

Galatians Small Group



Session 2- Balancing Culture vs. Christ

- Icebreaker - Culture is something that we cannot escape and gets a bad wrap but is not always necessarily a bad thing.
 - **What are some cultures that you are currently a part of?** American, Southern, Church, Fitness etc.
 - *LEADERS NOTE:* This is a very broad question on purpose. It will depend on the individuals definition of culture whether they are broad or more specific.
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READ: Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. Galatians 2:11-13 (NKJV)

- Even the apostle Peter was falling prey to conforming to the culture around him. He was afraid of the way he would be perceived if the Jewish leaders sent by James saw him eating with Gentiles.
 - **Why do you think Paul thought it was necessary to correct Peter? What do you think are the influences from culture that lead us to ignore the people the Holy Spirit is leading us to serve?**
 - *LEADERS NOTE:* Paul explains why he was so upset. Peter was eating with Gentiles and recognizing the freedom provided through Christ from the Jewish laws but then when a group of well-known Jews came Peter changed face. Being a leader, the way Peter acted set an example, the wrong example, and even someone faithful like Barnabas was led astray. Paul was rightfully upset, and something had to be said. Paul is letting his readers know that no one is above reproach when it comes to the truth of the gospel.
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READ: 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Galatians 2:15-16 (NKJV)

- **Paul uses a legal term, justification, to describe our standing through faith in Christ. What does it mean to you to be justified by faith?**

- LEADERS NOTE: Theology TIME! Justification by Faith Alone is the doctrine that all Protestant churches stand on. It means that we can not do anything to earn our salvation and that we are saved by our FAITH ALONE in Christ. This should cause us to rejoice that Christ paid our penalty for our sins. The wages of our sin is death and the wage must be paid. We were unable to pay that wage so Christ lived a life that we could not and died so that we may be justified by our faith in Him before the Father.

READ: 17 “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! - Galatians 2:17 (NKJV)

- **Does our Justification by Faith Alone mean that the gospel embraces sin? What does it mean to repent? Why does embracing the truth of the Gospel cause us to hate sin?**

- LEADERS NOTE: Paul is saying here that Jesus did not die so that people could sin and do whatever they want. The truth of the gospel includes real repentance. To repent means to “turn from” your sin and to pursue Christ. While we may never reach complete perfection, it is certainly our never ending goal. It is impossible to truly believe that Christ died on the cross for your salvation and still go on pursuing the things that he commanded against. A life that is living in unrepentant sin shows a lack of faith in what has been done through Christ.

READ: 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; 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 gave Himself for me. - Galatians 2:19-20 (NKJV)

- **What area of your life needs to “die” so that it might live to the glory of God? How can you live that out this coming week.**

- LEADERS NOTE: For most people it is probably going to have something to do with their fear of displeasing friends, family, or coworkers with their living out the gospel. For others it could be a sin they are called for freedom from. It also could be a sense of legalism.