

Grace Didn't Die
When, Where, and How To Draw Lines in the Sand
Galatians 2:1-14

Introduction: In general, we humans are competitive creatures with an uncanny ability to justify fighting one another over almost anything. Whether it's money, relationships, religion, politics, or even sports, a quick scroll through social media or a "news" website will expose you to all kinds of things people are fighting about; things you can instantly join the argument in the comment section. Social media companies actually amplify posts that arouse anger because they know people are more likely to engage with those than ones that might make them feel happy! Therefore, the more inflammatory people's comments are, the more the social media algorithms make sure those posts are seen. Social media companies know human beings are naturally combative egomaniacs who want to prove they are right. They know human beings are naturally drawn to fights to participate, cheer on who they want to win, or just to watch people fight!

Interestingly, since the invention of social media, pressure has increased on people to join the arguments and not just watch them play out. Activists now say if you aren't openly for and against whatever they are for and against, then you are their enemy. However, it's gotten so out of hand that a counterculture is starting to develop that promotes the idea that people should "never fight for anything except not fighting." In the Christian version of this counter culture, the belief is that because God is love, we should live at peace with everybody no matter what, and as such, Jesus expects us to lay aside all our disagreements and take no stand on anything so that everybody can live in unity. However, there isn't a marriage counselor worth their weight in salt who would agree with such a premise. If you and your spouse go to a counselor and their counsel is just to ignore the things your spouse is doing to you and your relationship so that you can live in peace, then you need to find another counselor! Good counselors aren't there to help couples ignore what's wrong, but rather to talk about it, that is, fight about it in a way that resolves it for the better rather than the worse.

But it's not just marriage counselors who would disagree with the idea that avoiding conflict makes sense; more importantly, the Bible doesn't teach it. As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches us that there are things very much worth confronting in one another, and in that sense, fighting for, with one another. However, a confrontation doesn't have to be a fight in the standard way one thinks of a fight, but by definition, a confrontation is a form of a fight. Whenever you confront or challenge somebody about something, you are, by definition, entering a contest or a "fight" where they are against what you are trying to get them to be for or vice versa.

For instance, at the most basic level, presenting the Gospel is a fight; it is a fight for the soul of man to repent from serving himself and instead serve God; it is a fight to convince a person to abandon death and embrace life! You wouldn't think it would be a fight, but it is, and no one made that more clear than Jesus. Jesus said,

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:34-39)

Obviously, Jesus wasn't talking about physically fighting people, and certainly He wasn't talking about killing anybody with a literal sword, but rather, with the sword that is the Word of God, His followers are to fight sin and death by defeating it with His light and life that are revealed in His Word! Paul put it this way when he wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus,

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:10-20)

So, the question then becomes, what are the schemes of the devil we are to fight against? What does the darkness look like that we are to overcome with light? What does the death look like that we are to fight with life and what is that life? How do we know which fights to fight and when to fight them?

Well, we can't answer everything today for sure, but our study of the book of Galatians takes us straight into three examples of things Paul decided were worth a fight.

Proposition: Galatians 2:1-14 reveals three different examples of things Paul felt were worth a fight.

The first example of what Paul was willing to fight was legalism ...

(1) Paul did not yield to legalism. - Paul refused to make Titus get circumcised. (2:1-5)

- A. 1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in--who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery-- 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.**
- B.** Notice chapter two opens with the word “Then,” meaning it’s a continuation of the previous passage where Paul established his apostolic authority to confront the false gospel being preached by those falsely claiming authority. Apostles had authority because they didn’t get the Gospel from somebody who claimed to have heard it from Jesus, but rather they had authority because they received the Gospel directly from Jesus. They could be those who officially and authoritatively represented Jesus because He, not men, not even other Apostles, informed and commissioned them!
- C.** Therefore, in the passage we read last week, Paul testifies to the trustworthiness of His apostolic authority in that it was not given to him by man, including the rightly acknowledged apostles in Jerusalem like Peter, but instead he received it from Christ Himself! Now it is important to know that the other Apostles, even those in Jerusalem, did acknowledge Paul’s apostleship, but he didn’t get the Gospel from them, nor did Paul receive his authority as an Apostle from them, if he had, he would by definition not be an Apostle.
- D.** So, in chapter two, Paul then fast forwards his story and conversation of his authority as an Apostle 14 years to the next time he met with the Apostles in Jerusalem, who had previously affirmed him as an Apostle. This all went down after Paul and Barnabas completed their missionary journey, which took them through the Roman province of Galatia. Here’s what happened,
- E. 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples. 1 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go**

up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. (Acts 14:26-15:2)

