

STUDIES IN GALATIANS

Study #3: Galatians 2:1-10

“You Were Running Well”

(Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free)

You Were Running Well: UNTIL: Divine Direction Was Not Discerned – Galatians 2:1-10

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

Greetings. We’re in study number 3 in the book of Galatians. The key verse to the whole book is Galatians 5:7. You were running well until something happened. What was it that happened? I’ve used that little phrase in all of the studies and so once again today we’re going to be saying: You were running well until divine direction was not discerned.

We’re going to be looking at chapter 2 verses 1 to 10 and our key verse in the study today will be chapter 2 and verse 2.

I found an email the other day that said:

Where Grownups Go for Fun

[There’s an] Estimated number of visitors [during the summer at Orlando’s Walt Disney World of] 60 million people. Expected number of visitors [at the] Bass Pro shops [will be] 100 million.

Jayne O'Donnell, "Bass Pro CEO Hooked Dream Job," USA Today (9-30-09), 2B

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So you know where the husbands have manipulated the family and the wives to go to the Bass Pro shops and see all of the stuff that's available.

Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts. And we are never, ever the same [again].

(Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul, p. 35)

I share that with you today because the key to the book of Galatians is an understanding of the friendship that had been established by the apostle Paul with these churches in Galatia, southern Galatian. And now he is so upset because they have chosen to listen to the Judaizing teachers who believe you've got to keep the Law as well as come to know Christ as Savior.

You're going to see the high point of that today. The apostle is still dealing in chapters 1 and 2 with the personal. We have watched him together as he's worked hard for us to understand his feelings.

One of the big things we're going to talk about today is the will of God. The apostle Paul's going to tell you how he ascertained the will of God for his own life and hope as a result of the study, you will be considering that as well.

John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* said:

Getting out of the will of God for our lives is far easier than getting back in once we are out.

The question I ask you today as we start the study is, to the best of your knowledge, are you in the will of God tonight? Can you have that sweet peace that you are exactly where the Lord wants you to be and that you're doing what you need to be doing? Or have you turned kind of the deaf ear and you're kind of happy where you are and you don't want to have any more new instructions.

A lot of people live that way. They miss so much of the joy and the blessing that can be theirs. It's easy to miss it.

Isaiah 53:6: "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we've turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Remember the prodigal son who realized, finally, that the servants of his father had more bread to eat and he was perishing there with hunger and he accepted reality. He came to his senses and went back home to his dad who was ready to receive him. He was back in the place where he should have been all along, but he chose to be stubborn and to go his own way.

Now there are some really great verses the talk about this and I want to just read a couple to you.

Psalm 37:23, 24

If the Lord delights in a man's way,
he makes his steps firm,
though he stumble, he will not fall
for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in 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.

Job 23:10-12

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I
will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his
steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have
not departed from the commands of his lips; I have
treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily
bread.

Okay, now let's take all of these things that we've discussed
here in this opening and let's apply it now to the word of God
and what we're trying to learn in this section.

You were running well: Until divine direction was not
discerned.

Remember the first study?

You were running well: Until no runs, no hits and a big error.

And Paul confronted them seriously with a different gospel that they were preaching, but he told them that Satan was troubling their minds and twisting the message and therefore he was not very, very well received at that point.

In the second study that we looked at last week:

You were running well: Until you forgot what God was doing in your life.

And he spelled out the itinerary of what he followed and how he came to know Christ as Savior and the dramatic changes that took place in his life.

Now:

You were running well: until divine direction was not discerned.

Have you ever had the experience of being out of the will of God and knowing it yet you desired it? You wanted it and you went for it and you know that you're out of the will of God in that. I certainly have.

And so what do you do when you get out of the will of God? You go back to where you got out and you get back in.

But I'm telling you, I wouldn't trade the world for the decision that we made and the fulfillment and the happiness and the joy that we experienced and all that's going on in our lives now.

If you find that you're like me today and you're vulnerable enough to think it with me, that you just might not be in the center of where God wants you to be right now, I'm going to say there are probably three D's that have gotten you where you are.

