

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 2 - Galatians 1:11-24
Gospel Living
“The Source of Truth”

In these verses, Paul seeks to show how he was completely independent of the Twelve and the assembly in Jerusalem. Paul saw the risen Christ and received his commission and message directly from Him. This experience qualified him to be an apostle. Paul was never meant to be the twelfth apostle to replace Judas. For one thing, Paul could not have met the qualifications; also God deliberately kept Paul separated from the Twelve so no one could accuse Paul of borrowing his message. Nobody could accuse Paul of inventing his message, because he had been a persecutor of the church, not a friend. His life was radically changed after he met Christ on the Damascus road. The only way to explain such a remarkable transformation is to accept the fact that Paul met Christ.

Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles and was related to the mystery of the church, the one body. The Twelve received their call from Christ on earth because their message presented the hope of Israel’s earthly kingdom. Paul received his call from heaven, because his message presented the “heavenly calling” of the church in Christ. There were twelve apostles, associated with the twelve tribes. Paul was one man representing the one body in Christ.

Paul did not confer with men after he received his calling. Had he met immediately with the Twelve, people could have said that he borrowed his message and received his authority from them. Instead, God sent Paul to Arabia for a time of meditation and investigation. Someone has said, “Paul went to Arabia with the Law and the prophets and came out with Romans and Galatians!” Like Moses and Elijah before him, Paul went to the desert to wrestle with God’s program and plan for his life. Then he went back to Damascus where he had first witnessed for Christ. After this visit, he went to Syria (Antioch). The churches there heard the wonderful news of Paul’s conversion and glorified God.

How tragic it is today that men reject Paul’s revelation of the Gospel and try to mix law and grace. We need to get back to the simple message of grace, the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone. To mix church and kingdom, law and grace, is to create confusion and pervert the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read Galatians 1:11-24 and answer the following questions

1. Read verses 11-12. How do Paul's thoughts differ from those in 1:10?
2. How did Paul's source of truth (See 1:12) differ from the Galatians source of truth? (See 1:7-8)
3. Why does Paul mention in this passage that his message and authority didn't come from man? Why is that important for us as we share that same message today?
4. In verse 13, Paul says that he persecuted the church of God. How does this affect Paul's story? How might this help him establish authority?
5. How would you describe Paul before God confronted him? (See 1:13-14)
6. Read the account of Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-22. What do you think went through his mind during this time of tremendous change? (See 1:15-16)
7. Do you think that those who did not have a dramatic change in their lives like Paul are at a disadvantage in witnessing about Jesus or in growing closer to Him? Why or why not?

8. Why do you think God sent someone so knowledgeable and with such close ties to Judaism to minister to the Gentiles instead of the Jews? (See Acts 22:17-22)

9. Paul was now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy. What is the most unbelievable and even unlikely conversion to Christ that you have ever seen?

10. Review 1:11-24 and the answers you have written. What one insight stands out as something you would like to apply to your life?

11. Paul tells his story in three stages. First, he talks about who he was before Christ. Second, he talks about how Jesus pursued and encountered him. Third, he talked about how he was changed and who he became after Jesus. Describe your story in these same three stages.

Hope for You: Watch Paul Grow

The Bible offers many examples of people who struggled as they tried to live for God. Their stories are meant to encourage us. But sometimes comparing ourselves to the “heroes” of the faith only intimidate us. Paul, for instance was a learned scholar, a fervent evangelist, a compassionate pastor, a competent businessman, and a diplomatic statesman. So when he tells us to follow his example as he follows Christ’s example it sounds a bit unrealistic. How could we ever model a super saint like Paul?

Paul didn't start out as a super-saint. Nor did he end up that way. In fact, he never saw himself that way. On the contrary, he grew in the faith with some difficulty. Notice how his view of himself changed over time.

A.D. 55 *"I am the least of the apostles"* (1 Cor. 15:9)

A.D. 57 *"I know that in me, nothing good dwells"* (Rom 7:18)

A.D. 60 *"I am less than the least of all the saints"* (Eph. 3:8)

A.D. 63 *"Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am chief"* (1 Tim. 1:15)

It sounds like Paul was perhaps more average than we often think. If one changes a few particulars and develops the wholehearted commitment to God that Paul had, than his story could well be anyone's. That's because Paul was as human as any of us. His life challenges us to ask whether we are growing, struggling, and changing as he did. If so, than there's hope for us.