

Galatians, Chapter Two, Lesson Two

AGGRESSIVELY CONFRONTING Galatians 2:11-16

STIMULATE

** Last week, as we began chapter two of Paul's letter to the Galatians, we learned three principles that were designed to help us imitate the faith of the apostle as we saw him "Avoiding Compromise". Do you recall what those three principles were?

- 1) Do not give in to peer pressure, but rather use it to strengthen your resolve. (V. 3)
- 2) Do not compromise the truth for even a moment. (V. 5)
- 3) When you find others of like precious faith, join with them in a commitment to proclaim and live the truth. (V. 9)

** Would anyone like to share which principle they chose to focus upon this past week and how that helped them to enjoy a closer walk with Christ?

For myself, it was very hard to choose because all three are so strong in helping me to stand up for Christ while I am "Avoiding Compromise". But number two proved to be of great encouragement to me. By having a predetermined mindset to not compromise the truth for even a moment, I felt equipped to live for the Lord no matter what the challenge or temptation.

MOTIVATE

** As we move forward into today's passage, we are going to learn the second of three behavioral patterns displayed by the life of the apostle Paul. Once we have formed an alliance with others of like precious faith (like we saw that group of five men do last week), what are we to do if a brother or sister starts to wander from the truth? Join me now in chapter two of Galatians, where we shall see Paul as he is "Aggressively Confronting", and we will learn the answer together.

Read Passage (V. 11-13) (V. 14-16)

Opening Prayer

AGGRESSIVELY CONFRONTING

INVESTIGATE

V.11 ** We cannot be certain as to when this visit took place but one likely suggestion would be at the conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey. Let's look at that together in Acts 14:19-28. (Read passage)

- V. 19 - At Lystra (cf. V.8), Paul is killed!
- V. 20 - Paul is brought back to life! (2Cor.12:2-4)
- V. 21 - Preaches in Derbe, returns to Lystra.
- V. 22 - "Through many tribulations we must enter.."
- V. 23 - They appointed elders in every church.
- V. 24 to 26 - Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch.

V. 27 - They give their report.

V. 28 - They spend "a long time with the disciples"

It was likely during this stay that Peter visited Paul by coming down to Antioch from Jerusalem.

** Back in Galatians 2:11, on this visit, do you suppose Peter had a wonderful stay in Antioch?

Not hardly! Paul "...opposed him to his face...", he was "Aggressively Confronting" a brother who was wondering from the truth.

** Why did he do that?

Because Peter "stood condemned".

** Does that mean that Peter had lost his salvation?

Absolutely not, Paul simply means Peter was guilty of compromise by the actions he had taken relative to the dietary customs of the Jews. The word "condemned" [kataginosko] means "to blame" and Paul was saying Peter stood accurately accused of having acted in a compromising manner. A different word [katakrima], which means "penalty", speaks of one's soul being lost and does not ever fit the description of a Christian. (cf. Romans 8:1)

V.12 ** Before we look closer at what Peter was doing wrong, what had he been doing that was right?

"...he used to eat with the Gentiles..."

** What does that mean?

A reference to love feasts, followed by communion. cf. Jude 1:12-13, 1Corinthians 11:17-21

** What do you think changed Peter in the first place from his Jewish ceremonial dietary customs?

An encounter with his creator! cf. Acts 10:9-16

** So Peter knows the right thing to do, what does he now do that was wrong?

He "...began to withdraw and hold himself aloof..." from the Gentiles.

** What motivated Peter to compromise and act against what he knew to be true?

"...the coming of certain men from James..." Peter was caving in under the peer pressure of Judaizers who had come down from Jerusalem. He actually was "fearing the party of the circumcision".

** Did these men "represent" James?

No, James was the head of the Jerusalem church and these men were Judaizers from Jerusalem who had their own agenda and only claimed to have been sent by James. (cf. Acts 15:24-25)

V.13 ** As the apostle Peter compromised what he knew to be true, what influence did this have on other believers there in Antioch?

"...the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy.."

The church was being devastated by division, Jewish Christian vs. Gentile Christian.

**** How far did this hypocritical compromise go? Was it only the young, weak Christians that got caught up in it?**

No, "...even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy." Once compromise is condoned, it will effect everyone, even the leaders of the church!

THE DANGER OF COMPROMISE IS THAT IT IS CONTAGIOUS!