The first one is DESIRES. When we let desires dominate. We assume that our desires are His desires.

You've always got to be haunted with Isaiah 55:8: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' saith the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways...'"

Secondly is the word DULLNESS.

Hebrews chapter 5 says: "You have become dull of hearing." You've become hard of hearing spiritually when you're listening to your own voice, rather than the voice of the Lord. And when you hear the voice of the Lord in the Word you have turned a calloused ear and that only happens when you have been rubbed with truth and you failed to be obedient.

The apostle makes that quite clear to the church that he was ministering to in the book of Hebrews. They had become dull of hearing because they heard and they didn't obey.

And the third one is just direct DISOBEDIENCE.

I want this so bad and I know it's not your will Lord that I know You're a God of grace and You will forgive eventually down the line so I'm going to. Now that's going to have some serious consequences in the long haul. God is so gracious and so good but you've got be careful if you're in that kind of a position where you have that kind of an attitude because there's going to be a long slow burn and you're going to learn a lot of lessons the hard way, if such is the case.

So those are just some thoughts that prepare us for Paul telling us the joy of his story and where he is in relationship to the will of God. And that's going to be in these verses that are coming before us.

Now if you want the will of God in your life Psalm 32:8, 9:

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go,
I will counsel you and watch over you.
Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.

Remember Isaiah 30:21:

Mine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, "this is the way, walk in it, when you turn the right hand, or when you

turn to the left”...

You have got to believe that. You’ve got to understand, too, that when some things come along you’ll learn to understand that those are there because the Father is trying to say something to you about that very thing. You see, it’s easy to miss the will of God by personal desires. When they...

Is there anybody in the Scripture that paid a horrible consequence for disobedience? Do you remember King Saul? He forced himself to become a priest and go in and offer the sacrifice and Samuel told him the way but he didn’t do it.

You see the same thing with Uziah. A king for 52 years in Israel. He went in to offer the sacrifice and became a leper as a result of that, for the rest of his life.

You see the same thing in David. I mean, he just decided to stay home from the military operations of the spring of the year and ended up in a real mess and it affected the rest of his life.

You see it in Jonah as he’s crying from the belly of the fish, “Oh God, I thank you for who you are!” As soon as he was burped out on the shore, he sure headed off to Nineveh where he was supposed to be going in the first place.

I’m just saying there are some consequences when you have uncertainty about where you are in relationship to the will of God.

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Now I'm going to quit preaching and go to meddlin', okay for a second. There are two words that get us when we get over 70.

When you've known the Lord for a lot of years, these two words are the most dangerous words in the whole vocabulary. The first one is the word ASSUMPTION and the second is the word ANTICIPATION.

You've walked with God for so long that you assume the opportunity equals His will. And that is not a valid assumption my friends. And the second one is anticipation. You've walked with Him for so long you anticipate what He is getting ready to do and without praying you go ahead and do it. And that will get you in deep yogurt too. Just mind your stuff and realize that at our stage of the game we better be very careful to seek godly counsel and move very slowly and making the decisions that you're making.

You're saying: "okay, now tell me before we look at the verses how I can know I'm in the will of God." Always take a reading on your circumstances first. Secondly, as you're reading God's word, does it verify the decision you're getting ready to make? And then prayer will ask God for His instruction and guidance and peace will be the result every time. "The work of righteousness will be peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." (Isaiah 32:17)

Colossians 3:15: "Let the peace of Christ rule as an umpire in your life."

Isaiah 32:17 but also Colossians 3:15 and Isaiah 26:3: “Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.”

I think if you’ll allow that, then you’re going to be able to make the decisions that need to be made.

But the more you hear and the more you read and the more excited you get about it, those are desires, but you’ve got to be sure that God drops the flag by making the provision and you get some real affirmation that this is what He want you to do. Do you see how you do that?

A lot of times people make decisions too in their marriages when they’re not in agreement. I think that’s a very dangerous thing especially if you’re both believers. That you come to that moment of peace together, that it’s the will of God.

You ready to dig into the text? You’re wondering when in the world is he going to get to the text?

