STUDIES IN GALATIANS

Study #4: Galatians 2:11-21

"You Were Running Well"
(Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free)

You Were Running Well: UNTIL: **Peer Pressure Postponed Progress** – Galatians 2:11-21

Key verse 5:7 — "You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?"

Lesson number four in the series in Galatians. Our key verse is "You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?"

And then we have billed each one of the studies on that phrase "You were running well until."

Today it's "You were running well until; peer pressure postponed progress."

Our key verse is going to be verse 12. We'll be there in just a little bit.

Brennan Manning in his book *Abba's Child* says:

An old anecdote is told about a farm boy whose one skill was finding lost donkeys. When asked how he did this, he

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answered, "I just figured out where I would go if I was a jackass, and there it was." (p. 169)

Today we're going to talk about interpersonal relationships because this is a real serious matter. This study is not an easy one. It's not an easy one for us to feel comfortable during it because the Spirit of God has a way of turning these verses back on us, which is wonderful. And so I hope that as you face these circumstances, you'll realize that last week the last thing we had in the study was five grown men holding hands in a circle singing "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

You'll remember because of the fact that Peter, James and John extended the right hand of Christian Fellowship, you also have John and Peter joining them. Assuming the fact that their message is the same but their field of ministry is different. Peter is going to the Jews and Paul is going to the Gentiles. So it's a wonderful time.

Now, they have made the trip back 130-something miles back to Antioch—this is Titus and Paul and Barnabas—and no sooner did they get home then Peter shows up on the doorstep.

It's kind of like so many good things happened when they talk in Jerusalem about the ministry with the Gentile saints in Antioch that they wanted to go check it out. And so Peter shows up sometime there after the Council and that's where the scene of the study opens today.

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John Ortberg, you can tell that he's been in ministry for quite a long time because he's pretty graphic in what he has to say about interpersonal relationships.

Some people tempt me out of the flow of the Spirit. They judge me, and I feel discouraged. They dislike me, and I feel rejected. They are a black hole of need and they drain me. They throw roadblocks in my path and discourage me. They anger me. They scare me. Plus I don't like them.

The playwright George Bernard Shaw sat next to a pompous bore at a dinner party one evening. After listening to an interminable monologue of useless information, Shaw observed, "Between the two of us we know all there is to know."

"How's that?" asked his fascinated companion.

"Well," replied Shaw, "you seem to know everything except that you're a bore. And I know that!" (*The Me I Want to Be*, p. 203)

Shaw and Winston Churchill had a wonderful relationship:

Shaw and Winston Churchill famously found each other to be difficult. Shaw once sent two tickets to Churchill to the opening night of one of his plays, with instructions to "bring a friend-if you have one." Churchill sent them back because he was busy opening night. He said he would come on "the second night-if there is one." (*The Me I Want to Be*, p. 203)

So you can tell that some people are able to rise above it and laugh about it and yet the seriousness of the situation is going to be something that we're going to have to deal with in the

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presence of the Spirit, because the fall-out of what we're getting ready to look at is pretty horrendous.

Erwin McManus says:

Love and sacrifice were inseparable. The barbarian way is not about violence fueled by vengeance and hatred. The barbarian way is about love expressed through sacrifice and servanthood. (*The Barbarian Way*, p. 34)

So what we're looking at today is: You were running well until, peer pressure postponed progress.

Now you know that the apostle Paul told us back in chapter 1 and verse 10.

<u>Galatians 1:10</u>

> For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God or am I seeking to please men? If I still were pleasing men, a bond slave of Christ I would not be.

So he's going a stand for truth and he's going to have conviction over that truth. This is going to bring him into conflict with Peter.

Now there's a reason for this being included in this wonderful epistle to the Galatian church.

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The Judaizing teachers thought that Peter could make no mistakes. He was the head honcho. He was the inside guy. He was the president of the 12 disciples and chairman of the executive committee and all the credentials. So he was perfect Peter in the eyes of the Law and the Judaizers.

Paul is a young man that comes lately and he doesn't even have the qualifications, according to them, for apostleship so you can disregard what he has to say. And so Paul, in the first two chapters, is doing all personal stuff. We've heard his testimony. We've heard where his message came from. We heard him speak out strongly about a different gospel. And then even where he traveled and the itinerary. Last week we saw that it was the direction of the Lord as to where he was going and what he was going to do.

Now, remember your key verse: You are running well until what? Someone cut in on you. Who was it that caused that? And I used that little phrase "You were running well" to outline the studies that we're having together.

"You are running well until; no runs, no hits and a big error."

He told you that in that very first study, these guys who are coming into Galatia are coming in with a twisted gospel. It's a different message. And you are going to have troubled minds because that's what Satan tries to do.

Study #2: "You were running well until; you forgot what God was doing in your life."

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And here the apostle recounts the dramatic changes that took place in his life as a result of what happened on the Damascus Road and that time that he was in Damascus.

