become conviction or remains merely agreement.

Part Three — Not Straightforward About the Truth

Hypocrisy

Paul uses a severe word because their conduct no longer matched what they knew. Hypocrisy does not always mean, I secretly reject everything I publicly say. Sometimes it means my actions contradict my professions. Peter knew Gentiles had been accepted by God. Yet his behavior treated them as though religious separation still determined fellowship. The contradiction was visible.

A church can say it believes in grace, then organize Christian life around fear. A pastor can say Christ completely forgives, then teach believers to obtain forgiveness again through religious performance. A believer can say we are all one in Christ, then treat people who do not conform to his religious traditions as spiritually inferior. The doctrinal statement says one thing. The culture says another. Peter's words may have said Gentiles are accepted. His chair said: not quite. That is hypocrisy.

The Interpretive Key

Paul tells us how to interpret the event. This was not merely food, culture, custom, personality, or ministry style. Peter's behavior contradicted Gospel truth—not because eating with Gentiles saves anyone, but because Peter's separation communicated that Jewish religious practice carried a spiritual distinction Christ had not required of the Gentiles. The table exposed the deeper question: What determines acceptance before God? Christ? Or religious conformity?

The visible problem: Peter moved away from Gentiles. The theological problem: Jewish religious performance was being allowed to determine fellowship and imply spiritual standing. That is why Paul immediately moves from dinner to justification.

Public Error Required Public Correction

I said to Peter before them all...

Galatians 2:14, NKJV

Booklet Two showed Paul meeting privately with the recognized leaders in Jerusalem. He was not a man who believed every disagreement should be public. Antioch was different. The error had become public. Everyone saw Peter leave the table, the Jewish believers follow, Barnabas moved. Gentile believers had received a public message. So Paul gave a public correction.

Public correction should never become entertainment or an opportunity to destroy someone. Paul is not humiliating Peter for personal satisfaction. He is correcting a public

Gospel contradiction because the people affected by it need to hear the truth. Private offense should be handled privately where possible. Public teaching that harms the church may require public clarity. Silence can become cooperation with the error.

Unity built upon Gospel contradiction is not biblical unity. The Gospel matters more than Peter's reputation. That is not disrespect toward Peter. It is placing Christ above Peter—exactly where Peter himself belongs.

If You, Being A Jew

If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

Galatians 2:14, NKJV

Peter had already been living with freedom. His own life had already admitted something. He had been eating with Gentiles. He had not been consistently living according to the Jewish separation he now appeared to be defending. So why compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

Which Peter is telling the truth—the one who ate freely with Gentiles, or the one who separated when the men arrived? Paul essentially asks: Which life do you actually believe? That question reaches every Christian. Do you believe Christ is sufficient? Then why live as though religious performance must complete Him? Eventually your life reveals your operating gospel.

How Do You Compel Someone Without Commanding Them?

Paul's word is, "compel." Yet Peter had not necessarily issued a verbal command. His influence created pressure. That happens in churches constantly. The pastor may never explicitly say that you must do these things to be accepted by God. Yet everyone understands what "serious Christians" do, how "trusted" people behave, and what the leadership approves. If you do not conform, the consequences are often: distance, suspicion, reduced fellowship, and perhaps even the loss of opportunities. No formal doctrinal statement is required. The culture, "compels."

A church can have no written rule and still create powerful law. Some practices may involve genuine wisdom or conviction. The problem begins when the practice becomes a measure of acceptance before God, or when people are pressured to adopt a religious culture as though that culture were the necessary expression of Gospel faithfulness. Paul saw Gentiles being pushed toward Jewish living and he said, no.

Part Four — Justification by Faith

The Question Underneath The Table

The confrontation raises one of the most important questions in Christianity: How does a Christian live? A Jewish believer had spent his entire life under the law of Moses—observing food laws, circumcision, Sabbaths, festivals, purity, temple worship, and sacrifices. Then Jesus dies, Jesus rises, and the Spirit comes. What changes? Must the Gentile become Jewish? Does the Jewish believer remain beneath Moses? Does Christ save while Moses governs?

Those were enormous questions. They are not entirely different from the questions Christians still ask: What guides me? How do I obey? What happens when I sin? What makes God pleased with me? Does God accept me today? That is why Paul's answer matters.