- F. For time's sake, we are not going to walk all the way through Luke's (the author of Acts) account of what happened in the Jerusalem council, but rather I'm going to stick with what Paul wanted the believers in the Province of Galatia to know about it. So, let's look again at the beginning of today's passage. Paul wrote,
- G. **1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up [(Jews always referred to going to Jerusalem as going up and coming from it as going down)] because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.**
- H. Interestingly, Paul had very public meetings and debates in Jerusalem on this subject, but he also had private meetings with those who had influence so that he could win them over. Paul was in it to win it! He had no intention of losing this debate and was fighting this battle in every ethical way possible.
- I. Now Paul's point in making sure he wasn't running in vain was again, not to find his authority from the Apostles in Jerusalem, nor to define the Gospel by them, but rather, because the men who showed up in Antioch preaching the false Gospel that he and Barnabas confronted had originated from Judea, and presumably had some kind of roots to the church in Jerusalem and possibly to the Apostles and elders leading the church in Jerusalem. Therefore, understanding the power and influence the Apostles in the church of Jerusalem had over Christians around the world, Paul, as well as the church in Antioch, felt it was necessary to force the Apostles in Jerusalem to proclaim what these men were preaching publicly as NOT being the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They wanted to remove any possible credibility the false teachers could claim through their association with the church in Jerusalem. If the Apostles and elders in the church in Jerusalem didn't publicly proclaim what these false teachers were proclaiming as a false gospel, it would be as if they had endorsed it and that could totally undermine everything Paul and those who served with them had and were doing in proclaiming the actual Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- J. Now here's where it gets interesting. In explaining how he went to Jerusalem to get this issue settled he told them,
- K. **3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.**
1. Circumcision wasn't a mere cultural practice. It was a commandment of God to the Jewish people. A man could not be accepted as a follower of God if he wasn't circumcised – period. (Genesis 17:14).

2. Interestingly, in Acts 16, after the Jerusalem Council, Paul circumcised Timothy to make him more effective with his ministry to the Jews. An uncircumcised Gentile like Titus was certainly offensive to Jews; however, an uncircumcised Jew was a complete abomination to a Jew. It was at the top of the charts of things that would send Jews into a total irate fit. So, Paul insisted that Timothy get circumcised in order to enhance his ministry effectiveness to his fellow Jews in telling them that circumcision, and the rest of the Law of Moses, had been fulfilled and replaced by Christ. Timothy was half Jewish. Therefore, Paul knew the only way he could get the Jewish believers to listen to the decision of the council of Jerusalem's declaration that a person didn't have to be circumcised to be a follower of Christ, would be to hear it from a Jew who was circumcised. Paul knew that if Timothy weren't circumcised, Jews would have just said Timothy was preaching this news to defend his own lack of circumcision. It would have necessarily impacted the trustworthiness of his message.
3. However, Paul drew the line in the sand when it came to forcing a Gentile to align with Jewish cultural practices, and Titus was 100% Gentile. Furthermore, because Titus wasn't circumcised, Paul could present him as evidence that Christ had fulfilled and replaced the Mosaic Law! The unmistakable, irreplaceable, incomparable, long-prophesied promised testimony that a person belonged to God was the Holy Spirit within them, and Titus was just such a person. The Holy Spirit had clearly testified that He had filled Titus in the same way he had done Jewish believers, but Titus was neither Jewish nor circumcised. Therefore, Paul bringing Titus to the Jerusalem council on this issue was the case in point, and what was being preached by those who had come from the church in Judea to the church in Antioch was indeed a false gospel.
4. Years before that, Peter, one of the key Apostles in the Jerusalem Council, had testified to the very same thing happening to a Roman Centurion named Cornelius and his family (Read Acts 10 and 11 for more information). Upon seeing the testimony of the Holy Spirit in them, Peter argued there was no reason not to baptize the Gentiles who repented and believed in Jesus, just as they had baptized Jews who repented and believed in Jesus. In so doing, Peter stated that both are a part of the household of God. The Holy Spirit indwelling and empowering a person is God's way of declaring to the world that a person belongs to God. Similarly, water baptism was not only an official way for a person to proclaim Christ had regenerated them and that they were proudly a part of Christ's family (the church), but also for the church to publicly affirm that the person was a part of the family!
5. However, those teaching circumcision were saying, unless a man gets circumcised and submits himself to the Mosaic Law, he at most can't be saved and at least can't be considered a spiritually mature follower of Christ.

