

GALATIANS | Chapter 2

PART 1 | GUARDING THE GOSPEL

Paul went to Jerusalem to protect the gospel, and he didn't budge.

Galatians 2:1-5 (NKJV)

- ¹ *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.*
- ² *And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.*
- ³ *Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*
- ⁴ *And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),*
- ⁵ *to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

Galatians 2:1-5 (NLT)

- ¹ *Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too.*
- ² *I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I met privately with those considered to be leaders of the church and shared with them the message I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure that we were in agreement, for fear that all my efforts had been wasted and I was running the race for nothing.*
- ³ *And they supported me and did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile.*
- ⁴ *Even that question came up only because of some so-called believers there, false ones, really, who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations.*
- ⁵ *But we refused to give in to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the gospel message for you.*

MAIN POINTS

Galatians 2:1 Paul's years of faithful service had already answered his critics.

Galatians 2:2 God sent Paul to protect the gospel, because the message itself was at stake.

Galatians 2:3 Titus was living proof that grace alone saves.

Galatians 2:4 Freedom in Christ is worth guarding.

Galatians 2:5 Some things we can bend on. The truth of the gospel isn't one of them.

TALK ABOUT IT

Read verse 2 in both translations. What does each one show you about why Paul went to Jerusalem?

Titus was living proof of salvation by grace alone (verse 3). Why do you think people sometimes expect others to become like them before they can come to Jesus?

Compare how the NKJV and NLT describe the false brothers in verse 4. What might it look like today for someone to try to take away the freedom we have in Christ?

Paul wouldn't give in *even for an hour* (verse 5). How can we tell the difference between being flexible and compromising the truth of the gospel?

PART 2 | ONE GOSPEL, DIFFERENT CALLINGS

The pillars of the church had nothing to add to Paul's message.

Galatians 2:6-10 (NKJV)

⁶ *But from those who seemed to be something, whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man, for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.*

⁷ *But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter*

⁸ *(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),*

⁹ *and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

¹⁰ *They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

Galatians 2:6-10 (NLT)

⁶ *And the leaders of the church had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.)*

⁷ *Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews.*

⁸ *For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles.*

⁹ *In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews.*

¹⁰ *Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do.*

MAIN POINTS

Galatians 2:6 God has no favorites, and nobody can add to His gospel.

Galatians 2:7 One gospel, different assignments.

Galatians 2:8 The same God who worked through Peter was working through Paul.

Galatians 2:9 When we recognize God's grace in someone, we stand with them.

Galatians 2:10 Remember the poor, even the ones who don't see everything the way you do.

TALK ABOUT IT

Look at verse 6 again. How does knowing God has no favorites change the way you see yourself and others?

Is there an area of your life where it's easy to seek the approval of people more than the approval of God?

Verses 7 and 8 show the same God working through Peter and Paul in different ways. How can we celebrate someone else's calling without comparing it to our own?

Paul was *eager* to remember the poor (verse 10), even believers who didn't see everything the way he did. What are some practical ways we could do that together?

PART 3 | NO DOUBLE STANDARDS

Even Peter drifted, and Paul cared enough about the gospel to say so.

Galatians 2:11-14 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;*

¹² *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.*

¹³ *And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*

¹⁴ *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "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 2:11-14 (NLT)

¹¹ *But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong.*

¹² *When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision.*

¹³ *As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.*

¹⁴ *When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"*

MAIN POINTS

Galatians 2:11 Nobody is above correction when the truth of the gospel is at stake.

Galatians 2:12 Fear of people can pull a strong believer off course fast.

Galatians 2:13 When a leader drifts, others drift with him.

Galatians 2:14 Our walk has to match what we say we believe.

TALK ABOUT IT

Compare verse 12 in the NKJV and NLT. What does the NLT's word *criticism* add to your understanding of why Peter pulled away?

Even Barnabas was carried away (verse 13). Why do you think one leader's choices can influence so many people?

Peter said one thing and lived another (verse 14). Where is it easiest for our words and our walk to drift apart?

Paul confronted Peter because the truth of the gospel was at stake. What makes a hard conversation like that worth having?

PART 4 | JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

Justified by faith, and now Christ lives His life through ours.

Galatians 2:15-21 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*

¹⁶ *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.*

¹⁷ *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!*

¹⁸ *For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*

¹⁹ *For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.*

²⁰ *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

²¹ *I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."*

Galatians 2:15-21 (NLT)

¹⁵ "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles.

¹⁶ Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

¹⁷ But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not!

¹⁸ Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down.

¹⁹ *For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law, I stopped trying to meet all its requirements, so that I might live for God.*

²⁰ *My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

²¹ *I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.*

MAIN POINTS

Galatians 2:15 Religious or not, we all come to God the same way.

Galatians 2:16 We're justified by faith in Christ, never by keeping the law.

Galatians 2:17 Grace doesn't hand out permission to sin. It gives us a reason to obey.

Galatians 2:18 Rebuilding what Jesus tore down only puts us back under the law.

Galatians 2:19 Dying to the law is where living for God starts.

Galatians 2:20 It's no longer I who live. Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:21 If we could earn it, Jesus died for nothing.

TALK ABOUT IT

Read verse 16 in both translations. How do the words *justified* and *made right with God* help you understand what God has done for you?

Why do you think it's so tempting to keep trying to earn God's acceptance, even after we've trusted Christ?

Verse 17 answers people who said grace leads to sin. How has understanding God's grace made you want to please Him more, not less?

Compare verse 20 in the NKJV and NLT. What does it look like in everyday life to let Christ live through you?