Remember that he was there for a period of three years. He went off in the desert to spend some time with the Lord. But at the end of three years he went down to Jerusalem to spend a two week retreat with Peter and he also got to see James the brother of our Lord.

Then in episode number three, which we looked at last week: "You will running well until; divine direction was not discerned" (chapter 2 verses 1 to 10).

It was 14 years between the previous study and the study we had last week. During those 14 years, Barnabas went over to Tarsus and invited the apostle Paul to come and help him with the church in Antioch. It grew and it flourished but they had Judaizing teachers there that were frustrating and dividing the flock in Antioch. So the head leaders in the church said "we're going to send a group of you down to Jerusalem and get this thing straightened out." And basically they went south and they came to Jerusalem and they met with Peter, James and John—the pillars of the church.

And they solved the problem by the things that happened at that Counsel. Now, you would think that what was ruled on in that Counsel would still be in effect just a few days after it happened, especially by the head honcho from Jerusalem. But such is not the case. That when they get back to Antioch, he

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still hasn't gone on the second missionary journey, they're getting ready to do that.

And while they're there, Peter comes and he comes in and he's just so thrilled. He sits with the Gentiles and has a ball. He's just so free because of the new edict that was decided in Jerusalem that there was no distinction and that the Gentiles did not have to keep any part of the Law. They were free from that and so the work of God's grace.

But now look at verse 11.

<u>v. 11</u> But when Cephas came to Antioch to his face I opposed him, because he stood condemned.

"But when Cephas"—or Peter—"came to Antioch to his face I opposed him, because he stood condemned."

Something bad is getting ready to happen. And Paul is telling these folks in Galatia that when he was there in Antioch, he did some things that we can't accept.

Do you see how quick things can happen? In Jerusalem, they're totally unified. In Antioch, there's nothing but conflict.

In Jerusalem they've got the creed, all described and they are unified with it. And then in Antioch, he's got the conduct. It's inconsistent with it and they're divided. They just got through singing "Blest be the tie that binds" and now their hearts are broken and they're divided. It was just a 360 mile trip north to

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Antioch, but something really bad happened in the process. And Paul says—if you want the translation of the Greek text—"I stood against him face-to-face."

Picture in your mind a huge dining room, because believers in those days broke bread together <u>often</u>. So they are having a glorious, let's say, 500 member potluck dinner. And everybody's enjoying themselves. And Peter is sitting over there with a table full of Gentiles and they're laughing it up and they're just having the best fellowship. Then all of a sudden there are some representatives from James, it says.

Now, number one, I don't think James endorsed what got ready to happen because he, definitely along with Peter and John had made that decision. But these guys that were a part of James and part of the church in Jerusalem still believed in the Law.

Peter recognized these guys when they came in and the text is going to tell you why he stood condemned.

<u>Acts 10:34</u>, if you remember:

> And Peter having opened his mouth, said, "Of a truth I am in the process of comprehending the fact that God is not one to show partiality.

But here he is now sometime later, showing partiality.

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In the book by Dennis Rainey on marriage, he says:

Rare is the person who can weigh the faults of others without putting his hands on the scales.
(*Lonely Husbands, Lonely Wives*, p. 225).

And that you can say over and over again when you get into marriage counseling. The distortions that are so real.

The picture that we've got now then is Peter going to be standing condemned. Why?

He's compromising his convictions. He's not standing for truth and he's in a position of leadership.

He's the direct opposite of Martin Luther who would let character and conviction stand and say "Here I stand, God help me! Even if it's going to cost me my life."

God delights in us standing for truth. He delights in us to pay the price whatever is necessary to declare it and not be scared of what people are going to think of us when we bear witness. But you know as well as I do, there are times when you are afraid to bear witness for Christ because of what you think people are going to think about you. Rather than are they going to go straight to hell if they don't know Jesus Christ personally.

So the perspective is so different. And so many people are running well until peer pressure postponed progress.

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Now, let me ask you this. Is there any other place in the life of Peter that you could say he hasn't learned his lesson? Now remember, on the night after the upper room experience, they were going down to the garden of Gethsemane and what did Peter say? "Look Lord, everybody else can flick it in on You but they're not gonna sack my quarterback! I'm always going to be there for You."

And the Lord warned him, remember? He said before it dawns in the morning, you're going to deny 3 times that you ever knew me."

Now listen to Matthew 26:69-75:

> Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for the way you talk gives you away." [Your Galilean accent tells us who you are! Surely you are!] Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a cock crowed. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

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Now what I want you to see today is we understand that. Because the life of Christ, and here's the head honcho denying him in every way that he goes out broken and he's weeping bitterly.

I want you to just honestly look at this passage and see if this is not just as serious if not more serious than what he did that night on the way to Calvary.

I believe that he went out and wept bitterly after this is over because when he chose to violate with conviction and compromise with regard to putting the Gentile separate from the Jews, he drove a stake in the heart of the early church. And when you look at this and you see the words you understand that you have got to be careful with your brothers and sisters because your hatred for them or your division from them can lead to some terrible ramifications in the eternal destiny of a lot of people. And they can be affected by that.

