

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

1. The Private Address

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.

2. The Public Address

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.

3. The Personal Address

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. 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.

Remember externalities are to do with our doing; internalities have to do with our being; and Christianity is about who I am in Christ, not what I do for Him. We obey not in the fear and insecurity of hoping to earn our salvation, but in the freedom and security of knowing we are already saved in Christ. We obey in the freedom of gratitude.

Q#1 Have there been times in your life when you have begun to think that your performance counts toward your salvation? What caused you to think this way?

Q#2 What are the “nice” and “proper” attitudes that your culture and upbringing has taught you? How could you add these on to belief in Christ as an expectation for other Christians?

Q#3 Can you think of examples of churches not prizing gospel unity sufficiently; or pursuing institutional unity at the expense of gospel truth?

Disarming Discord in the Church Gal. 2:1-10

1. The Tactics of False Brothers

- a. They Operate Secretly
- b. They Undermine Authority
- c. They Make Unbiblical Demands
- d. Their Fruit is Slavery

2. A Plan for Biblical Unity in the Church

- a. Respect the Leadership
- b. Privately Deal with Disagreement
- c. Let Bible Doctrine Be the Foundation
- d. Identify and Avoid Troublemakers
- e. Guard the Great Commission
- f. All Members are Equal in Importance
- g. Never Let Your Guard Down

Review the applications below and discuss how important they are and how we can ensure we maintain our unity!

“Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond peace” Ephesians 4:3

Applications:

- Laying aside personal preferences for the good of the body
- Resisting the temptation within to murmur, gossip, and complain...
- When mistreated, deal with it biblically (Matthew 18)
- Esteem others as more important than myself
- Confess the malice in my heart.... Pray for the Lord to purge it and remove it before it spreads
- Strive to keep the unity of the Spirit of our church
- Pray for God to help us cultivate a spirit of peace, love, and thankfulness...