A Man Is Not Justified By Works Of The Law

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 2:16, NKJV

How did Paul move from a dinner table to justification? Because the dinner table was revealing the deeper issue. Who stands right before God, and on what basis—Jewish religious practice, or Christ?

Notice the wording. Paul does not say a Gentile is not justified by works of Law. He says a man. Humanity. Jew and Gentile. Religious and irreligious. Peter, Cornelius, Paul, James. No flesh can establish righteousness before God through Law. And who is, “we”? Paul and Peter, Jewish believers, men who had Moses. Why did they believe in Christ? That they might be justified by faith in Christ. If Moses could establish their righteous standing, why did Jewish people need Christ? Because “*by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified.*”

What Justification Means

To justify is to declare righteous—to establish someone as right before God. Paul's claim is not merely that Gentiles do not have to become Jews before they can begin Christianity. It is deeper: works of Law do not establish righteousness before God. Therefore Peter's behavior was communicating something his theology should have

denied. By separating, Peter gave Jewish religious performance a practical significance that justification by faith had removed.

The Jewish believer has Moses, circumcision, dietary distinction, and a religious history. The Gentile may have none of those things. Yet before God they need the same Christ, and they stand upon the same basis: faith in Christ. That destroys religious superiority. The Jew cannot boast, I have Moses. The Gentile cannot boast, I never needed Moses. Both boast: Christ.

Justification Must Reach Monday Morning

Many Christians affirm justification by faith as the doctrine of how they became Christians, but after salvation they live by another principle. Grace got me in; performance keeps me acceptable. Faith began the relationship; works maintain it. Christ justified me then, but my behavior determines whether God is pleased with me today. Paul does not divide Christian life that way. If works of Law cannot establish righteousness, they cannot become the way a believer keeps improving his standing with God after conversion. You sin. Now what? Does your standing change? Is God holding the sin against you? Must you confess sufficiently, feel sufficiently miserable, promise improvement, seek pastoral restoration, or perform enough good behavior to feel spiritual again? Or do you remain justified by Christ?

The Cross resolved the sin issue, but forgiveness alone is not living to God; nor is it Christ living in the believer. Here Paul presses the next point: if Christ establishes righteousness, this week's performance is not the basis.

You Must Decide

Either Christ completely establishes my righteous standing, or my works contribute to it. Either God dealt with the sin issue, or He did not. Either Christ is sufficient, or He needs my religious performance to complete the relationship. We cannot indefinitely live between the two. A Christian who tries will experience continual instability: good week, God accepts me; bad week, God rejects me; prayer answered, I must be doing well; suffering comes, what did I do wrong. That is not justification by faith. That is justification by performance inspection.

Christians should examine conduct. Fruit matters. Jesus spoke about fruit. But fruit cannot become the hidden basis upon which we justify ourselves or others before God. Fruit flows from Life. Fruit does not purchase Life. Here we simply protect justification.

Paul and James

Paul says a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ. James writes, *"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only"*

(*James 2:24*). Many Christians have been taught a particular harmonization: Paul and James are saying exactly the same thing from different perspectives—works before salvation versus after; justification before God versus before men; different senses of faith, works, and justify.

Those interpretations exist. I know them. I do not want to pretend they do not. But I am not convinced we should begin with the assumption that these men could not have genuinely disagreed. The historical evidence we are examining gives reason to take the possibility of real disagreement seriously. James was connected with Jerusalem. Men came from James. Peter's behavior changed. The circumcision issue remained powerful. Acts will later show thousands of believing Jews zealous for the Law and James deeply involved in addressing reports that Paul taught Jewish believers to forsake Moses. Therefore I do not believe we should force Paul and James into verbal harmony before allowing each text to speak.

This does not require us to villainize James. James loved Jesus. James served the church. James carried enormous responsibility in Jerusalem. If he remained deeply attached to Moses, that does not require us to make him foolish or malicious. There was a coherent biblical logic available to a Jewish believer: God had promised Israel a new heart and His Spirit, and had said His Spirit would cause His people to walk in His statutes. A sincere Jewish believer could reason that now that the Spirit has come, God has provided what is necessary for Israel to live faithfully under what He commanded. From that perspective, remaining zealous for Moses could appear faithful rather than contrary to Christ. I do not have to agree with that conclusion in order to treat the reasoning charitably. Later biblical evidence can continue the investigation.