So take this study seriously today. Look at it carefully and just say Spirit of God, speak to me as You please.

Many of us read the *Daily Walk Bible* and have done it for a number of years. Bruce Wilkinson in one of the daily readings said:

> Working with people is not so difficult. All you need is inexhaustible patience, unfailing insight, unshakable stability, and a tremendous amount of experience! (August 1)

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In order to survive in doing that. Now, here comes the key verse.

<u>v. 12</u> For before certain from James came, He was eating with the Gentiles (it was his habit to eat). But when they came He was drawing back and separating himself, fearing those of the circumcision.

Why did he confront him face-to-face?

"For"—when the verse starts with "For" it's the REASON: "For before certain from James." Now James wasn't evidently with them here, but these were representing James from Jerusalem came. "He was eating with the Gentiles" and I translated "it was his habit to eat." It's all in the imperfect tense. But when they came, "he was drawing back and separating himself, [and] fearing those of the circumcision."

Ok. His response is threefold and all three of these verbs are in the imperfect tense. What that means is, it starts and it keeps on going.

You know how you get trapped in a meeting and you want to get out of there without anybody knowing you're leaving. You gradually move toward the door and you try to slip out with nobody knowing that you're doing it. That's the picture here because of the pressure of these legalistic brethren from Jerusalem. Peter realizes he's been caught and so he gets up from the Gentile table and he goes over with the Jewish boys at

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the kosher table and then in the process wants to get out of there.

And so take your three verbs. Drawing back means trimming the sails and separating yourself; putting some distance between them, and then fearing those of the circumcision. You can say it. Peter really blew it on this occasion.

But how similar is it to that night of denial just before the cross? In a similar way he stands, and he's confronted and condemned because of the fact of this compromise. He's acting one way and he's doing something else.

Galatians 1:19: "But another of the apostles I did not see except James the brother of our Lord."

Remember it was just Peter and James that he saw when he was there in Jerusalem. And now Peter is withdrawing.

I put this as our key verse. You were running well until; peer pressure postponed progress.

Just this pressure on Peter causes him to forget everything that went on at the Council. He forgot everything but his own hide in this situation. And so it compromises it.

Let it be a lesson to us that God always blesses personal conviction when it's in accordance with truth.

Joseph certainly lived by that rule when he was in Egypt.

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Solicited for an affair with Potiphar's wife, he left the place, lost his coat but kept his character.

You see this same blessing that Joseph received in the life of Daniel. Daniel 1, the diet prescribed for him by Nebuchadnezzar was not according to his personal convictions and so he asked to have an alternate menu. He purposed in his heart and he would not defile himself with the king's meat.

God blessed him incredibly in Daniel 6 when the new Persian administration puts him way up there and the others are so jealous they tricked Darius in signing an edict that nobody would pray, but to him for 30 days. And what does Daniel do?

The next day after the edict was written, three times a day he opened his windows toward Jerusalem. He didn't hide it at all and he prayed like he always did before. Of course he went through the lions' den. But God faithful to recognize his conviction and commitment to truth, closed the mouths of the lions and delivered him from the circumstances.

Do you remember that story of Peter when the Lord is coming across the water like a ghost at three in the morning? And Peter said, "If it's you, let me come to you." And when he got out of the boat and started to walk toward the Lord it was all fine until he turned his eyes from the Lord and onto the waves and he started to sink.

I think he got his eyes off the Lord and on Peter.

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I think he just blew it so bad because he forgot who he was and he got fearful.

Proverbs 29:25: "The fear of man brings a snare, but whosoever puts his trust in the Lord shall be saved."

2 Timothy 1:7: "God hath not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

You know the real reason, and you and I are going to have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, many times we are silent in our witnesses because we're afraid of what people are going to think of us.

Isn't that awful? That we have to confess that to each other today. That as brothers and sisters that we would kick ourselves because we had a perfect opportunity for witness and we didn't do it.

Don Anderson shares the funniest experience in his neighborhood. He says, I walk from 4 to 5 in the morning with my little walker. We had new neighbors move in just two doors down from us. And low and behold on the first loop of my walk which was about 4:15, the lights came on outside his house. And I thought well this is going to be a great opportunity for me to meet my new neighbor. Well he had his back to me and I said, "Good morning!" He nearly flew over the fence.

I thought I wonder what kind of an impression I've made on him but I kept walking. Two mornings ago… Now you realize

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this is a big long loop and to get right by his house is only for a few seconds or so. Yesterday morning he came out, got the paper and said "Good morning!" I said "Good morning! My name is Don Anderson." And he told me his name and this morning the same thing happened again. He said "You know, we must be on a schedule or something." I said "We are and I'm so proud of you getting up at four in the morning to read the paper and get caught up on the day's activities before you get started."