Galatians 2:2

Jack Hayford: The revelation likely refers to specific guidance from God to Paul. The present tense of *preach* shows that Paul didn't change his message to suit different occasions and audiences. Those of *reputation* were the recognized leaders of the Jerusalem church.

Matthew Henry: Paul faithfully gave a full account of the gospel he preached among the Gentiles, free from any mixture of Judaism. Many wouldn't welcome it, but he wasn't afraid to own it. His concern was that the fruit of his past work not be lessened or his future usefulness hindered.

Galatians 2:3

Jack Hayford: Titus, who was Greek, was a test case. The leaders in Jerusalem likely urged Paul, for the sake of peace, to compromise by having Titus circumcised. Paul refused, because giving in would have meant accepting the bondage of the Law over the freedom of the gospel.

Galatians 2:4

Jack Hayford: The false brethren were Judaizers who insisted that Gentiles be circumcised as a requirement for salvation.

Galatians 2:5

Matthew Henry: We must not make room for any conduct that would cast a shadow on the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 2:6

Jack Hayford: Any supposed advantage the senior apostles had over Paul was of no concern to him, and it didn't affect the validity or independence of his ministry.

Matthew Henry: Though Paul talked with the other apostles, he didn't receive any addition to his knowledge or his authority from them.

Galatians 2:7

Jack Hayford: God has only one gospel, but He assigns different spheres and cultures in which to preach it.

Matthew Henry: The gospel isn't ours. It's God's, and we're only its keepers. For that, we should praise God.

Galatians 2:8

Matthew Henry: The apostles agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles while they kept preaching to the Jews, believing that dividing the work this way matched the mind of Christ.

Galatians 2:9

Matthew Henry: By giving Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, the apostles acknowledged that Paul had been chosen for the honor and office of an apostle just as they had.

Galatians 2:10

Jack Hayford: The believers in Jerusalem were known to be poor **Romans 15:26**.

Matthew Henry: This is a pattern of Christian charity that we should extend to all the disciples of Christ.

Galatians 2:11

Jack Hayford: Antioch of Syria was the third largest city in the Roman Empire and the missionary center of the early church **Acts 11:19-26**. Paul's apostolic authority showed in this ugly clash with Peter, and his purpose in telling the story was to state the very truth of the gospel.

Galatians 2:12

Jack Hayford: Peter's action didn't come from theological conviction. It came from cowardice.

Galatians 2:13

Jack Hayford: The rest of the Jews were Jewish Christians in the church at Antioch, like Barnabas, who weren't associated with the legalists.

Galatians 2:14

Jack Hayford: Peter no longer observed Jewish food regulations, so separating himself from the Gentiles was flagrant inconsistency.

Matthew Henry: Because Peter's offense was public, Paul corrected him publicly. By the death of Christ, the wall between Jew and Gentile had been taken down, and by withdrawing from the Gentiles, Peter led others to think the old ceremonies were still necessary.

Galatians 2:15

Jack Hayford: When Paul calls the Gentiles sinners, he isn't questioning their moral qualities. He's speaking of the fact that they didn't observe the Law.

Galatians 2:16

Jack Hayford: Paul and Peter agree that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the way of salvation.

Matthew Henry: Why did we believe in Christ, if not to be justified by faith in Him? Then it's foolish to go back to the law and expect to be justified by moral works, sacrifices, or ceremonies. And the argument applies just as strongly against depending on the works of the moral law as it does against ceremonies.

Galatians 2:17

Jack Hayford: Christ doesn't promote sin by releasing us from bondage to a legalistic system.

Matthew Henry: It's an old and unjust charge that justification by faith alone encourages people to sin. To use free grace as an excuse to live in sin is to try to make Christ the minister of sin, and every Christian heart should shudder at that thought.

Galatians 2:18

Jack Hayford: The transgressor is the one who turns back from Christ to legalism.

Galatians 2:19

Jack Hayford: Through the law, Paul became aware of his sin, but the Law gave him no power to overcome it. So he turned away from the Law as a way to be accepted by God.

Matthew Henry: Paul no longer hoped for or feared anything from the law, any more than a dead man does from his enemies. But the result wasn't a careless, lawless life. It was a life devoted to God.

Galatians 2:20

Jack Hayford: The believer, united by faith to Christ in His death, has died to the old life and has risen to a new life **Romans 6:1-10**.

Matthew Henry: Faith fastens on Christ giving Himself for us. As Henry puts it, to believe in Christ crucified "is not only to believe that he was crucified, but also to believe that I am crucified with him."

Galatians 2:21

Jack Hayford: If we can earn salvation by obeying the Law, then the Cross is unnecessary.

Matthew Henry: "God's grace cannot stand with man's merit. Grace is no grace unless it is freely given every way."

SOAP

SOAP is a simple way to read the Bible and hear from God. Take one passage a day this week and work through these 4 steps in a notebook or on your phone.

S is for Scripture. Read the passage slowly, more than once. Then write out the verse that stands out to you, word for word.

O is for Observation. Write down what you see. Who's talking? Who are they talking to? What's happening, and what does the passage show you about God?

A is for Application. Ask what this means for your life right now, and write 1 sentence about what you're going to do with it.

P is for Prayer. Pray the verse back to God in your own words, and ask Him to help you live it out today.

THIS WEEK'S PASSAGES

- Day 1 Galatians 2:1-5
- Day 2 Galatians 2:6-10
- Day 3 Galatians 2:11-14
- Day 4 Galatians 2:15-16
- Day 5 Galatians 2:17-18
- Day 6 Galatians 2:19-21
- Day 7 Galatians 2:1-21

On day 7, read the whole chapter straight through and write down what God has been saying to you all week.