Now there’s only 10 verses.

v. 1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas having taken along also Titus.

“Then after the space of fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas having taken along also Titus.”

Now you’ve got three people. You’ve got Paul. You’ve got

Barnabas and you've got Titus. If you want to put down at verse one Acts 15 as your cross reference, you would be right on target.

Now what we're trying to do here is set the itinerary of the apostle so you have the chronology in mind, and you know where we are with regard to his life. If we could go back to the Damascus Road, he was going north on the Damascus Road, he met the Lord there, went into Damascus and our text tells us that he spent three years there. Part of that was spent out in the desert in Arabia and he was there to be alone with the Lord. The other part of the time he was preaching and teaching in Damascus. But he stirred up such a furor that at the end of three years he was let down in a basket through the wall at night escaping for his life to go to Jerusalem.

So he makes the reverse trip of 130 miles to Jerusalem and he's there for two weeks, remember, and he saw Peter during those two weeks and James the brother of our Lord.

They're both going to come back into the study today. So it was a God thing that they have this time together. His preaching in Jerusalem got everybody stirred up so they decided to send him home. He went north to Caesarea, took a boat and went all the way to Cilicia and ended up in Tarsus, his hometown. He hadn't been there very long when Barnabas came over from Antioch and said I really need you to help me with the church in Antioch. It's growing like crazy. So the apostle Paul answered the call.

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They went over to the church at Antioch and began preaching and teaching and lo and behold, here comes some of these Jews from Jerusalem that say “You Gentiles are not Christians, unless you’ve been circumcised, you man, and unless you’re keeping parts of the Law.” Same song, second verse that he’s getting here again in the book of Galatians.

The church decided to send Paul and Barnabas down to Jerusalem to settle this issue with all the guys in Jerusalem.

Now who’s Titus? Titus is a Gentile who came to know Christ. During those 14 years that are here described, the apostle and Barnabas took off and went on the first missionary journey.

On that first journey they establish these churches in southern Galatia—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lyrstra, Derbe. After they finished the trip, they came back to Antioch to report and that’s when the conflict took place and the saints at the church in Antioch said go down to Jerusalem and settle this thing, because there’s so much difference of opinion, we want to make this right.

Now, on that first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas took John Mark with them and John Mark just barely got started and he got homesick and headed off back to Jerusalem, so it was just the two of them that finished that first journey and went back up to Antioch to report.

Now, the record of it is in Acts 14 and 15. Let me just read a little bit of it to you.

Acts 14:26-15:4

and from there they sailed to Antioch, from which place they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled (accomplished). And when they arrived and gathered at the church together, they reported all things that God did with them and that He opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they were spending not a little time with the disciples. And some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you are not able to be saved.” ...

And of course, that stirred up the fury and they sent them.

Titus became the test case. He is a guy who came to know Jesus Christ, evidently, on his first missionary journey, uncircumcised, but he is going to give a witness to that church in Jerusalem that Christ really changes lives. The only other place you see Titus is he was sent on part of the mission to Corinth to help with that church. But then his most significant ministry came on the island of Crete and Paul wrote a little book called Titus to him to help him in his ministry on the island of Crete.

The neatest thing in the whole world, archaeologists have uncovered a cornerstone on the island of Crete with the name Titus on it. So you know he was there and had a ministry but you can thank God that Titus went along and gave his

testimony and that blew their socks off when they realized that here's a man who really loved Jesus Christ and his life had been dramatically changed and he was already in service.

So the only item on the agenda when they get down to the council, these three men, is going to be the whole business of circumcision and the report's going to be given in these verses that come before us. And we'll be talking about then is the will of God.

If you love a person long enough, he or she will disappoint you, hurt you or even leave you. I wish it could be different but our humanness doesn't seem to let us get away with perfection. I read recently that the only place perfection exists is on our resumes! Simple day-to-day life creates stress, disappointment, frustration, hurt, conflict and anger between even the best of friends. (*Friendships That Run Deep* by Keith R. Anderson, p. 99)

Now, here comes a key verse. Are you guys still with me? This verse is so awesome because it's the third part of what I've been telling you all along about the apostles' witness.

v. 2 And I went up in accordance with a revelation and I laid before them the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles. But privately to those of recognized eminence lest by any means I should be running or had run in vain.

