

## Day 1 — When the Gospel Is at Stake

**Scripture:** When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. <sup>13</sup>The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. <sup>14</sup>When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

Galatians 2:11–14

### Reflection

Peter’s actions in Antioch created distance where Christ had created unity. What looked like a personal decision was actually a public denial of the gospel. Paul understood that behavior preaches—sometimes louder than words.

Legalism often slips in quietly. It redraws lines Jesus erased. It suggests that some believers belong “inside” while others remain “outside.” Paul confronts Peter not to shame him, but to protect the truth that **faith in Christ makes us one family**.

### Reflection Questions

- Are there subtle ways you treat some believers as “less than”?
- Where might fear of others be shaping your obedience more than faith in Christ?

### Prayer Focus

Ask God to align your actions with the truth of the gospel.

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## Day 2 — The Subtle Pull of Legalism

**Scripture:** The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

<sup>14</sup>When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

Galatians 2:13–14

### Reflection

Legalism doesn’t always announce itself. Sometimes it looks like nostalgia for “the way things used to be,” quiet judgment of others, or constant anxiety over spiritual performance. At its core, legalism shifts trust from Christ to control.

Grace feels risky because it removes our ability to measure ourselves. Legalism feels safer because it offers visible benchmarks. But safety built on performance is fragile—and exhausting.

### Reflection Questions

- Do you find yourself comparing your faith to others?
- Where do “oughts” and “shoulds” weigh heavier than joy?

### Prayer Focus

Confess areas where you rely on performance instead of grace.

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### Day 3 — Why the Law Cannot Save

**Scripture:** We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles <sup>16</sup> know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in<sup>[d]</sup> Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:15–16

#### Reflection

The law can diagnose the problem, but it cannot cure it. It reveals sin, exposes weakness, and sets a perfect standard—but it offers no power to meet that standard.

Paul reminds us that even those with every spiritual advantage still need a Savior. Moral effort, religious background, and spiritual discipline cannot produce righteousness. **Only faith in Christ can.**

#### Reflection Questions

- Where do you secretly believe “trying harder” will fix your standing with God?
- How does it change your heart to know righteousness is received, not achieved?

#### Prayer Focus

Thank God that justification is a gift, not a reward.

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### Day 4 — Crucified with Christ, Alive by Faith

**Scripture:** But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! <sup>18</sup> If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. <sup>19</sup> “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:17–20

#### Reflection

Union with Christ changes everything. Your old self—defined by failure, striving, and accusation—has been crucified. Now, Christ lives in you.

This doesn't mean you never stumble. It means failure no longer defines you. Falling short no longer creates distance from God; it becomes an invitation to repentance, restoration, and deeper dependence.

The Christian life is not lived by self-effort, but by **faith in the Son of God who loves you.**

### **Reflection Questions**

- How do you usually respond when you fall short—shame or trust?
- What would it look like to live today confident in Christ’s finished work?

### **Prayer Focus**

Ask God to help you live from your identity in Christ, not for it.

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## **Day 5 — Don’t Trade Grace for Chains**

**Scripture:** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! Galatians 2:21

### **Reflection**

If righteousness could be gained through the law, the cross would be unnecessary. Legalism empties grace of its power and replaces intimacy with obligation.

God invites you into freedom—not freedom to sin, but freedom to live fully loved. Grace doesn’t weaken holiness; it fuels it. When you stop striving to earn God’s approval, obedience becomes a joyful response, not a fearful requirement.

### **Reflection Questions**

- Are there “chains” you’ve grown comfortable wearing?
- How can you actively choose grace over self-effort this week?

### **Prayer Focus**

Thank God for the freedom found in Christ alone.