



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Galatians

### Lesson 10 Equal with Peter and other Apostles

**Galatians 2:6-10**, *But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favouritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.<sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter<sup>8</sup> (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),<sup>9</sup> and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.<sup>10</sup> They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

Paul was defending his Apostleship by the message he preached. His preaching was affirmed by the Apostles in Jerusalem by the approval of the non-circumcision of Titus, a Gentile. We saw in the last lesson how Titus was not asked to

be circumcised or asked to follow the Mosaic laws and traditions.

So, Paul had established firmly that his message was affirmed and confirmed by the apostles in Jerusalem.

Now he takes another step saying that he is equal to Peter and others with different mandate for each of them since there was no partiality in God.

*V6, But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favouritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.*

Paul is talking about the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem.

It didn't make any difference to Paul what a person's reputation was.

**James 2:1-9,**

**Don't be afraid of a reputation.**

God isn't impressed with a person's background or deeds. When Peter was at Cornelius' house, and the Holy Spirit came upon all those pagan, Gentile believers, he said,

**Acts 10:34**, *Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.*

**2 Corinthians 5:16-17**, *Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

We can see from the first few pages of the book of Acts, what a mighty man Peter was in the early church and how the people respected and feared him.

- Peter's the one who tells everyone Judas needs to be replaced. (1:15-22)
- He sets the rules for who is an apostle and who is not (1:21-22)
- He explains the whole tongues of fire thing (not an easy task). (2:14-36)
- His disapproval kills Ananias and Sapphira. That's ultimate. (5:3-10)
- Peter lays his hands on believers and poof they receive the Holy Spirit. (8:17)
- He tells Simon money can't buy him power. (8:20)
- He sees a vision from God telling him that the Gentiles are also included in the Gospel. (10:11-15)
- Peter heals a man who can't walk in the temple. (3:6-7)

- He helps Aeneas—who's paralyzed—walk again. (9:34)
- He brings Tabitha back to life. (9:40)

**Acts 5:11 & 13,**

*<sup>11</sup> So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.*

*<sup>13</sup> Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.*

Paul sums it up like,

- ✓ I am simply a preacher, nothing more.
- ✓ I have no authority.
- ✓ I have absolutely zero authority in the world.
- ✓ My education gives me no authority.
- ✓ My mind gives me no authority.
- ✓ My experience gives me no authority.
- ✓ I have zero authority as a leader of a church.
- ✓ My position gives me no authority.

The only authority that exists is that authority that comes from God through His Word and I only pass on the divine authority to you.

## Equal with Peter

Apostle Paul takes head on with Peter saying they are equal!  
V7<sup>7</sup> *But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter.*

Paul had been entrusted with the gospel.

**1 Timothy 1:12**, *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,*

That trust Paul was given, he passed to Timothy!  
Also, Paul commended Timothy to pass it on to faithful men to carry forward.

**2 Timothy 2:2**, *And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

Our assignments are different.

People do misinterpret saying that Paul and Peter preached different Gospel. No. They are mistaken.

There is one gospel to the circumcised and the uncircumcised.

- It is not the gospel of the circumcised, and
- it's not the gospel of the uncircumcised.

It is the gospel to the circumcised and to the uncircumcised, but it's just one gospel

Two worlds, namely the Jewish world, and the Gentile world. So, God chose two different kind of preachers one to the circumcised and another to uncircumcised.

Both are equal, no one is inferior or superior, but the assignment is different.

*V8, (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),*

The same Holy Spirit that empowered Peter from the Day of Pentecost on, is working in me, this is the statement Paul is making.

Peter preaches in the early chapters of Acts after the Day of Pentecost, and thousands and thousands of people are converted. Paul asserts that the same power in Peter as an apostle is the power in me.

We have the same gospel.

We have the same Holy Spirit.

We have the same power source.

No difference.

Paul doesn't say, "I was able to work the same kind of miracles that Peter did..."

Paul knew where the power was coming from. The same God that was working in Peter was working in Paul.

God had displayed miracles through Peter's life, healing people, even raising people from the dead. God also displayed miracles in Paul's life as well.

The secret is to let God do the work!

It's not in learning how to squeeze more hours out of the day. It's not in learning ten steps to lead a person to Christ successfully.

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*The secret to power in ministry is to let God be God, and you take the back seat. You have the same power as Peter and Paul!*

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**Romans 8:11**, *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

**Philippians 2:13**, *for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

If there's a secret to power in ministry, it's simply learning to submit to God and let Him lead the way.

**Zechariah 4:6**, *So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.*

*V9, and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

This statement from Paul is a blow, final blow to the Judaizers. The leaders in Jerusalem recognised that grace was given to Paul.

Previous lesson we saw how they practically accepted Paul's message by not asking Titus to be circumcised.

Why?

Because it wasn't required.

They recognized that the gospel that Paul preached was exactly what Peter preached.

They recognized that the power of the Holy Spirit that had been manifest in the ministry of Peter in Jerusalem and Judea.

They also recognised that the power of the Holy Spirit had been manifest in Paul all through the Gentile world.

Both the ministry people were being converted.

They both possessed the same gospel, were empowered by the same Holy Spirit.