“And I went up”—now look at it—“in accordance with a

revelation and I laid before them the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles. But privately to those of recognized eminence lest by any means I should be running or had run in vain.”

He’s going right back to running again. But why did he go to Jerusalem?

It was in accordance to/of Revelation. The Lord said go to Jerusalem. The Antioch church said to go to Jerusalem. The leaders said go to Jerusalem. He went to Jerusalem. All of them tell you that when you want the will of God for your life, can know and be affirmed in that will, simply by being sensitive to what the Lord’s trying to tell you. And to listen with both ears.

Now this is our key verse. And the reason that he’s going up to Jerusalem is because there was a revelation of Jesus Christ and he went in accordance with that revelation to give his witness.

Now put the three together. In study number one we learned that all he was came through Jesus Christ. That defends his apostleship. That was chapter 1 and verse 1. All that he said came through Jesus Christ—that was last week—chapter 1 and verse 11. And today, all that he did came through Jesus Christ. He was under divine direction—chapter 2 and verse 2.

His character, his conversation and his conduct all came through Jesus Christ. His walk, his words and his witness

came through Jesus Christ. You've seen the man, you've heard his message and now you know of his ministry and they all have divine authentication upon it because he was a man who was leadable by the Lord and it all came through Jesus Christ. How careful you and I need to be in discerning divine direction in our lives, lest we be running in vain or doing something outside of His will.

Now, you see that little phrase “recognized eminence” in the verse? You're going to run into that four times. Paul is not making fun of the leadership. He's recognizing it. The leadership involves three people: Peter, James and John the apostle. You've already met Peter and James last week because when he went up to Jerusalem the first time, leaving from Arabia, he stopped and visited with Peter for two weeks and he visited with James, the brother of our Lord.

So these are the three key figures that are going to enter in to the decision that's getting ready to be made by the council.

“I went up in accordance with a revelation”—here's a man directed by God and he's carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ without any legal requirements or additions.

Isn't it great though, that instead of going to the public arena immediately and creating the conflict, he would go privately to the guys who are key in leadership. The strategy is just amazing. Rather than make a big issue over this and get embarrassed by the key leadership by having them dig in their heels and bow their neck against the message that he's

preaching, he's going to the three of them privately and tell them exactly what he's saying and how he's doing and what the results have been on that first missionary journey in these churches that have been established already. And people will come to know Christ and, oh by the way, I brought one along for you and I want him to give you his testimony.

And so here he takes this time to get the human approval. He already has the comfort of knowing that he has divine approval because God has led him all the way. But now he is seeking the approval of these key leaders before they get after it.

I love it. He is such an intense goal oriented individual, he's comfortable under authority and so he works everything just perfectly.

In the book, *Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*, Harvey Mackay says, The Japanese have a very simple way of describing the typical American marketing plan: READY? FIRE! AIM! (p. 17)

Naturally there was one strategic businessman who said there are 95% of American people who have no goals for their lives.

That's really scary. Would it be possible for us to be so goal-oriented and so impressed with the passion of the Spirit of God, that when we get ready to die, all we have to do is die with the comfort that we have fulfilled His will for our lives.

That's the greatest joy in the whole world. To be able to know

that I've been on assignment, I've completed the task and I'm ready to go to the house.

Jesus said that "I finished the work you gave me to do" in John 17, while He's in the garden of Gethsemane. All that's left is death on the cross but we're going to get that done tomorrow. So the task is over.

I meet so many Christians on their deathbed who really feel bad because they've missed so much and they failed to fulfill what they feel they should have done.

John Wooden, as you know was a famous coach at UCLA, died in his 90's. He described the happy, fulfilled life on five blocks: industriousness, enthusiasm, friendship, loyalty and cooperation. He calls that the pyramid of success. If he would've added the spiritual, I would've been a very happy camper. I know he was a believer and professed to be one. But still, it would've been nice for him to have included it in this dimension. (*The Essential Wooden*, p. 40)

v. 3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek was compelled to be circumcised.

