

## Galatians, Chapter Two, Lesson Three

ADVOCATING CHRIST Galatians 2:17-21

### STIMULATE

\*\* From our study together last week, what negative examples did you see that would cause you to start "Aggressively Confronting" your brother or sister in Christ, if you noticed them doing it today?

- 1) Hypocrisy - Going against what you know to be true in the Word of God. (V.12)
- 2) Intimidation - Caving into the peer pressure of others who walk in error. (V.12)
- 3) Imitation - Following ungodly leaders into their error, instead of taking your stand on God's truth. (V.13)

\*\* Do you recall the three traits that should accompany our aggressive confrontation of a brother caught up in any "trespass" or sin?

We closed our time of worship last week by asking the Lord for the 1) Humility, 2) Wisdom and 3) Love needed to follow Paul's godly example. cf. Galatians 6:1

### MOTIVATE

\*\* So far, in the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians, we have learned how to be "Avoiding Compromise" and to be "Aggressively Confronting" when need be. Today we are going to learn the third and final behavioral pattern in this chapter, as we see the apostle Paul "Advocating Christ". What is the single most important factor in a Christian's life, if we want to be effective for the cause of the gospel? Please open your Bibles to Galatians 2:17-21, and we will discover the answer together!

Read Passage (V. 17-19) (V. 20-21)

Opening Prayer

### *Advocating Christ*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.17** \*\* According to Paul, where does the child of God seek to be justified?

It is our desire to be declared by God as having been "justified in Christ". Last week we defined the term "justified" this way: "To be found as 'just' before a Holy God, because of the Cross of Calvary, our sin having been taken away and the righteousness of Christ imputed to us".

Remember - 2Corinthians 5:21

\*\* Even though we are indeed justified by faith in Jesus Christ, what else is also true of us?

"...we ourselves have also been found sinners..."

Jesus made it very clear that He came to save the lost and not those who had declared themselves as righteous by their religious works. (Matthew 9:10-13)

\*\* What rhetorical question does Paul put forth to represent the argument of the Judaizers?

"...is Christ then a minister of sin?" The legalistic Judaizers were saying that salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone was too easy and made Christ a participant in the sin of those He was "saving", because the gospel was ignoring the Law and, as alleged by them, did not call for obedience.

\*\* Did Paul think there was any truth to that question or to the accusations of the Judaizers?

No way! "May it never be" [Me genoito] is the strongest idiom of repudiation in New Testament Greek. "It carries the sense of outrage that an idea of this kind could ever be thought as true."

[John MacArthur - Romans 6:1]

\*\* Did Jesus Christ call for obedience from those He came to save?

Absolutely! (cf. John 15:14, Matthew 12:50, 28:20)

**V.18** \*\* What does Paul mean by saying "...if I rebuild what I have once destroyed..."

He is talking about the error of returning to a fleshly effort to establish his own righteousness by keeping the Law. In addition, he is amazed that the Galatians would even consider such a tragically hopeless response to the gospel. (cf. Galatians 3:2-3)

\*\* Do you remember how Paul felt about the value of his legalistic past, when compared to life in Christ?

He thought it was rubbish! All see - Philippians 3:1-8

"More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." (V.8)

\*\* Now back in Galatians 2:18, what are you proving by trying to earn your way to heaven through religious activity or by just being a "good" person?

You are proving that you are "a transgressor".

\*\* What are you transgressing by trying to rebuild a doctrine of salvation by works?

The gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, which would be saying that there was no significance to Christ's death on the cross for us!

**V.19** \*\* It is little wonder that Paul was working so hard to establish the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, what impact had the Law made upon the life of Paul?

It killed him! Paul came to know that he was a sinner through a knowledge of the Law of God. He also knew that he could not keep the perfect law of God. The Law was unable to bring life for it only condemns, it never justifies. cf. Galatians 2:16/3:23-24

\*\* Since Paul had died to the Law, what was he now able to do?

He could now "...live to God."

\*\* What does it mean for someone to "live to God"?

Everything we think, say and do should be designed to glorify God and be the expression of His will! cf. 1Corinthians 10:31/John 4:34 & 6:38

1) Thoughts - Hebrews 4:12

2) Words - Matthew 12:33-37

3) Deeds - Titus 2:11-14

**V.20** \*\* To further reinforce his claim of living to God, what amazing statement does Paul now make?

"I have been crucified with Christ..."

