



## WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL

May 28, 2023

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### RECEIVE

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Slowly. Prayerfully, read and/or listen to Galatians 2:1–21 twice. Before and after each reading, pray asking the Spirit of Christ to guide you into knowing and living what you are receiving from the Scriptures. Consider, what does God want you to reflect on and learn from?

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### REFLECT

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1. Paul goes to Jerusalem to “check-in” with the leadership. What does this say about Paul? Is this a healthy sign for the church? Imagine a fast-growing identity based on a radical belief system with very little written guidance and very young leadership (the 14-year-old church)—what would you do to keep it on target/pure? What kind of “idea creep” do you imagine?
2. James, Peter and John confirmed that Paul’s message to the Gentiles was the same as their message to the Jewish believers and blessed Paul’s ministry. They had different missions, but the same gospel (verse 7). With whom has God called you to share the Gospel? How can you move in that direction?

3. Partnership and solidarity are important to the spreading of the Gospel. How can you stand with friends, relatives, church members, or mission partners as they work for the Kingdom?
4. In verses 12 and 13, Paul describes an instance in Antioch when Peter gives in to peer pressure from those preaching circumcision and Paul confronts him immediately. Why was it important for Paul to confront Peter on this? How might relationships between Jewish and Gentile believers have been affected had Paul allowed legalism and division to take root?
5. The Jews had to change their mind about Gentile observance of many Jewish laws. When was the last time you changed your mind about an important idea? Talk about the change. Was it difficult to let go of the old position? What emotions do you remember? Was there prejudice?
6. It's easy to get overly focused on outward actions — the things others can see. Read Matthew 23:25–28. How do you keep your focus on your relationship with Jesus instead of keeping the rules? How are you continually offering yourself to Jesus for the transformation only He can give?
7. How can you be kind and courageous in resisting well-meaning Christians who try to impose their rules on others?

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## RESPOND

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While it's easy to focus on outward observance, our identity and self-worth must be rooted in Jesus. Journal about your identity in Christ. Ephesians 2:10, John 1:2 and Colossians 2:10 are good places to start.

How can you improve the unity and the acceptance of Christ Church this week? What ideas come to mind? What actions can you take?

So many people at Christ Church have pointed to Rooted as an experience that transformed their life with Jesus. Have you had the Rooted experience? If not, you can save your spot for fall [here](#).

One way to have support as you let Jesus transform you is to work with a Spiritual Director. If you'd like to find a Spiritual Director, please contact Pastor Eric Haskins at [ehaskins@ChristChurch.us](mailto:ehaskins@ChristChurch.us).

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## SCRIPTURE

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### **Galatians 2:1–21** New International Version

Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the Gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.

James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 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. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

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?”

“We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 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 Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

“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! If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 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. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

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## RESOURCES

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[\*The Prodigal God\*](#) by Timothy Keller is a helpful tool to further your faith and understanding of Christianity in a whole new way.