Despite this issue seemingly being settled after Peter and Cornelius, it somehow was still alive and well and flowing out of the church in Jerusalem, with no statement of rebuke from the leadership in the church of Jerusalem. This is why Paul and Barnabas forced them to make a statement, and thus why we end up with the Jerusalem Council.

6. Acts 15 gives more details on what happened at the Council, but again, for our purposes, I want to stay focused on what Paul wanted the churches in Galatia to be focused on. Listen to what he told the churches in Galatia about the debates, the literal verbal fights, albeit respectful fights, but fights nonetheless!
- L. **4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in--who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery-- 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.**
1. So, Paul went there, not to find a compromise for both to exist, but to totally eradicate any possible credibility for such teaching! He refused to compromise with even a millimeter of the line he drew in the sand concerning the Gospel.
 2. Do you want to know how intense it got? These false teachers had people posing to agree with Paul so that they could get close to him and his team to try and find some kind of crack in the armor that they could then use against Paul in the debate. They were lying and deceiving others to try to prove their version of the gospel was true! That alone should have discredited them!
 3. Regardless, Paul said I will draw this line in the sand, and I will not be moved. Any change to the Gospel of Jesus Christ fundamentally forms a different gospel, and the result of all other gospels is slavery to sin! We are going to thoroughly bury that hatchet on this issue as we go through Galatians, so I'm not going to comment any further on that today so that I can instead make sure you don't miss the gravity of the fight, what the fight was about, and why it was so vital for Paul to win it!
 4. K.S. Wuest noted, **"This was a grave crisis. The entire status of Gentile Christianity was involved in the case of Titus. The question as to whether Christianity was to be merely a modified form of legalistic Judaism or a system of pure grace, was at stake."**¹

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 62). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

5. Charles Spurgeon noted, **“The idea of salvation by the merit of our own works is exceedingly insinuating. It does not matter how often it is refuted; it asserts itself again and again. And when it gains the least foothold, it soon makes great advances. Hence Paul, who was determined to show it no quarter, opposed everything that bore its likeness. He was determined not to permit the thin end of the wedge to be introduced into the church, for he knew well that willing hands would soon be driving it home.”**²

6. Paul won the fight at the Jerusalem Council. The proof was that Titus left Jerusalem with the affirmation of the Apostles that he was indeed a fully accepted child of God by nothing more than the grace of Christ through faith, in the same way the Holy Spirit had previously made this Gospel truth clear to them with Cornelius and so many other Gentiles. As such, Paul now had a real-life testimony to send out for anybody who wanted proof that the Apostles in Jerusalem not only agreed with him that the Gospel he was preaching was the Gospel of Christ, but also that the teachings of the Judaizers was a false gospel.

The second example of what Paul was willing to fight over was his calling ...

(2) Paul did not yield his calling. - Paul fought to keep his ministry to the Gentiles. (2:6-10)

- A. **6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.**

Note: In other words, Paul didn't form any of the Gospel he preached to please the men who seemed to be influential or powerful.

- B. **7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.**

- C. **James** - the brother of Jesus, leader of the church in Jerusalem, and author of the book of James in the Bible.