Now notice verse three. Is this cool or what?

"But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek [or a Gentile] was compelled to be circumcised."

When we went to these guys and we gave them the message

and what we're preaching and they heard from Titus, they were so touched by the change in his life and the new direction and the passion for the Lord and for the ministry. They said "no way, we can't add anything to him and what he is doing in the gospel he's preaching."

Satan is in the business of troubling the mind and twisting the gospel. And boy, here's Titus, the test case. He's going to come in and tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God.

v. 4 But because of the false brethren brought in secretly who came in secretly (snuck in) to spy out our liberty which we are having in Christ Jesus in order that they might bring us into bondage.

"But"—verse 4—because of the false brethren brought in secretly who came in secretly (snuck in) [I call them creeps] to spy out our liberty which we are having in Christ Jesus in order that they might bring us into bondage.

Their whole purpose was designed to infiltrate the ranks of the believers and sow the discord. And that's the way Satan's tactics always are.

Spy out our liberty which we are having in Christ Jesus so that we might bring you back into bondage.

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Howard Hendricks tells this story about going to India that really touched me.

Yesterday we got a letter from Africa asking us to come and partner in southern Africa. Today I got an email from India, a pastor who wants us to come and partner in ministry in India.

All that's coming off the web and all they are saying is "We need help." The gospel needs to be spread, and people are hungry to hear it.

Hendricks answered the call to India on a short trip over there. An old woman lay seriously ill in the hospital. Her closest friend read Isaiah 25:6-9 aloud to her. Wanting the comfort and support of faith, the sick woman asked her friend to hold her hand and on the other side of the bed, her husband, who considered himself a deeply religious man and who prided himself for his boldness and having a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker on his car, reached out to take her hand. His wife withdrew it, saying, with deep sadness, "Herbert, you are not a believer. Your cruelty and callousness throughout the 40 years of our marriage tells me that your faith is only an illusion."

Boy, when you hear stuff like that from those who are the closest to us. It's got to be tragic. But what did they hear about Titus? They heard the authenticity of the message and he was ready and eager and excited to share it and there was great response to what he had to say.

v. 5 To whom not even for an hour did we yield to the submission demanded, in order that the truth of the gospel might remain (continue for you).

Now notice verse five.

“To whom not even for an hour did we yield to the submission demanded, in order that the truth of the gospel might remain or (continue for you).”

We realize what we’re doing and it was done for you Galatian Christians and yet you’re going right back under the very things we liberated you from at the Jerusalem council. We didn’t even yield to those guys one second. We were faithful to stay true to the gospel message.

Philip Yancey says:

Perfectionism keeps running aground on the barrier reef of original sin. How can we in the church uphold the ideal of holiness, the proper striving for Life on the Highest Plane, while avoiding the consequences of disillusionment, pettiness, abuse of authority, spiritual pride and exclusivism.” (*Grace Notes*, p. 130)

Eugene Peterson confesses:

It is a lot easier for me, Lord Jesus, to be an onlooker than a participant. I get all the pleasures of diversion and excitement,

and none of the stress of the risk and [the discipline involved.]
(*A Year With Jesus*, p. 112)

This is Howard Hendricks' story about the change of the gospel. He tells of visiting this leprosy colony in Indian:

The morning he arrived, the residents were gathered for a praise service. One of the women with leprosy hobbled to the platform. Hendricks said that even though she was partially blind and badly disfigured, she was one of the most beautiful women he'd ever seen.

Raising both of her nearly fingerless hands toward Heaven, she said in a clear voice, "I want to praise God that I am a leper because it was through my leprosy that I came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior. And I would rather be a leper who knows Christ than be completely whole and the stranger to His grace.

(*Treasures for Women Who Hope* by Alice Gray, pp. 71-72)

Those kind of clear, positive witnesses. I can just hear Titus saying those words and the impact is incredible.