V.14 ** As Paul, a Hebrew, stood in the middle of this cowardly hypocrisy, do you suppose he was afraid to address the issue with Peter?

No, he challenged Peter "in the presence of all".

**** Why was Paul "Aggressively Confronting" just Peter?**

They all were wrong, but Peter was the leader. As the apostle, Peter had the responsibility to be above reproach in his godly example and lifestyle. When Peter (as a leader and pillar of the church) set the wrong pattern, others were quick to follow.

This event may well be the reason for the apostle Paul's instruction to Timothy in 1Timothy 5:19-20.

**** What was the erroneous pattern set by Peter and then adopted by the others?**

"...they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel..." Peter's actions of hypocrisy were undermining the heart of the gospel truth, that is; salvation by grace through faith and not as a result of works.

**** How would you explain in your own words Paul's argument to Peter?**

Paul gently, but firmly reasoned with Peter, saying since you no longer observe Jewish ceremonialism but are sharing in the love feast with Christians, why are you compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews (which of course includes being circumcised)?

**** How do you think that Peter responded to this public rebuke by the apostle Paul?**

While the passage does not address Peter's initial response, we do know that he would continue to grow in his admiration for Paul and that fact reflects an obedient, submissive response here.

Remember it was after this meeting in Antioch, at the end of his life, that Peter was praising Paul as a "beloved brother" (2Peter 3:14-16). Just as a footnote, Peter wrote that last letter in 66 A.D., just one year before his own death and Paul died in Rome around 67-68 A.D. as a martyr for Christ.

V.15 ** What are the two categories of humanity according to verse 15?

Jews and Gentiles.

**** Is Paul saying that Jewish people, as the physical descendents of Abraham, are not sinners?**

No, he made it very clear that the Jewish nation had dishonored God by the combination of their religious ceremony and their sinful hearts. (cf. Romans 2:17-24)

V.16 ** Paul begins verse sixteen with "nevertheless" to illustrate that the Jews share a common need with the "sinners from among the Gentiles". The need is so great that he mentions it three times here in verse sixteen. What is that need?

Our common need for "justification".

** Biblically speaking, what does that mean?

To be found as "just" before a Holy God. Because of the Cross of Calvary, our sin has been taken away and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, making us "justified" before our Father in heaven. When that transaction has taken place, God sees me "just-if-I'd" never sinned.

Romans 4:5 - God "...justifies the ungodly..." Romans 5:1 - We are "...justified by faith..."

Galatians 3:24-26 - Again,...justified by faith..." 2Corinthians 5:21 - "He made Him...to be sin..that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

** As we consider the wonder of our salvation, the free gift from God toward those who believe, what are the three phases or elements of that salvation?

- 1) **Justification** - Past, which we have just seen.
- 2) **Sanctification** - Present, 1Thessalonians 4:3-5
- 3) **Glorification** - Future, Romans 8:16-17, 29-30

Our salvation is secure in the hands of the One who called us by His grace into an eternal relationship with His Son. cf. Philippians 1:6

** Getting back into Galatians 2:16, how can a person become justified before a Holy God?

"...through faith in Christ Jesus..."

** Is there anyway possible for a human being to become justified before God by his own fleshly effort?

Absolutely not! "...since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."
(Psalm 130:3-4 and Romans 3:23)

EXTRICATE

** What negative examples have you seen in today's passage, 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)

DELINEATE

** How did Paul respond to this widespread hypocrisy?

He went to the source! By "Aggressively Confronting" Peter (face to face) in the presence of all, Paul was being bold for the sake of the truth.

** For clarification's sake, does this put us at war with our brothers or sisters? Are we to attack them and hit them over the head with the Holy Spirit's hammer of conviction?

No, this same apostle Paul gives us the pattern for correction. He reasoned with Peter (V.14) and won his respect and future adoration. (cf. Galatians 6:1)

EVALUATE

** We said as we started this second chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians, that we should imitate the faith of those "who spoke the word of God to" us (Hebrews 13:7). As you consider the comfort zone that you are currently living in, what will be the impact on that comfort if you apply today's passage to your own life?

It is not easy or inexpensive to be "Aggressively Confronting" a brother or sister in Christ. But if they are living in compromise to the truth they know, we must gently and firmly demonstrate our love for them by confronting their error.

ACTIVATE

** Let's ask the Lord for the humility, wisdom and love needed to follow Paul's example.

Closing Prayer