Whatever conclusion the reader eventually reaches concerning James, Paul's statement in Galatians cannot be softened. A man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ. By the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified. That is the controlling text here.

Part Five — Dead to Law, Alive to God

Is Christ A Minister Of Sin?

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

Galatians 2:17, NKJV

There it is—the fear that follows grace. If Christ justifies us apart from Law, and Christians still sin, does grace make Christ responsible for sin? The objection makes sense. If believers no longer stand before God through Law, what restrains them? If justification is by faith, will people abuse grace? Paul does not solve the concern by putting the Christian back under Law. That is essential.

Paul's sentence also acknowledges reality. While seeking justification in Christ, “*we ourselves also are found sinners.*” Christians can still fail: Peter just did something wrong, and Barnabas got carried away. The presence of failure does not prove grace failed, and it does not prove the believer needs to return to Law. Christ does not encourage sin, and grace is not the cause of flesh. Law can command. Fear can restrain. Shame can pressure. Transformation cannot arise from self-effort sufficient to make us acceptable. Paul will not leave the believer dead and empty. He is about to name the Life. First, he finishes the death: do not rebuild what Christ brought to an end.

If I Build Again

For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Galatians 2:18, NKJV

Religious instinct says: the believer sinned; rebuild the rules; increase control; strengthen accountability; add consequences; and restore the external system. Paul says if I build again—that is the problem.

Paul had left behind a system in which Law defined his righteous standing. He had been zealous, he had advanced, he had possessed religious credentials, and then Christ came. Paul no longer looked to that system for justification. To rebuild it would mean returning to the relationship he had already abandoned, and Paul says that doing so would make him the transgressor — not Christ.

Grace feels dangerous when someone fails. A church proclaims complete forgiveness, then someone commits an ugly sin, and everyone panics. Surely we need to qualify grace now. Soon the old structure appears again: fear, distance, condemnation, and religious

procedures required before the person may once again be treated as accepted. Paul says do not rebuild. That does not mean sin is harmless. It means Law cannot become the source of transformation.

Law Cannot Love You

Human beings need love, acceptance, security, belonging, and peace. We search for those things constantly—in people, achievement, money, religion, and success. Law can tell us what is right. It cannot love us. Law can identify failure. It cannot accept us. Law can pronounce a standard. It cannot give Life. That does not make Law evil. God had a reason for giving it. Here Paul's movement is already decisive. He is about to tell us he died to it.

I Through The Law Died To The Law

For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

Galatians 2:19, NKJV

This is one of the strongest statements in the entire letter. Paul does not say he has a different attitude toward Law. He does not say he still lives under Law but now Jesus helps him obey it. He does not say he is free from the ceremonial parts but still governed by the rest as the rule that still governs him. Paul says: I died to the Law. That language must carry its full weight. Death to Law is the end of the believer's former governing relationship. How a dead man lives—and why God ever gave the Law—is the next stretch of the letter. This page stays with the death.

Paul says "I"

Do not miss who is speaking: Paul—a Jew, circumcised, a former Pharisee, zealous for the traditions of his fathers, and a man who had lived deeply inside the law of Moses—was now dead to the Law.

It would be easy to construct a two-track Christian system: Gentiles were never under Moses; therefore, Gentile Christians are free from Law; Jewish Christians, however, remain under Moses. But Paul himself was Jewish. And Paul says he died to the Law. That should force us to think carefully. Paul does not place himself under a second arrangement in which Jewish believers remain under Moses as their rule with God. He says I died.

Later Romans 7 will say the same thing more slowly: Law governs a person while he lives; death changes that relationship. We do not import the entire Romans argument here. Galatians already gives us the conclusion. Paul died to Law

That I Might Live To God

Paul does not say he died to Law so that he could become autonomous, sin freely, ignore God, or invent his own morality. He says, “*that I might live to God.*” Dead to Law—why? To live to God. Freedom from Law does not mean freedom from God. Paul does not move from Law to lawlessness. He moves from Law to Life with God.