Now do you see last week's study? You learn your story and you magnify the grace of God in the story that you tell. And here's Titus showing you how to do it.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. And look what we owe to him today because we have the freedom of the grace of God in having Christ as our Savior.

v. 6 But to be something from those who were of recognized eminence whatever they once were it makes no difference to me. God is not accepting man's person. For those of recognized eminence laid nothing in addition upon me.

Now when you get to verse six he says:

“But to be something from those who were of recognized eminence—[there's that word again]—whatever they [once] were. It makes no difference to me. God is not accepting man's person. For those of recognized eminence—[there it is the third time]—laid nothing in addition upon me.”

Now he says that four times. He said it twice here in six, he said it back in verse two and he is going to say it one more time in verse nine. He's not deriding them or bucking authority. He's just telling them that he went to the leaders.

You see one of the things these Judaizing teacher said is Paul is not an apostle, and number two, he didn't go and check with the leadership. And so he's telling the Galatian church four times in these verses that he went to those of recognized eminence and this is the ruling that came as a result of that.

This gets so exciting. I can't stand it! Are you getting ready and eager to see what's coming on the next page?

“Of recognized eminence” [those people who are in leadership—Peter, James and John]—“laid nothing in addition

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upon me.”

I just wrote, if you want to put this in layman’s terminology, “no corrections or additions.” Nothing different from what you’ve been saying.

v. 7 But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised even as Peter [had been entrusted with the gospel] to the circumcised.

Now look at verse seven.

“But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised even as Peter [had been entrusted with the gospel] to the circumcised.”

You’ve got the same message. You’ve got two different mission fields. Together the council ascertained it was not anything to do with the message. It had everything to do with the way God deployed these two servants.

Peter, James and John are located in Jerusalem. They are ministering primarily to Jews and the apostle Paul is entrusted with a ministry to the Gentiles.

It’s one message, two different mission fields, Jews and Gentiles that are being touched. One message. Two fields of service.

What a powerful statement. Paul would have missed that if he was not sensitive to the Lord's leadership to go to Jerusalem to get these affirmations before he went on the second and third missionary journey.

v. 8 For He who energized Peter unto apostleship to the circumcision also energized me unto the Gentiles.

“For he who energized Peter”—Oh! This is great! Verse 8—“unto apostleship to the circumcision also energized me on to the Gentiles.

The whole thing is just powerfully described as a oneness which they felt in Jerusalem at the total acceptance of what happened.

Listen to what John MacArthur says from his book, *Found: God's Will: Find God's Will and Direction and Purpose for Your Life*:

Some apparently think that God's will is lost. At least they say they are searching for it! To them, God must appear to be a sort of divine Easter bunny who has stashed His will, like eggs, somewhere out of sight and sent us running through life trying to find it. And He is up there saying, “You're getting warmer!” (p. 5-6)

And He's up there saying “You're getting warmer!” That's not too far from the truth.

Gary Thomas in *The Beautiful Fight* says:

It's not as if I'm called to find out the will of God and then accomplish it in my own strength. On the contrary, not only does God call me; he also equips me, sustains me, and empowers me. Anything less is a Christless Christianity. (p. 128)

Eugene Peterson prays:

Dear Jesus, teach me my place: as a servant, not a master, as the friend of the bridegroom, not the bridegroom; as a witness to the truth, not the truth itself. Amen. (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 246)

v. 9 And having perceived the grace which was given to me; James and Cephas and John those who were of recognized eminence to be pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in order that we should go unto the Gentiles and they to the circumcision.

Now look at the next verse, verse nine.

“And having perceived the grace which was given to me; James and Cephas [that's Peter] and John those who were of recognized eminence [there is your fourth time] to be pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in order that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision.”

What does it mean “pillars”? You know what a pillar is in a building? It’s what holds everything up. In the church of Jesus Christ, you have pillars and caterpillars.

You’ve got those who are tearing it down and you’ve got those who are building it up.

These guys are the guys that the Lord used to establish the church on the day of Pentecost. Peter preached that powerful message. That was the beginning of the birthday of the church.

So it’s right for Paul to call them pillars. But the right hand of fellowship is to give these guys total and complete approval as to what they’re going to be doing in their ministry. The right hand of Christian fellowship. The greatest force.