There is no difference in message, there is no difference in power between Peter and Paul, and this decision was affirmed officially.

Recognised by who?

- ✓ “James,” the brother of our Lord, the head of the Jerusalem church.
- ✓ “Cephas,” or “Peter” the most revered and the chief of Apostle.
- ✓ “John” whom the disciple Jesus loved, the inner circle of Jesus Christ.

These three were the most reputed and trusted pillars of the Church. They were the main leaders of the church, gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.

Right hand of fellowship, kind of like forming a partnership with Paul and Barnabas, signifying that they were all in this together. When I was in the Baptist church, they had this thing that they would do with new members of the church, extending to them the “right hand of fellowship”, shaking the pastor’s right hand, on behalf of the entire church.

- Affirmation,
- confirmation,
- support.

*“perceived the grace that had been given to me.”*

It’s the grace of the calling!

The saving call of God on the Damascus Road. That was all grace!

It was grace that called him to be an apostle.

It was grace that taught him for three years.

It was grace that empowered him.

It was grace that produced the results.

It's all of grace.

**1 Corinthians 9:17**, *For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.*

Paul says that it's required of stewards that a man be found faithful. He was faithful all the way to the end.

Even though he could say in the end that fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith.

Only grace accounts for his ministry.

If anything happens by the preaching of any pastor or any preacher, it's because of the grace that has been given. It is the grace that touches the souls of people. It is from heaven that all change takes place.

Only God's grace accounts for the spread of the gospel.

Only God's grace accounts for the founding and growth of the church.

Only God's grace accounts for the power of the Word of God to transform lives.

*that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

**Acts 9:15**, *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

His commendation is given, and he is recommissioned officially by the Jerusalem leaders to go back to the calling the Lord had given him.

They do ask him to do one thing. The only thing they asked was to remember the poor!

This is one last blow against the Judaizers.

The leaders in Jerusalem did not say,

Could you get Titus baptized?

Could you do just this or that or the other kind of observances?"

No.

*V10, They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

When we study the life of Paul, he did that constantly in his ministry!

In the early church they were having all things in common, and when somebody had a need, somebody would sell something and meet the need.

**Acts 2: 44-45**, *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,<sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.*

Acts sixth chapter, there were widows that didn't have enough, and there were people appointed to make sure that those widows are being looked after. Those who had more than enough could get it to the people who had not enough. They were ministering to the saints.

Paul had done that in the middle of the fourteen years at some point. He came down with relief for those in the famine in Judea.

**Romans 15:25-27**, *But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.<sup>26</sup> For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.*

Paul on his missionary journey always had the poor saints in Jerusalem in his mind.

Why were there so many poor saints in Jerusalem?

On the Day of Pentecost, there were literally hundreds of thousands of Jews that came from all over the Mediterranean world back to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. They were pilgrims there. They were converted there. They ended up staying because there was no other church anywhere in the world. They had to be taken care of by the people in Jerusalem. It was tough to be a Christian in Jerusalem. You would lose your job, you be persecuted from your family, you wouldn't have any resources when the authorities knew you have been converted to Christianity.

Being a Christian in Jerusalem after the Day of Pentecost was very difficult.

Read chapter 8 of Book of Acts. Suddenly persecution comes, people are killed, the apostle James is killed, and Stephen is stoned. It's tough being a Christian in Jerusalem because of the animosity of the Jewish Higher authorities.

So, they were having the problem of caring for these people who live somewhere else, but stayed here in Jerusalem where they were converted, and became a part of the church.

Paul wherever he went, collected money to bring back to Jerusalem.

Paul says he had been pleased to receive from Macedonia and Achaia contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. They were pleased to do so and are indebted to them. They were indebted to the saints in Jerusalem where God began this work, and they were happy to send money.

Wherever Paul went, he says he made collections. He told the Corinthians, he said, you've got to give, and give generously.

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**, *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup>So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

**1 Corinthians 16:1-4**, *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup>On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. <sup>3</sup>And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.*

That is just love.

A Christian is one who loves God, and who desires to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

He loves God, he loves the Lord Jesus Christ, he loves the blessed Holy Spirit.

If you love someone then you desire to please them.

If you love someone, you do everything you can to please them.

**John 14:15**, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

We love each other. You don’t have to force us to meet the needs of the poor.

**Psalms 119:97**, *Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.*

The first commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The second is to love your neighbour as yourself.

**Matthew 22:37-40**, *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Are we law-breakers now because we have become believers?  
No.

We pay no attention to the circumcision, and ceremonial laws, and external laws, and rituals, and ancestral traditions.

But the moral law is a reflection of God whom we love, and therefore we love everything about God, everything that's a reflection of His glory.

Paul saying to us and to the Galatians that,

- I am a true apostle,
- I preach the true gospel,
- My own personal testimony validates it, and
- the apostles and leaders of the Jerusalem church validate it.

We conclude this section like this.

- ✓ Paul is an apostle.
- ✓ Paul preaches the same gospel Peter preached.
- ✓ Paul functions by the same power Peter had.
- ✓ Peter on the Day of Pentecost preached a powerful message through the power of Holy Spirit, that came through the message and thousands were saved.
- ✓ He is therefore validated by the Jerusalem church and its leaders.