You see, relationships are so easy and so simple if we just have courage enough to try to build a bridge and talking to them and eventually, maybe, that neighbor down the street will not think we're weird two doors up. He wanted to know the whole reason I was out there doing that and everything in it was fun to talk to him about it.

"But when they came," the text says—three verbs:

1. "drawing back"

2. "separating himself" and

3. "fearing those of the circumcision."

You just put, when you've got the imperfect text in the Greek text, you just put a gradual process. That's why you translate the verb like it's present. You say:

1. "<u>he was</u> drawing back"

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2. "he was separating himself"

3. "he was fearing those of the circumcision."

In the book of Hebrews, the Hebrew Christians were deciding to go back under Judaism because of the persecution.

And in Hebrews 10:38-39 we read this:

> But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul is having no pleasure in him. But we are not of the shrinking back kind to destruction, but of those who are having faith to the preserving of the soul.

Peter's had a little problem with performance. You remember when he came to the Lord and he says: "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother? Seven times?"

Now that tells you a whole lot. This is "Mr. Peter the Perfect" and everybody else is an offense to him. And so he's saying, how many times should I forgive him? And then he tries to answer his own question. And the way he does that, the going rate in those days you forgive a guy twice and then you nail him on the third one.

So he takes the going rate, multiplies it by two, adds one and expects to hear "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah. Flesh and blood never revealed that to you. Such magnitude in your ability to forgive."

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You see, it's all performance. What does the Lord say? How about 70 times 7. I can just see Peter's computer working: "490 then I get him on 491." You know. It's all built on performance.

And since the focus is on Peter here and he's just gotten this new edict from the Council of the freedom of the grace of God and that the Gentiles are not going to be keeping any parts of the Law, that he would turn to this and he fell.

That's like building your house upon the sand and when the winds and the rains come, the house falls and great is the fall of it.

This is so sad. Satin goes for the big boys a lot of times because he knows when he gets the big boys, he's also going to get a whole lot of people who've followed the big boys.

And that's always been his modus operandi. And so here's Peter right in the middle of this mess created by his own hands.

Three ugly words:

1. "drawing back" and

2. "separating" and

3. "fearing."

Now is that different from Psalm 1? "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of

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sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful." (Psalm 1:1)

You see, that man is blessed because he doesn't conform. He's blessed because he doesn't go along and loiter around that which is sinful.

He doesn't eventually come to the place where he's sitting in the seat of the scornful and laughing at the things of God. You can just see Satan's fingerprints all over this if you're just sensitive to take a good look at it.

<u>v. 13</u> And the rest of the Jews also played the role with him. So that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Now here's the big thing comes. Look at verse 13. You don't do stuff like this in isolation as a brother and sister in the body of Christ. What happens? Oh, it's terrible!

"And the rest of the Jews"—we don't know how many of them were in that big dining room—"also played the role [that's the word for hypocrite, that's wearing the mask] played the role with him. So that"—Oh! this is going to kill you—"even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy."

Do you think that hurt a little? Here for 14 years, Barnabas is the one that came and got him, took him over to Antioch and they travelled on the first missionary journey together with John Mark. Until John Mark flicked it in and went back to Jerusalem and the two of them finished that journey. That

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encompassed that whole period from when he was in Jerusalem up until the end of that first journey. Fourteen years they traveled. They established all four of these churches together in Galatia.

How do you think the Christians in Antioch of Pisidia and Lyrstra and Derbe and Iconium are going to feel when they read this letter? And that even one of the guys that witnessed their salvation as Gentiles turned around and turned his back on them at a moment of stress and circumstance. You see, we don't oftentimes read the text with the ramifications of how badly people are hurt when we failed to stand straight as an arrow with truth. And the devastating effects that can come from something like this.

"And the rest of the Jews … and even Barnabas was carried away with their"—and "their" is translated—"hypocrisy."

They were saying one thing and they were doing another. It was so hard for Paul to watch that.

Do you suppose—now on I'm going to make a conjecture here—do you suppose they're just getting ready for the second missionary journey? Remember? And they're going to go out and give the report of the Jerusalem Council to all these churches that they're free from the Law, free from circumcision, all of that. And so they're going to go out and celebrate on the second missionary journey.

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What happens on the morning that Paul is singing in the shower "On the road again"? Barnabas meets him and says "I am excited we're going, but let's take John Mark with us." Remember that?

And Paul said "No way Jose! He's a loser. He left us on the first trip. He'd leave us on the second trip. We're not going." Remember what Barnabas said? "Sorry you feel like that. We're checking out."

Paul got Silas and went on the second journey. Barnabas took Mark and they went another direction. Do you think that maybe just some of the animosity and the hurt and the pain of him forsaking him at that dining room and going along with the legalistic brethren also affected Paul's decision in that matter?

You see, you've got to be careful. When you have relationships that are not right, you've got to make them right and you've got to deal with forgiveness and you've got to deal with getting back into the position where God can bless or there are going to be serious ramifications from that when you let those things fester. And you try to live in denial that they don't exist. This is a serious matter because it affects that whole second journey and the direction.

