

# Running the Race

## TEACHING NOTES

### KEY VERSES

Galatians 2:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:1-7

### KEY THEMES

Impact of the Gospel on our Christian life

### Our motivation

#### Living the new life (Romans 6:1-11)

*Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.*  
 – Matthew 22:37-40

#### Peter (Galatians 2:20)

#### Confrontation (Galatians 2:11-14)

## The impact of the Gospel

### Birth truth, identity truth, and growth truth

 **Our response to sin (Galatians 2:14)**

 **God's response to sin (Galatians 2:20)**

 **Running the race (2 Timothy 2:1-7 and Hebrews 12:1-3)**

**Lesson objective:** *To know our growth only comes when we put into practice the truth that we are crucified with Christ, dead to the power of sin, and alive through surrender to the Spirit.*

## PERSONAL STUDY

### Session 1

#### Prepare your heart and mind

Open up your Bible and read Psalm 121. Give yourself a few minutes to prepare your heart and mind by reflecting on these verses.

#### Learning to rest in God's grace

God's grace meets us wherever we are, no matter what sort of junk we are facing. But, He doesn't leave us there. His desire is for us to surrender our lives, so that we can experience the fruit of the Spirit as the normal state of our lives. Who wouldn't want their days to be characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

There is a profound truth repeated throughout the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs 17:1 it is put this way: *"Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife."* Would you rather pursue life the way the world does and have constant insecurity and anxiety? Or would you rather experience true peace that God is with you and will provide for your needs?

To change and become a person who trusts and walks in His peace will take time. It may help to revisit a concept you may have learned in the *Equipping the Church* course on Romans. We can become people who *Know, Consider, and Surrender*. To *know* means to grasp on a deep level that engages our heads and our hearts. To *consider* means that, in the moment, we step back from life situations to recall and choose to stand firm in the truth. To *surrender* means that the fixed posture of our hearts is to yield to the Holy Spirit as He guides us into all truth and transforms us into living reflections of Christ.



#### Read Galatians 2:17-21

As you consider what Paul has said in this passage, reflect below on how it can help you to *Know, Consider, and Surrender*.

**Know** – What basic truth or truths about the faith do you see discussed in Galatians 2:17-21? How well do you believe or trust that these things are true for you?

**Consider** – What are 1-2 life situations where you regularly struggle to be grateful, peaceful, or to depend on God? The next time you are in one of these situations, how might you encourage yourself to stand firm by using the truth of Galatians 2:17-21?

**Surrender** – What does Paul say about himself in this passage that sounds like surrender? When have you experienced true surrender to God? What might need to change in your life for you to be more wholly surrendered to Him?

### Key verse

Last week's verse was Galatians 2:20. This week we're adding the next verse, Galatians 2:21. Place the provided card somewhere you'll see it throughout the day so you can be frequently reminded of the truth of God's Word.

*<sup>20</sup>My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup>I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.*

### Prayer time

Our passage Galatians 2:17-21 has a lot to say about our freedom in Christ. Take time to thank God for the various aspects of that freedom described in the passage.

**Session 2****Prepare your heart and mind**

Start this time with the expectancy that God will give you understanding and growth as you spend time studying His Word.

**Peter**

Spend a few minutes writing down what you know about Peter.

**Read Galatians 2:11-14**

What more did you learn about Peter's personality from this passage?

Sharing a meal with someone was a high form of acceptance in Peter's day. Under the old law, Jews would be ceremonially unclean if they ate with Gentiles. After Jesus' death, the old law was abandoned, and right standing with God was through grace and faith in what Christ had done on the cross. As we read Galatians 2:11-14, we see a man who was influenced by those around him, who struggled with hypocrisy, and who may have wrestled with prejudice. Peter, an apostle of Christ and pillar of the church, went from following the truth of the Gospel message to following his flesh and a set of regulations when he withdrew from the Gentile Christians.

In verse 14, how do you know Paul was serious about correcting Peter?

Why do you believe Paul felt the need to be confrontational and how does he address these issues with Peter?

When have you given into pressure or lived out of fear rather than from personal conviction?

God created something new. Gentiles no longer needed to become Jewish, and Jews were no longer distinguished from Gentiles. The church was growing and consisted of anyone who placed his or her faith in Jesus Christ; it did not matter if they were Jew or Gentile.

In Christ, every believer is equal before God. Believing in what Christ has done for us should unite us. How have you seen churches or believers tolerate hypocrisy? Racism or discrimination?

Paul's correction to Peter points him back to truth, the truth of the Gospel. Peter had the head knowledge, but his actions needed to be reminded of his new life in Christ. As Christ followers, we often have to recalibrate our thinking and feelings to be in line with Biblical truth. Here are a few questions we can ask ourselves and some verses we can look up to help us recalibrate when we feel overwhelmed, fearful, or not aligned.

What do I know about the character of God? (2 Peter 3:9, James 1:17, Psalm 116:5, Psalm 103:8)

What do I know about the sovereignty of God? (Matthew 19:26, Ephesians 3:20, Isaiah 46:9)

Who am I in Christ? (John 1:12, Romans 6:6, Genesis 1:27)

What do I know about the power of the resurrection of Christ for my life? (Philippians 3:10, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:19-20, Colossians 2:13-14, Romans 8:1)

**Key verse**

Continue working to memorize Galatians 2:21. Attempt to write it out from memory:

**Prayer time**

Spend some time reflecting on whether there are areas in your life that need to be more in line with who Christ has called you to be. Ask God to help you obey, not out of sin management, but through obedience because of the heartfelt love you have in Christ and all He offers you through the work on the cross.

## ADDITIONAL STUDY

In next week's session we will look at how God's desire is that every one of us would grow into maturity so that we can become all God intends. This brief study will help you get a taste of what's to come during that lesson.



### Read 2 Peter 1:3-8

<sup>3</sup>By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup>And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

<sup>5</sup>In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

<sup>8</sup>The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Observation

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

### Interpretation

(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context? What questions do I have?)

### Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)