² Spurgeon, C. (2013). *Galatians*. (E. Ritzema, Ed.) (Ga 2:11-14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- D. **Cephas** - another name for Peter.
- E. **John** - The one known as the beloved disciple of Jesus, the author of the Gospel account named The Gospel of John, the book of Revelation, and the epistles entitled 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John.
- F. **“2:10 *They only asked us to remember the poor*”** Paul was first introduced to the concept of a special offering for the poor in Jerusalem by the church at Antioch (cf. Acts 11:27–30). He developed this into an initial procedure for Gentile churches (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8, 9; and Rom. 15:25–27). If Gal. 2 parallels Acts 15, explaining why the other stipulations of Acts 15:23–29 are not mentioned becomes more difficult. Therefore many have seen this verse as an argument for making this visit contemporary with Acts 11:27–30.”³
- G. If you read Acts 15, you will see that there were some other things that they asked Paul and Barnabas to reinforce as they traveled and preached. However, the point I want you to see here is that Paul’s defense of the Gospel of Christ was simultaneously a defense of his ministry to the Gentiles.
- H. Now this shouldn’t be confused with “turfism” in the church, that is, those people who feel their ministry should have priority over every other ministry, and as such stubbornly refuse to submit to the leadership of the church that must make decisions over which things are most effective for the overall mission of that church. There is also a turfism in the church that acts as if everybody should be trying to reach the people they are trying to reach, and if you’re not trying to reach the people they are trying to reach, then you must not truly love Jesus. Both are terribly arrogant, foolish, and childish, and therefore, sinful.
- I. However, Paul’s refusal to compromise His calling to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles wasn’t turfism, but rather, first and foremost, about obeying Christ’s instructions for whom he was to preach the Gospel to and defending the Gospel of Jesus that he preached! If the Gospel was not for the Jews as well as the Gentiles, then it wasn’t very good news at all; however, if Gentiles were indeed fully saved by nothing more than the “grace of God through faith in Christ” then how could there be anything but a full endorsement of the mission to bring them this incredible life changing news!
- J. So, think of the impact of this handshake. A handshake was significant!
 - 1. *“They gave me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.* The custom of giving the hand as a pledge of friendship or agreement has been found among both the Hebrews and the Greeks. It was probably derived by the

³ Utley, R. J. (1997). [*Paul’s First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*](#) (Vol. Volume 11, pp. 20–21). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.

Hebrews from some outside source. The custom appears as early as Homer. It is found in an inscription from Pergamum (98 b.c.), where the people of that city offer to adjust the strife between Sardis and Ephesus and send a mediator to give hands for a treaty. The custom is found among the Persians. Images of right hands clasped were often exchanged in token of friendship. An extract from Tacitus says, "The state of the Lingones had sent, according to an ancient institution, right hands, as gifts to the legions, a signal of good will." On Roman coins there often is seen two hands joined, with various inscriptions speaking of concord and agreement. ... It was an acknowledgment of apostolic equality. Paul would not be content with the mere approbation of the Twelve upon his missionary labors. He needed to show the Galatians that he was an apostle equal in rank to the apostles at Jerusalem."⁴

2. "This act indicates the acceptance of Paul's apostleship and gospel message by the apostles in Jerusalem, as well as the recognition of their partnership as ministers. If the Galatians were formerly concerned that Paul might be a rogue apostle, they no longer needed to be. Paul had full support of the "pillars" of Jerusalem all along—the Jerusalem apostles came to recognize that every apostle has their own area of ministry."⁵

K. This agreement allowed Paul to write to the churches in Galatia and destroy the credibility of those undermining the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul preached. The three most influential Apostles in the Jerusalem church (James, Peter and John), the church in the very place Christ was crucified and then rose from the grave; the place at the very heart of Jewish life and culture; the church where everything got stated, were all embracing Paul as a true brother in the same mission and same Gospel, and as such, the false teachers that were opposing Paul and the Gospel he preached had no standing nor did their gospel.

The third example of what Paul was willing to fight over was racism ...