Now granted, before life is over, in 2 Timothy these guys get it back together again. Paul told Timothy to be sure and bring John Mark with him because "he is profitable to me for the ministry" so there is the possibility of recovery. But the

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necessity of it sometimes is not very clear in Bible teaching.

What you're doing speaks so loudly I can't hear what you say.

D.L. Moody loved Charles Hadden Spurgeon. He loved his messages and he was very uneducated. He was in Chicago. Spurgeon was in London. Wanting to see his hero he went to London to visit with him. And I love the record of this.

One time D. L. Moody went to meet Charles Spurgeon at Spurgeon's home in London. Spurgeon had been Moody's hero and, from a distance, his teacher. When Spurgeon answered the door with a cigar in his mouth, Moody practically fell down the stairs in shock.

Looking up at Spurgeon, he gasped, "How could you, a man of God, smoke that?" Spurgeon took the stogie out of his mouth and walked down the stairs to where Moody was still standing in confusion. Putting his index finger on Moody's rather rotund stomach, he smiled. "The same way you, a man of God, could be that fat." (*When Being Good Isn't Good Enough* by Stephen Brown, p. 87)

You see, cultures are different.

That's why Romans 14:5 is in the Bible. "That each man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

You accept people for who they are and not what they do. And the parameters of our legalistic, performance-oriented Christianity oftentimes ostracizes people who potentially could

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be very precious and dear friends and be used greatly by our Lord.

Spurgeon says this—you can tell he's a pastor:

Reproaches from those who have been intimate with us, and trusted by us, cut us to the quick; and they are usually so well acquainted with our peculiar weaknesses that they know how to touch us where we are most sensitive and to speak so as to do us most damage. (*Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers*, p. 28)

It's embarrassing, but it's true. There are people who don't like us. There are people who don't like the message. There are people who are there to give you an opportunity to spend as much emotional energy as you can possibly spend to survive.

Erwin McManus says:

The problem, of course, is that we are all hypocrites in transition. I am not who I want to be, but I am on the journey there, and thankfully I am not whom I used to be.

A healthy community is not a place of perfect people.

That place just doesn't exist. We all are flawed. If there was a perfect community, it would be ruined the moment I joined it. And it's easier to be patient with people when you realize they're being patient with you. [I love that statement.] When we don't come clean up front, it creates an unhealthy environment that leads to pretension and hypocrisy. (*The Barbarian Way*, entry #16)

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You've seen it. You've smelled it. And you understand it fully.

<u>v. 14</u> But when I saw that they were not walking straight in relation to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of everybody, "If you being a Jew are living as the Gentiles and not as the Jews, how are you constraining the Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Now look at verse 14.

"But when I saw that they were not walking straight in relation to the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in the presence of everybody." [He just stood up right in the dining room.] "If you being a Jew are living as the Gentiles and not as the Jews, how are you constraining the Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Peter, can I say something? It's tough to follow you when you don't know where you're going.

I put <u>Proverbs 3:5-6</u> there:

> Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.

You won't be going in circles. You won't be saying one thing and doing another.

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The problem is, they were not walking straight in relation to the truth of the gospel.

Somebody said "It's better to go straight than to move in the best of circles. And that's basically what he's saying. You're not walking straight. And he did this in the presence of everybody. He's confronted and condemned. Do you think that's a little bit tough for a guy that's proud?

Do you remember how when he got there at the place of trial? How that first little girl accused him? What did he do? He moved away. He wanted to avoid her. So he gets over in the next situation. There he is again. Then he moves the third time and the sequence of that is trying to avoid any of this for the sake of embarrassment and for the fear of being implicated in the whole trial. That was all that was involved in that first one.

But can you imagine in your wildest dreams, here is one of the pillars of the church in Jerusalem being confronted by an apostle come lately by the name of Paul. In Antioch he is Pastor Paul there. And the head leader is being confronted by him publicly in the dining room. What that's going to do?

You know the Lord said when you got something wrong with the guy you go to him first privately. Remember that in Matthew 18. And then if he's not going to respond then you take somebody with you but then you eventually, the third thing, tell it to the whole church.

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And so there was a progression here. But Paul got angry. I think he really got upset and hurt because of all that was involved in it. "You being a Jew are living as the Gentiles." [You've just been eating up a storm with them here these several days] "and not as the Jews, how are you constraining the Gentiles to live as Jews?" by going over and sitting over there and condemning them?

In the book Randy Alcorn has written on suffering, [he says]:

Had we been in Adam's place, no doubt we would have made the same evil decision he did; whether months earlier or years later is irrelevant. Remember, it takes only a single sin along the way to become eternally separated from an infinitely holy God. (*If God is Good*, p. 70)

We break one, we are guilty of breaking them all.

And in this situation, Peter has returned to legalistic performance for the basis of his growth and maturity in Christ.