\*\* The perfect tense is used in the phrase "I have been crucified with Christ..", referring to something that happened in the past with continuing influence in the present. What is the theological importance of that statement?

God sees us and our sin as having been crucified at the same time as His Son. At the moment of our salvation, our old life is placed upon the Cross of Calvary and our sin is paid for in full!  
cf. Colossians 2:12-14, 3:3-4

\*\* What impact should that theological truth have in the present, according to Paul's next statement?

"...and it is no longer I who live..."

\*\* If we wish to be effective for the cause of the gospel, this statement that Paul just made contains the most important factor in a Christian's life, can you put it in your own words?

Self must die! I must be willing to deny myself (daily) so that I will be available to live to God!  
Jesus made this very clear... Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23

\*\* If I am not the focus of my daily concerns, then who should be?

"...but Christ lives in me..." Our daily concerns should be filtered through the grid of Jesus Christ and His desire for our lives.

\*\* Once Paul had established the pattern of denying himself daily, how did he fill the void that the death of self had created?

"...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God..." Paul devoted himself to a lifestyle of "Advocating Christ". Even though Paul lived in a human body, he controlled that body with his faith in Christ so that others would hear the gospel and become saved.  
cf. 1Corinthians 9:19-23 - Paul advocated Christ to all!

\*\* If we want to imitate the faith of Paul by advocating Jesus Christ to all that we meet, what is to be our motivation, what was Paul's motivation?

He knew that Jesus "loved" him.

\*\* How much does Jesus love Paul and us as well?

So much that He "delivered Himself up for" us!

cf. John 15:13

\*\* What does that say to the critics of Jesus who are still claiming He was just a good man who was victimized by a political movement that got out of hand and caused Him to be murdered.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was totally by the Father's design and in the control of the Son, no one took His life from Him. All see - Acts 2:22-23, John 10:17-18 and Matthew 26:47-56.

**V.21** \*\* Alright then, back in Galatians 2:21, after receiving the unspeakable gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who gave Himself willingly for us, why doesn't Paul want to slip back into legalism for salvation?

Because that would "...nullify the grace of God..."

Nullify [atheteo] means lit: "to do away with what has been laid down", or "to set aside". Paul wanted to live his life "Advocating Christ" to everyone he met, the last thing he would want to do is to "set aside" the glorious work of Christ on the cross.

\*\* What practical reasoning does Paul use to reinforce his resolve to stand for the gospel?

"...if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

\*\* How could you put that into your own words?

If it is possible to earn our own way to heaven, then it is a total waste of another's life to have them die for me, there no longer remains a need.

\*\* Can you achieve righteousness yourself by keeping all of the rules?

No, no, a thousand times no! cf. Philippians 3:9

\*\* What additional motivation do you see in this verse for always "Advocating Christ" in your daily life?

Others need to hear the gospel and believe, because Christ did not die needlessly. His death was the plan of God for the salvation of sinners.

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* As we strive to imitate Paul's faith, what will be impacted in our life if we "live to God"?

Everything we think, say and do should be designed to glorify God and be the direct expression of His will!

1) Thoughts - Hebrews 4:12

2) Words - Matthew 12:33-37

3) Deeds - Titus 2:11-14

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* What is the most important factor in a Christian's life, if he or she wishes to be effective for the cause of the gospel by "Advocating Christ" to all who are around us?

"...it is no longer I who live..." I must be willing to deny myself daily and take up my cross for the glory of the One who delivered Himself up for me.

### **EVALUATE**

\*\* As you review your past week, how have the petty concerns of life attacked the principle that "it is no longer I who live"? Have you noticed that your own self-centered desires have crowded out your passion for "Advocating Christ"?

Do you find that it is much easier to have a pity party than to proclaim the gospel?

### **ACTIVATE**

\*\* If we are to learn anything from today's study in the Word of God, may it be that we must live for Jesus Christ. "Advocating Christ" everyday means that "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 delivered Himself up for me".

May the Lord be pleased by our commitment to Him!

Closing Prayer