(3) Paul did not yield to bigotry. - Paul refused to allow ethnic superiority or prejudice to go unchallenged. (2:11-14)

A. 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 3, pp. 65–67). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Ga 2:6–10). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- B.** I read a variety of commentators who tried to ease the ugliness of the sin here, but I could find no evidence in the text to support their efforts. This is a flat-out rebuke of the sinful, prejudicial, bigoted views of others.
- C.** The subject at hand is table fellowship, which was a huge part of the culture of the world at that time and still is in most parts of the world. In Acts, we constantly see the church eating together in each other's homes. It was fundamental to developing and sustaining them as an actual fellowship of believers, that is, a real-life family that all who repented and believed in Jesus were equally a part of.
- D.** You see, sitting down to eat a meal with somebody says something about the priority of the friendship. Food is one of the necessities of life. You can't live without eating food; therefore, sitting down with somebody doing the very thing that life itself is dependent on is a way of saying I'm dependent on you as well; I value you like I do this meal. There's something about eating a meal together that says no matter what your title is, no matter how successful you are, no matter how rich you are, you are a human being who has to put your pants on the same way I do and eat food just like I do. Maybe that's why there's something about having a meal with somebody that seems to lower walls and create an opportunity to be honest, work for solutions, and try to function as one.
- E.** In short, table fellowship is one of those subtle but substantial ways we interact with others and say we are the same, we are together, and you matter to me. That's why the oral law that the Jews developed as additional laws to the Mosaic Law prohibited Jews from eating with Gentiles. Jews did not consider themselves to be equals with Gentiles, but better; therefore, to eat with a Gentile portrayed something they didn't believe to be true!
- F.** In addition, Gentiles had no allegiance to the dietary laws of the Jews; therefore, to eat with a Gentile was viewed as potentially endorsing violations of the Law. If it was said that you ate with a Gentile, it may also be noted that you possibly ate food you were not supposed to eat, or at least made a de facto endorsement that there was nothing wrong with eating the foods condemned by The Law as unclean or idolatrous.
- G.** So, with that, think about what happened. Peter is sitting there eating with the members of the church in Antioch when in walks a group of Jews affiliated with James the brother of Jesus, the one who had already agreed with Peter that a person didn't have to be circumcised to be a Christian, but were still struggling with the idea of letting go of the rest of the Mosaic Law, as well as the oral laws

the Jews made up all on their own! When these men showed up, Peter feared they would go back and tell James, and the rest of the church in Jerusalem, which was almost entirely Jewish converts to the faith, that Peter was defiling himself and approving other Jews to do the same. As such, Peter soon gave in to the pressure, and he got up from where he was eating with the Gentiles and separated himself from them. Seeing Peter do that caused the other Jews in the Antioch church to do the same; to Paul's shock, even Barnabas did it! You just had one of the most influential leaders in the Christian church intentionally and noticeably remove himself from table fellowship with Gentiles, so as not to have his reputation ruined among Jewish believers who, at best, viewed Gentile believers as second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God.

- H. Some commentators suggest these men verbally persuaded Peter into doing it, but Paul gives no such hint. Their presence and the threat they imposed on his standing in Jerusalem were all it took. Clearly, the church in Jerusalem was already going backwards from what it had committed, and Peter knew it. Clearly, what Peter had said at the Council in Jerusalem was an agreement of the mind, but not the heart, because he feared the disapproval of the Jews in Jerusalem more than he valued the people he was eating with. He was essentially lying to the people he was eating with, because he genuinely didn't see them as equals, nor did he see them as somebody he wanted to be known for being one with!
- I. So, Paul calls them ALL out publicly because it had been done publicly and disgracefully. All the Gentile members of the church of Antioch watched Peter, Barnabas, and all the Jewish members of the church get up from the tables and separate themselves from them! How gut-wrenching it must have been for Paul to have witnessed this. Therefore, in the presence of everybody, Paul said to Peter, "**If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?**"
- J. What did he mean by that? Well, you see, in Acts 10 God told Peter the dietary laws were no longer applicable and as such the Gospel was just as much for Gentiles as it was for Jews, so much so, Peter could not only now eat with Gentiles, but he could also kill and eat the very animals Jews had previously been prohibited from! In Acts 11, when Peter returned to Jerusalem and reported what had happened, people completely flipped out, but Peter boldly stood his ground and shared the story of what God had done! I don't have time to read that to you today, but the implication is that Peter began to eat things Jews were not supposed to eat, and did so while eating with Gentiles. This had become a standard practice for Peter, at least when he was away from Jerusalem, as well as the other Jews in the church in Antioch, and indeed for Barnabas, that is, until the men showed up from James! So what Paul is saying to Peter here is, you live like a Gentile every day of your life, but now you're going to separate yourself from them when these men from James show up, and as such de facto endorse the false teachers who teach a false gospel that tells Gentiles they need to act like