Scripture records that Peter, recognizing what he had done to our Lord, went out and wept bitterly. I believe that he left the dining room the same thing, recognizing the seriousness of what he had just done with regard to the unity and oneness of the Jews and Gentiles being in Christ and wept bitterly over his failure.

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<u>v. 15</u> As for us we are Jews by nature and not sinners of Gentile origin (the Gentiles).

Now look at verse 15.

"As for us we are Jews by nature." [They both are Jews, Paul and Peter] "and not sinners of Gentile origin." Now they're sinners of Jewish origin. Okay.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It's just that they're different in that they're Jews and we're talking about the Gentiles.

"Peter, if you're going to make a separation here, you and I are of Jewish origin and not Gentile."

Do you want to hear the stronger statement though?

Peter if you're going to make the separation then you have no right to be associating with the Gentiles. You have just terminated my ministry. My whole ministry is to the audience that you have just terminated and separated yourself from them. You see, we don't think like that. When something like this takes place.

Do you know what I thought of? Remember that parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee said as he begins to pray: "I thank God I'm not like these other creeps and I don't do this and I don't do that and I don't do the other thing. But I do fast. I do pray and I give my time." And then the tax

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collector just says "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

And the Lord said he went down to his house was justified rather than the other man who is trying to declare everything that he personally is performing.

Now there are two of the neatest verses in the whole Bible and the fact that you came today, you're going to be the recipient of them.

Sixteen and twenty are barn-burners.

<u>v. 16</u> And knowing that a man is not justified (made righteous) by the works of the law only through faith in Christ Jesus. We also believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be made righteous by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law because by the works of the law there shall no flesh be made righteous.

Sixteen is the clearest presentation of the pure gospel of Christ. If you ever had any question. And Paul in the midst of this discourse, confronting Peter, makes it so clear you can't miss it. Look at it.

"And knowing that a man is not justified (made righteous) by the works of the law only through faith in Christ Jesus. We also believed in Christ Jesus, [you and me] in order that we might be made righteous by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law because by the works of the law there shall no flesh be

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made righteous."

Wow! You just say there are some places in the Bible that just blow you away and this is another one.

What a clear, clear statement of the gospel, and it puts legalistic performance to bed forever and it's only through Christ. Salvation by faith. And it all begins with the glorious belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and it's not by the works of the Law shall any flesh be justified.

Max Lucado hits hard on that in his book:

Life Lessons

Trying to get right with God by keeping a bunch of religious rules is a formula for frustration and failure. First problem, whose rules? Such requirements vary from religion to religion, person to person, and generation to generation. What if you're working from the wrong list? Second problem, how do we define what it means to "keep" those rules? Do we have to follow them perfectly? Or are we allowed a reasonable number of mistakes and missteps? And what is considered "reasonable"? The gospel of Christ eliminates all this confusion by stating categorically that no one but Christ is good enough. Only through faith in him, only by relying on his efforts on our behalf, do we qualify for heaven. (*Life Lessons*, p. 29)

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<u>v. 17</u> But if while seeking to be made righteous in Christ we ourselves also were found to be sinners, therefore is Christ a minister of sin? May it not happen (perish the thought).

Verse 17. Oh, this is going to get strong. You talk about putting Peter on the horns of a dilemma, man. He is in checkmate. Big time. He cannot make a move no way.

"But if while seeking to be made righteous in Christ we ourselves also were found to be sinners, therefore, is Christ a minister of sin? May it never be." Strong, strong negative.

What's he saying? He's saying, if you turn from Christ and your faith in Him and you go back to the Law, you're saying Christ was a minister of sin because He didn't provide an adequate solution to my sin problem.

Oh, do you want to put yourself in that place Peter? And everybody's just sitting there with their mouths open. May it never, ever happen!

Eugene Peterson says:

Lord, you know I'm always coming up with a new scheme for self-improvement, and reducing my role in the spiritual life to that of a charwoman, scrubbing and dusting and polishing my moral image. What I need is you, your presence. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus! (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 125)

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He is saying it so well and so clearly there in that verse.

<u>v. 18</u> For if the things I tear down these things I build again I am showing myself a transgressor.

Now, verse 18. He's on a roll.

"For if the things I tear down these things I build again I am showing myself a transgressor."

In other words, if it didn't work and I am indeed still trying to tear down what I received and then build it again, I'm showing myself to be a transgressor.

Christ, first of all is the sinner and then on top of that I am too. He's making it very, very clear that the serious ramifications have not been carefully considered.

Well, therefore, is Christ a minister of sin? You don't want to do that. So I'm saying he's caught on the horns of the dilemma. He's in checkmate.

But let me just try to sympathize with you and me for a minute. Okay? I think it's normal that once you receive Christ as Savior, you're so overwhelmed you want to do everything perfectly. And so we're bent toward performance to please Him and work. We're living in a way that indicates that the Law would be the way that we would follow that. For the sermon on the mount, so many people get caught up in that. You've got to learn that that's not the way to grow and mature in Christ.

