

WEEK 2: CHAPTER 2

ABOUT THIS SERIES

In our *Galatians* series, St. Mark is walking verse-by-verse and chapter-by-chapter through Paul's letter to the Galatians to discover how an ancient manuscript like Galatians gives us timeless truths for today. Your group will go deeper into the series by learning about the cultural and scriptural context to Paul's letter.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for your group
- Read through the Discussion Guide
- Refreshments (optional)
- Clean meeting area
- Clean bathroom
- Crack front door

OPENING (5 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: To get us started today, let's ask a quick question—

WHEN I SAY THE PHRASE, "PUBLIC FEUD" WHO COMES TO MIND? IT COULD BE SOMEONE LIKE WILL SMITH AND CHRIS ROCK OR MICHIGAN AND OHIO STATE OR THE HATFIELDS AND MCCOYS....

After a brief discussion, say: Public feuds are very much a part of today's topic as we continue our series on the book of Galatians. But, as we talk about the feud between Peter and Paul, we'll begin to think about our own feuds, gossip, and reconciliation. I'm glad you're here today—let's pray, and then we'll get started.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

KEY VERSES (5 MIN)

After a prayer, say: Let's start by reading the key verses of Galatians 2:

CAN SOMEONE READ ALOUD THE FOLLOWING VERSE I CALL OUT, AND I'LL READ THE SUMMARY:

VERSE	SUMMARY
Vs. 1	Paul talks about returning to Jerusalem after a two-year journey where he planted churches in minor Asia. He brings Barnabas (a Jew) and Titus (a Gentile) to Jerusalem to demonstrate the reconciliation of Jesus.
Vs. 9	Paul meets with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem and they verify they are preaching the same gospel.
Vs. 11-12	Paul confronts Peter for his hypocrisy to stop eating with Gentiles when other Jews arrive.
Vs. 20	Paul describes how the cross doesn't just redeem his life, it transforms his lifestyle.

WHICH OF THESE KEY VERSES INTRIGUES YOU THE MOST, AND WHY?**CONFLICT RESOLUTION (15-20 MIN)**

After a discussion, say: We just heard how Paul publicly chastised Peter for his hypocrisy, and it brings up the question of conflict in the church. Conflict is inevitable, but what's a God pleasing way to resolve it? Thankfully, the Head of the Church himself has addressed this very matter.

CAN EVERYONE TURN TO MATTHEW 18:15-20, AND CAN SOMEONE READ IT FOR US?

After the reading, say: In this reading Jesus outlines conflict resolution in his Church. We can overlook the offense, but if we decide not to, we have some steps to take:

WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP WHEN SOMEONE IN THE CHURCH OFFENDS US?**WHAT'S THE SECOND STEP?****WHAT'S THE THIRD STEP? (THIS WOULD BE OUR IDEA OF GOING TO THE BOARD OF ELDERS OR THE CHURCH COUNCIL WITH A MATTER.)****WHAT SORT OF REACTIONS DO YOU HAVE TO THIS TYPE OF ESCALATION?**

After a discussion, say: This of course brings up what happens when people don't follow this protocol. Either failure to talk to the offender, or failure to listen to the offended. The word for this is "gossip". As we heard on Sunday, gossip is "telling someone privileged or negative information about another person when the listener is neither part of the problem nor part of

the solution.” You have the right to not talk about something when you’re offended and just forgive. But in the church, we are commanded not to gossip.

WHY IS ONE TO ONE CONFLICT RESOLUTION SO RARE IN CHURCHES?

WHY IS GOSSIP SO COMMON IN CHURCHES?

WHY IS GOSSIP SO DEADLY TO CHURCHES?

LET’S END WITH A POSITIVE QUESTION—WHY IS EDIFYING SPEECH IN THE CHURCH SO IMPORTANT TO GOD?

After a discussion, say: Of note, the second half of this reading includes the frequently cited verse that Jesus is present “wherever two or three are gathered.” This isn’t just a promise to be with us when we gather in unity on a happy Sunday morning, the context of the famous quote is that Jesus is with us when we talk with someone who offended us. Not only does Jesus serve as a mediator between us and God for our sin, he promises to serve as a mediator when we resolve conflict with a brother or sister in a one on one conversation!

May we keep this in mind in our Small Group, and in our church, that we can continue to be a healthy ministry.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Before we get to our prayers, though, two quick announcements:

One, Prosper the City is going to be coming up after Easter, so just prepare your calendars now for some more Small Group meetings in late April and May.

Two, every Small Group is going to sponsor one of the prayerwalks this summer. We’ll help plan routes, plan Scripture, and bring refreshments for our particular week. So be looking at which of your Wednesday evenings this summer would be good for that.

Let’s close things out with prayer—

To start our prayer time, we’ll pray against any gossip in the church for the sake of Christ and the unity he won for us.

ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

Host, after taking prayer requests, close the group in prayer.