

# The General Electric Power Company Series

## Galatians | Ephesians | Philippians | Colossians

### Lesson #2 – Galatians 2

#### Main Idea

There are two great dangers that have always existed within the church: *licentiousness* and *legalism*. In one regard they appear to be completely opposite by the fruits they produce; however, at their core they are identical. For you see, both licentiousness and legalism are rooted in self. The former seeks to gratify self, while the latter seeks to glorify self. Within the church it is essential that Believers be allowed to live with **freedom in Christ**. On one hand it is Biblical for us to hold one another to high standards through encouragement and exhortation (Hebrews 3:13), while on the other hand it is completely unacceptable to create an environment where Believers feel judged and are constantly under the microscope of the *Big Brother* faction within the church. We can all identify churches that espouse the “anything goes” mentality that borders on hedonism. At the other end of the spectrum is the church that speaks of nothing but the wretchedness of man and where God’s grace seems to have almost no place.

The great irony in the legalistic church is that on the outside these churches look like they have it all together, especially when it comes to Biblical knowledge. However, for some reason these churches seem uncomfortable with the concept of grace and allowing Christians to experience freedom in Christ. It has been my observation that within these types of churches there might be some type of inferiority complex that exists within the Body or leadership. Another option is that they do not have enough faith to believe that God really can transform people’s lives. These churches overcompensate by trying to convince the world that they are more holy than everyone else. The only hope that we all have is the love of Christ and to be changed by the Holy Spirit. Being coerced by legalists within the Body who see themselves as the protectors of “all things Holy” never produces sustained transformation.

#### Outline for the Book of Galatians

Greetings & Introduction: Galatians 1:1-10

Part 1: Paul defends his apostolic ministry of the pure gospel. Galatians 1:11-2:21

Part 2: Paul defends the gospel of justification and salvation by grace and faith alone. Galatians 3:1-4:31

Part 3: Paul defends the freedom Christians have to love one another and live by the Spirit. Galatians 5:1-6:10

Concluding Remarks: Galatians 6:11-18

#### Questions for Consideration

1. One of the themes of Galatians is freedom in Christ, which is specifically addressed in verse 4. James 4:17 (NIV) states, *If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.* How would you define freedom in Christ?
2. Hebrews 3:13 (NIV) states, *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.* What is the difference between encouraging and browbeating? How important is it for us to encourage one another to pursue Christ?
3. In verse 10 Paul talks about the importance of remembering the poor. Why do you think this is important for us to do as Christians? How does this concept integrate into James 1:27?
4. At certain points in his life Paul was very confrontational, as we see in verses 11-14. Do you think Paul was wrong when he did this? Also consider Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:15-20 and Paul’s comments in Galatians 6:1-5. The answer to this question can be significant in how you deal with others.
5. Read verses 15-16 and answer the following.
  - a. How important is obedience as Christians?
  - b. What compels you to want to be obedient?

**Homework** Read Galatians Chapter 3. Why is it important that we understand the difference between *living under the Law* and *living under grace*?



## Galatians 2 (New International Version, ©2010)

### **Paul Accepted by the Apostles**

<sup>1</sup> Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised,<sup>[a]</sup> just as Peter had been to the circumcised.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> James, Cephas<sup>[c]</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

### **Paul Opposes Cephas**

<sup>11</sup> 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?”

<sup>15</sup> “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.

<sup>17</sup> “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. <sup>21</sup> I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”<sup>[e]</sup>

### **Footnotes:**

- a. [Galatians 2:7](#) That is, Gentiles
- b. [Galatians 2:7](#) That is, Jews; also in verses 8 and 9
- c. [Galatians 2:9](#) That is, Peter; also in verses 11 and 14
- d. [Galatians 2:16](#) Or *but through the faithfulness of ... justified on the basis of the faithfulness of*
- e. [Galatians 2:21](#) Some interpreters end the quotation after verse 14.