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Now verse 20, in just a second, is going to tell you what we're supposed to do. How the same faith that saved us is the same faith that will also help us to become what we need to become to be like Christ. Now, see there it is in verse 19:

<u>v. 19</u> For I through the law died to the law in order that I might live unto God.

"For I through the law died to the law in order that I might live unto God.

When did you die to the Law?

Well, I knew you were going to ask that question and so did the apostle Paul.

"I might live unto God." What does that mean? I'll have fellowship with Him and I'll communed with Him and I'll be submissive to Him and I'll be obedient to His word. I'll trust Him. I'll live for Him. I'll be what He wants me to be.

<u>v. 20</u> With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.

Now verse 20.

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Galatians 2:20 is like a life verse to a lot of people and for a particular time in your life after you become a Christian, it really makes it clear what God expects of us in becoming more and more mature in Christ.

"With Christ I have been crucified"—[When He was crucified on the cross, I was too]—"and I no longer am living."

The Law can't take someone who's already died and been crucified. That's as far as the Law can—go to the grave. They can't anticipate resurrection.

"And I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by" [the Law. Is that what it says?]—"[I am living by] faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf."

So the indwelling Christ who comes there by faith to declare us righteous—that's salvation.

Sanctification is trusting the indwelling Christ as we submit, commune and are obedient, makes us more like Christ and performance has nothing to do with and the Law has nothing to do with it.

So we just need to understand where Paul is coming from.

I love the way Maj. Thomas in his book *Saving Life of Christ* said about the children of Israel. It was the same faith that took them out that would've taken them in, but that took 40

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years to learn the lesson. (paraphrased)

God is faithful! And He will indeed produce Christlikeness in us as we commune, as we fellowship, as we walk with Him and the Law has nothing to do with it.

Someone said "A Christian's life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ."

We live in faith and faith lives by exercise.

John Hunter said: "The secret of a changed life is an exchanged life. Jesus Christ does not want my dedication, he wants my death. A dead man can't do anything. He can only decay and therefore Christ living in me is living out His life in and through me on a daily basis." (source unknown)

Now, throughout the Scripture it's always been God's will to be among His people.

Remember in Exodus 40 when the tabernacle was built, what happened? The glory of the Lord came down and filled the presence of the tabernacle.

Remember when Solomon built the temple? What happened? As soon as he finished that prayer of dedication, the glory of God filled the temple so that the priests could not even go in.

Ok, after the temple was gone, then it is Jesus Christ.

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John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.”

During his life, the presence of God was among us. Now He’s gone back to glory, how’s the presence of God seen among people?

You are not your own. You are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are His.

You are not your own. We belong to Him. We are His dwelling place and the idea of Christian living is full cooperation of the believer with the in-living Christ.

Now you understand why Hudson Taylor often saying at two in the morning: “Jesus, I am resting, resting; in the joy of what Thou art. I’m finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.”

You begin the sweet discipline of acknowledging the indwelling Christ and you are having a running conversation with Him on a daily basis. This is all by faith.

I love that statement that he made “who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.”

That’s the past. I have been declared righteous, but in the present, now in sanctification, He is indeed living out His life in me. And through all the circumstances of the curriculum, He’s making us more like Himself.

Now, that’s hard.

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A.W. Tozer comes across with some pretty strong words:

The problem is not to persuade God to fill us, but to want God sufficiently to permit Him to do so. (*The Best of A.W. Tozer*, p. 38)

You know, we're just afraid to let go. We're afraid to totally surrender and yield ourselves to Him and trust Him to be faithful.

Peterson says:

I want my life, Lord, to be an answer to your love for me: my actions and my words, my thoughts and my dreams-all a response to the great reality of your presence in Jesus, that calls into question my selfishness and my pride. (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 179)

Do I really want that?

Joni Erickson Tada says:

When God denies your dearest desire, get ready to open up your heart even wider, for He will become that desire Himself. (*A Lifetime of Wisdom*, p. 122)

When you really learn to turn it over to Him.

So Peterson's says:

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Lord, I get so caught up in my own plans—my childish fancies and private disappointments—that I fail to see the grand design you are working out. And then, by your grace, I see it again—a design that makes my life far richer than what I planned, more joyful than what I anticipated. (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 354)

Boy the Lord can do great things!

Are you ready for the final verse? This has been a ride hasn't it? It's been emotional ride today. Both for the teacher and the students, I must say.

<u>v. 21</u> I am not nullifying the grace of God. For if through law comes righteousness then Christ died uselessly (without a cause).

Look at that last verse.

"I am not nullifying the grace of God. For if through the law comes righteousness then Christ died uselessly (without a cause)."

You've not only made Christ a transgressor, you've also taken away the very thing that He came to do. If the Law could do it, Christ died needlessly.

"The cross is irrelevant Peter. Peter, two things, by what you just got through doing you've taken away my ministry to the

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Gentiles and you've proclaim that Christ died uselessly on the cross. He wouldn't have needed to do it if the Law was adequate.