Can you just feel in your mind what it would be like to be standing in a circle as five men were all called passionately to share the gospel of Christ with the remainder of their lives? Wherever and however and whenever and whatever. To call each other together. How the Lord must’ve blessed that circle.

I saw these five men—Peter, James, John, Paul and Barnabas—holding hands, and I started singing “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.” Because that’s the way the body of Christ should function.

There ought to be that sweet love and appreciation for one another as brothers and sisters. But that we’re each passionate

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about sharing the gospel with our family, with our friends, in the opportunity that God uses. That was last week's study.

Don't forget what God is doing in your life because that's the foundation for your witness and your testimony. And then you take that testimony and as God opens the doors for opportunity, you walk through those doors to the ministry that He has for you in a very special way.

“and having perceived the grace which was given to me.”

How do you think they “perceived the grace that was given to me?” Well by his own testimony of the tremendous ministry and the fruitful ministry they had on that first missionary journey and the years that he preached in Antioch before they went on that first journey.

There was 14 years there and so he had a lot of stories to tell about how God had intervened and worked in their lives.

Nancy Leigh DeMoss in *Seeking Him* says:

“Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. Grace is the enabling gift of God not to sin. Grace is power, not just pardon.”—John Piper (p. 90)

God in His grace provides us with great opportunities for ministry. Opportunities for us to serve and to be faithful.

v. 10 Only that we should keep on remembering the poor which this very thing I made haste also to do.

And our last verse:

“Only that we should keep on remembering the poor which this very thing I made haste also to do.”

In the last part of the council in Acts 15 they say: “Oh, by the way. Circumcision is off the table but remind them that the poor saints in Jerusalem need help.” There’d been an economic collapse. And so that’s why Paul everywhere he went to preach, he took offerings. And those offerings were brought back on that last trip to Jerusalem. When he came down there for that final trip before he took that one-way trip to Rome and ultimately to his own demise.

He was faithful to collect financial resources to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. That was the only stipulation that they put that they would’ve loved to have the help. “Keep on remembering the poor.”

Now there are 11 lessons that come out of today’s study. I hope you will take careful time when you get home to read it, but I want to do something else. I want you to just quietly, if you’re married sit down together, and just share together why you know you are right where you need to be right now. And why God has you and what is it that He still wants to do through you that you haven’t heard from Him, as far as instruction.

There are so many places in the world that we could have a significant ministry. You were running well until divine direction was not discerned. I don't want you to ever have to say that as a result of this study today.

Who can measure the joy and the happiness and the fulfillment that could be yours if you just go through that exercise today.

Listen to this poem by Barbara Rydeburgon:

He does not lead me year by year,
Nor even day by day;
But step by step my path unfolds.
My Lord directs my way.

Tomorrow's plans I do not know.
I only know this minute;
But He will say, "This is the way,
By faith, go walk ye in it."

And I am glad that it is so.
Today's enough to bear,
And when tomorrow comes,
His grace shall far exceed its care.

What need to worry then, or fret?
The God who gave His Son holds
All my moments in His hand;
And gives them one by one. (source unknown)

Hudson Taylor's favorite song that he sang every morning in his devotions is:

Jesus, I am resting, resting
In the Joy of What Thou Art;
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart.

Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,
And Thy beauty fills my soul,...

Jesus, I am resting, resting
In the Joy of What Thou Art;

Think of Caleb. He was the only one along with Joshua who gave the minority report when they came back as spies from the Promised Land.

And what did God say? You two guys are going to be friends. He was 45 when he was a spy and he was 85 standing in the land under Joshua's leadership and given Hebron. And he said "I'm just as strong today as I was 45 years ago so I can go in here and take the land." And what's the key phrase about Caleb that stands out in bold relief several times in Joshua 14? He wholly followed the Lord.

Because of that, he was honored and blessed in his old age and in the joy of being one of two who got to be in the land. Why? He learned to say no to the body and yes to the Spirit. He learned to be sensitive of being in the will of God, rather than out of it.

There can be a time when we're considering it and when we're considering it be sure that all you say is yes.