Many Christians effectively understand the Gospel this way: I remain under God’s Law; I violate it; Jesus forgives me; then I go back under Law; I violate it again; Jesus forgives me again. The cycle continues. Paul says something more radical. Not: I am forgiven while remaining in the same legal relationship. But: I died to the Law. Death changes the relationship. That is why we must not shrink Paul’s words to: you cannot be justified by Law, but Law still runs the believer’s life with God afterward. Paul’s language is stronger than that. Dead to Law. And the purpose? To live to God.

Part Six — Live Straight Toward the Truth

The Table Now Makes Sense

Why was Peter's withdrawal so serious? Because his behavior was practically rebuilding what Christ had torn down. Peter stood in Christ. Gentile believers stood in Christ. Yet under pressure Peter reintroduced a religious boundary at the table. If justification is by faith, if no flesh is justified by works of Law, if Paul himself died to Law, then why should Gentile believers be pressured toward Jewish religious conformity? The table was not merely a social problem. It was the visible manifestation of a theological contradiction.

Two Ways Of Standing Cannot Share The Same Ground

One way says Christ establishes my standing. The other way says Christ plus my religious performance establishes or maintains my standing. They cannot both function as the basis of acceptance. Either Christ's work is sufficient, or something must be added. That was Booklet One. Now the same conflict appears in behavior. Peter's mouth may have affirmed Christ. His withdrawal communicated Jesus—and. That is why conduct matters.

The Modern Church Can Move Its Chair Too

We may never confront a circumcision table. But we can move our chairs. A divorced believer walks in. A former addict. Someone with a visible past. Someone who does not dress like us, share our background, know our religious vocabulary, or understand every doctrine correctly yet. Someone who has failed publicly. What do we communicate? Come to Christ—and then become like us? Christ accepts you—but we will wait until you prove yourself? God forgives—but we will keep your debt alive? Jesus brought you near—but institutional acceptance is still required before you may fully belong? That is how a modern chair can contradict the truth of the gospel.

Leaders Must Be Especially Careful

Peter's actions carried weight because Peter was important. People followed him. Leaders must be especially careful about turning preferences, personal convictions, cultural practices, and denominational traditions into apparent measures of God's acceptance. A pastor may say, "This is simply my conviction." But if the entire congregation learns, Pastor does it—therefore God requires it, the conviction has become a functional law. Leadership multiplies communication. That does not mean leaders should possess no convictions. It means they must distinguish what Christ requires from what they personally practice. Peter failed that distinction at Antioch.

Grace Does Not Mean Silence

Should Paul have simply accepted Peter's difference? No. Grace does not mean truth doesn't matter. Grace gave Paul courage to defend people who were being pressured back toward bondage. Sometimes love says no—not because we hate the person, but because we love the people being affected. Paul was protecting Gentile believers and Gospel truth. In a strange way he was also serving Peter. A friend who allows you to publicly contradict the Gospel because he is afraid to offend you, is not doing you a favor.

Do Not Make Paul The Hero Either

We can read Galatians and begin cheering for Paul as though the story were Paul versus everyone. No. Paul is not the hero. Jesus is. Paul's authority comes from Christ. Paul's Gospel comes from Christ. Paul's justification comes from Christ. Paul's freedom from Law comes through Christ. He is not building a religion around himself. He is tearing every human boast down. Peter is not the hero. James is not the hero. Paul is not the hero. Christ is.

Conclusion — If I Died to Law, How Do I Now Live?

The Antioch crisis began with something remarkably ordinary. A meal. Peter sat with Gentiles. Then men came from James. Peter became afraid. He withdrew. Other Jews followed. Even Barnabas followed. And suddenly the table preached a different message.

Paul did not call it a personality difference, a cultural preference, or a matter of private conviction. He said they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel. That phrase should stay with us. Does the way I live point straight toward what Christ accomplished? Or does fear bend the message?

Underneath the table was justification. A man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ. No flesh. Not Gentiles only. We—Jewish believers—believed in Christ for this very reason. And Paul, a Jew who had lived inside the law of Moses, says he died to the Law that he might live to God. Not forgiven while remaining in the same legal relationship. Dead to Law. Alive to God. Do not rebuild what was destroyed.

THAT I MIGHT LIVE TO GOD.

Which raises the question this booklet cannot answer alone. If Paul died to Law, how does he now live? What no longer determines our standing is now clear. Who becomes the Source of our Life is the next subject.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...

Galatians 2:20, NKJV

That is where Booklet Four begins.