You see how sometimes just an innocent compromise of conviction can do some terrible, terrible damage. And more than anything else that's all I want you to get out of this today.

1 Corinthians 16:13: "Be on the alert, be standing fast in the faith, be showing yourselves to be men, be strong."

Be faithful. Determined before God that you're going allow the Spirit of God to convict and with singleness of heart and brokenness of spirit, you're going to let Jesus Christ produce His image in each of us

Now there are 12 lessons that come out of it. I trust you will take time to read that.

I want to end today with Nancy Leigh DeMoss' statement from *Brokenness*:

When Melanie Adams finally came to the end of herself and was broken before God and her husband, God began to increase her capacity for love and for worship. Several months after that initial point of brokenness, Melanie wrote to tell some of the changes that had taken place in her life as a result:

> I have fallen in love with my husband more deeply than ever. It was quite a rude awakening to realize the chasm in our marriage was my fault, born of an

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unforgiving heart. My husband has forgiven me and I smile at the future.

I have developed the somewhat frustrating habit of crying all the time—not a normal response for me. In church, a song of worship or a meaningful message finds me borrowing my husband's handkerchief as he gently pats my hand.

God's Word jumps off the page every time I open His Holy Book—it is personal now. I enjoy a sweet communion with the Lord and have heartfelt gratitude for His love and sacrifice that I never knew before. I have peace and joy, and He has given me a new song. (pp. 116-117)

That's what each of us wants. But, are we at that point?

You were running well <u>until</u>; peer pressure postponed progress.

We don't like to go there. We don't need to be there but too oftentimes we find ourselves there.

It's my prayer today that God will raise up an army of people who will purpose in their hearts to stand true for their conviction. We need it desperately in our day, for people to be faithful to the Lord Jesus. God will bless them because they're willing to stand alone, if necessary, for that which they believe. They will not allow society were friends to divert them from the challenge of walking close to Jesus Christ and to be glorifying, and nothing save His cross.

Father, thank You for today. Thank you for the privilege of

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studying together. And father, for those who are struggling with performance rather than relationship, help them once again to see how adequate You are and the provision which You've made to satisfy every need, and the power and the strengths to implement those things which bring joy and delight to Your heart. In Jesus, name we pray. Amen.

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STUDY NUMBER FOUR – UNTIL: PEER PRESSURE POSTPONED PROGRESS – GALATIANS 2:11-21

KEY VERSE 2:12

NOTES

v. 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch to his face I opposed him, because he stood condemned.
v. 12 For before certain from James came, He was eating with the Gentiles (it was his habit to eat). But when they came He was drawing back and separating himself, fearing those of the circumcision.
v. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the role with him. So that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.
v. 14 But when I saw that they were not walking straight in relation to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of everybody, "If you being a Jew are living as the Gentiles and not as the Jews, how are you constraining the Gentiles to live as Jews?".
v. 15 As for us we are Jews by nature and not sinners of Gentile origin (the Gentiles).
v. 16 And knowing that a man is not justified (made righteous) by the works of the law only through faith in Christ Jesus. We also believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be made righteous by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law because by the works of the law there shall no flesh be made righteous.
v. 17 But if while seeking to be made righteous in Christ we ourselves also were found to be sinners, therefore is Christ a minister of sin? May it not happen (perish the thought).
v. 18 For if the things I tear down these things I build again I am showing myself a transgressor.
v. 19 For I through the law died to the law in order that I might live unto God.
v. 20 With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.
v. 21 I am not nullifying the grace of God. For if through law comes righteousness then Christ died uselessly (without a cause).

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read Galatians 2:11-21 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why did Paul confront Peter when he came to Antioch, according to verse 12?

3. What did the others do when they saw Peter changing his mind, according to verse 13?

4. What did Paul do, according to verse 14?

5. How is a man "made righteous" in God's sight, according to verse 16?

6. Why did Paul die to the Law, according to verse 19?

7. What happened to Paul, according to verse 20?

8. What does Paul say about Christ's death in verse 21?

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

_____

_____

_____

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

_____

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_____

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God blesses those who have courage enough to stand for their convictions.

LESSON #2: Job said: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27 NIV).

LESSON #3: Esther said: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16 NIV).

LESSON #4: Daniel stood for his convictions. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. . . . Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before" (Dan. 1:8; 6:10 NIV).

LESSON #5: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood for their convictions. "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up'" (Dan. 3:16-18 NIV).

LESSON #6: No one is made righteous by the works of the Law.

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LESSON #7: "The fear of man brings a snare but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Prov. 29:25 NIV).

LESSON #8: Our responsibility is to "walk straight in relationship to the truth of the Gospel."

LESSON #9: A man is made righteous only through faith in Christ Jesus.

LESSON #10: When I keep on trying to perform the works of the Law after I become a Christian, I am telling Jesus that His death was not adequate.

LESSON #11: "If righteousness comes through the law, then Jesus Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21).

LESSON #12: The living Christ is waiting to live out His life through us.

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