Jonah chapter 1. Jonah is out of the will of God. In Jonah chapter 2 he's running back to the will of God, through a whale of an experience. In Jonah chapter 3 he's in the will of God and God is leading a revival in Nineveh.

And in Jonah chapter 4 he gets impatient and is running ahead of the will of God and he gets in another mess as the book begins to end.

Just learn that the Lord wants to lead you and guide you. Half of it is sensitivity on our part to hear Him and to respond to what He wants us to do and to be faithful in that.

I wish we could sing Fanny Crosby's hymn:

All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?

A. W. Tozer said:

Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with another for place or prestige or position. I would be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretense. Forgive me for thinking myself. Help me to forget myself and

find my true peace in beholding Thee. That Thou mayest answer this prayer, I humble myself before Thee. Lay upon me Thy easy yoke of self-forgetfulness that through it I may find rest [in Thee]. Amen. (*The Best of A.W. Tozer*, p. 33)

Father, we thank You for today and the joy of studying Your Word. We pray Your Holy Spirit will minister to us from this passage of Scripture in significant ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

STUDY NUMBER THREE – UNTIL: DIVINE DIRECTION WAS NOT DISCERNED –
– GALATIANS 2:1-10

KEY VERSE 2:2

- v. 1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas having taken along also Titus.
- v. 2 And I went up in accordance with a revelation and I laid before them the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles. But privately to those of recognized eminence lest by any means I should be running or had run in vain.
- v. 3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek was compelled to be circumcised.
- v. 4 But because of the false brethren brought in secretly who came in secretly (snuck in) to spy out our liberty which we are having in Christ Jesus in order that they might bring us into bondage.
- v. 5 To whom not even for an hour did we yield to the submission demanded, in order that the truth of the gospel might remain (continue for you).
- v. 6 But to be something from those who were of recognized eminence whatever they once were it makes no difference to me. God is not accepting man's person. For those of recognized eminence laid nothing in addition upon me.
- v. 7 But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised even as Peter [had been entrusted with the gospel] to the circumcised.
- v. 8 For He who energized Peter unto apostleship to the circumcision also energized me unto the Gentiles.
- v. 9 And having perceived the grace which was given to me; James and Cephas and John those who were of recognized eminence to be pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in order that we should go unto the Gentiles and they to the circumcision.
- v. 10 Only that we should keep on remembering the poor which this very thing I made haste also to do.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Galatians 2:1-10 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. Why did the Apostle Paul go up to Jerusalem, according to verses 1 & 2?

3. What did the “false brethren” want to do, according to verse 4?

4. What does Paul mean by “bondage” in verse 4?

5. Who won the debate, according to verse 5?

6. What was the difference between Paul’s and Peter’s ministry, according to verse 7?

7. Who are the three key men in the Jerusalem church, according to verse 9?

8. What did they ask Paul and Barnabas to do, according to verse 10?

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

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

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

LESSON #1: As the Apostle Paul documents his travels, you sense that he is definitely being guided by the Lord and living by Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in 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” (NIV).

LESSON #2: Paul was very sensitive to stir up trouble by talking privately first with those who were in positions of authority in Jerusalem.

LESSON #3: I would recommend that you pray with me every morning: “Dear Lord, keep me on task, on track, and out of Satan’s traps.” This is certainly a relevant prayer in view of this study in Galatians 2.

LESSON #4: When desires, dullness, and disobedience dominate we are in danger of missing His will for our lives.

LESSON #5: Satan’s desire is to keep us in bondage by adding to or complicating the Gospel message.

LESSON #6: Fellow believers will recognize God’s leading in your life and ministry.

LESSON #7: Satan’s henchmen often demand unquestioned submission to their authority.

LESSON #8: Paul does not want to be wasting time running outside of the will of God.

LESSON #9: Ask God to give you the courage to stand tall and to resist the demands of our pagan culture around us.

LESSON #10: Remember to be faithful in your giving to those who are less fortunate and are in need.

LESSON #11: Ask God for a clear focus on your mission for life and where your ministry should take place. God is faithful to lead in this regard.

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