Jews, even though you being a Jew act like a Gentile as long as other Jews from Jerusalem aren't watching?

- K.** Why did Peter do this? Well, there was still something in him that saw Gentiles as less important than Jews. Traditionally, Jews would refer to Gentiles as dogs! They were seen as deplorables. So, Peter couldn't very well let it be known in Jerusalem that when he was out and about in the Gentile world, he was acting just like a Gentile, just like one of those deplorable people who can't trace their heritage back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He didn't want it known that he wasn't living in submission to the Mosaic Law and, as such, appeared in many ways to be one of those dogs known as gentiles. In valuing the approval of the Jews so much that he couldn't be seen eating with Gentiles, Peter and the rest of the Jews who went with him were aligning themselves with the bigotry that the men from James openly espoused as holiness endorsed by God, and Paul wasn't having it!
- L.** Interestingly, John recorded a prayer that Jesus prayed with His disciples at the last supper. As they concluded their table fellowship that night in celebration of the Passover, Jesus prayed a prayer that included this,
- M.** **20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)**
- N.** Fundamentally, the Gospel of Jesus is first and foremost what Christ did for us to be one with God, but also so that we can be one with one another, the same way Christ is one with the Father! Except for the willful act of suffering separation from the Father so that He could justly suffer the separation we are condemned to because of our sin, there has never been a moment that The Son has been separated from the Father, and this is the unity that Jesus came to establish not only between us and God, but also between us and ALL who are in Him. Yet, Peter and the Jews just separated themselves from the Gentile followers of Christ out of fear that the men from James might report what they saw back to James and the rest of the Jews in Jerusalem, and they themselves would get ostracized. That is bigotry at its most basic roots, and the Gospel is clear that Christ came to do the opposite!
- O.** Bigotry, whether it's racially motivated or ethnically motivated, is a part of the human condition of SIN that Christ died to eradicate. Therefore, it has no place in the life of the church or a follower of Christ! Bigotry can NEVER be justified for any reason. It opposes the core values of the Gospel and the straightforward commandments of Jesus. Therefore, whenever bigotry of any kind exists in the

church, it has to be confronted and rebuked because it is an assault on the Gospel itself! Bigotry within the church preaches a false Gospel! The Gospel is the information about what Christ did to unite us with the Father and all who are in Him from every people group in the world! Therefore, if we justify not being totally one with one another, then we are literally preaching a false Gospel!

Challenge: What lines are you drawing in the sand, and do they point people to the Gospel or away from it? Inversely, what lines are you not drawing in the sand, and as such, leaving people void of that which does point to the Gospel?

Let me be clear, even in Paul's blunt confrontation, there was always humility, love, and a sincere desire for repentance and complete restoration through God's grace alone. We will talk more about that in the final chapter of Galatians when Paul talks about how we should confront brothers and sisters in Christ who are overcome by sin. But today, I want you to think about how the lines you are drawing in the sand, or the lines you refuse to draw in the sand, impact how others view the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Think about this challenge and how it impacts your marriage, children, or community relationships. For instance, I've watched parents spiritually destroy their children by drawing lines in the sand over things that have nothing to do with following Jesus, while simultaneously refusing to draw lines in the sand over things that have everything to do with following Him. The children are then left totally confused and feeling the Gospel is just a bunch of hypocritical nonsense because the lines in the sand are a confusing mess of nonsensical scribble, rather than a simple and powerful image of the vertical and horizontal lines of the cross of Jesus Christ!