

## 2-23-25 How to Lead: Mistakes Leaders Make

### Week 4

**Text:** John 18:15-27; Galatians 2:1-16

**Topic:** Peter, Fear

**Big Idea of the Message:** Peter let his fear of others sway him in crucial moments. Jesus stood firm out of His desire to please God.

**Application Point:** As godly leaders, we must value God's opinion more than the opinions of others.

**Week 1:** Adam avoided taking responsibility and blamed Eve. As godly leaders, we must use our responsibility to help others.

**Week 2:** Moses ran out of patience and allowed his frustration to get away from him and lost his great reward. As godly leaders, we must endure patiently until the end.

**Week 3:** David did not discipline his children and had an unhealthy house out of order. As godly leaders, we must use discipline to pursue health and restoration.

**Week 4:** (Today) Peter let his fear of others sway him in crucial moments. As godly leaders, we must value God's opinion more than the opinions of others.

Compromiser, hypocrite, flip flopper, soft under pressure, these are all terms that if we were honest most of us have carried some if not all of these titles.

In **John 18:15-27**, Peter denied and betrayed Jesus three times. He gave into the pressure of all that was going on during that time.

When things went wrong, sideways, when things didn't make sense anymore Peter held all those titles.

Then in **John 21**, Jesus confronted Peter regarding his betrayal. Peter was made right with Jesus by confessing his love and serve to Him. We can read more about Peter's transformation in Acts.

**“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!” 37 Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” 40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” 41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. Acts 2:36-41NLT**

Later, we see God use Peter to take the gospel to the Gentiles...Praise God!

**And since God gave these Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?" 18 When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, "We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life." Acts 11:17-18**

Peter was the leading voice that backed Paul's testimony of God's plan among new believers, both Jews and Gentiles.

**At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: "Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. 8 God knows people's hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. 10 So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? 11 We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus." Acts 15:7-11**

Peter was winning! He has finally become the leader that Jesus knew He could be when He chose him. Peter had arrived, it was all gravy for the rest of his ministry, no more mistakes.... Or was it?

**Read Galatians 2:11-16.**

Now, first let me say, NO ONE is certain if the **Acts 15** exchange was before or after the **Galatians 2** exchange. There are many who believe that Paul rebuked Peter and then Peter demonstrated his repentant heart in **Acts 15:7-11**, which I just read.

There are others that believe **Acts 15** happened and then Peter compromised later down the road in Antioch and Paul called him out using his own words against him.

Peter said in **Acts 15:9-10**, **He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. 10 So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear?**

Paul reminds him of his argument in **Galatians 2:14-16. Verse 16, "knowing that a man is not justified by he works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ..."**

No matter how it all fell into place, Peter let his fear of others sway him in crucial moments. As godly leaders, we must value God's opinion more than the opinions of others. So, before we are too hard on Peter, do you value God's opinion, commands, ways, will more than others, even yourselves?

- I. **Peter's example reminds me that even the best-intentioned believer can go astray.**
  - The entire disagreement had to do with what Peter ate, and with whom he ate. It was a food problem and a fellowship problem.
  - In **Acts 10** God gave Peter a dream where he saw all kinds of unclean animals. God said, "Kill and eat." Peter said, "Not so, Lord! Those are unclean." God had said, "Don't call unclean what I call clean."

- After that Peter understood that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews. He went to the home of a Roman Centurion and ate with him. So, this was an issue Peter had already settled.
- When Peter visited Antioch, he enjoyed the food and fellowshiping that was going on in the church. Jews and Gentiles eating, sharing pulled pork, ribs, lamb kabobs, pita and humus. (Perfection!)
- Everything was fine until some other Jewish VIPs came from the Jerusalem church. When they arrived, Peter suddenly changed his behavior.
- Peter arrived in the fellowship hall and when he saw the pork he was indignant. “What are you doing serving pork? Don’t you know that it’s unclean according to the Law of Moses? I’m a Jew, and I don’t eat pork! Get rid of it!”
- Peter was being two-faced. He acted like someone set free by grace when he first arrived. But when the Jerusalem Jews arrived, he reverted back to Old Testament rules and regulations.
- Paul wrote that Peter did this “**fearing those who were of the circumcision.**” (v.12) Those were the Pharisaical “Christians” from Jerusalem who demanded Gentile men be circumcised before they could be saved.
- Peter’s behavior didn’t line up with the gospel.
- Pause.... Cecil, does your behaviors line up with the gospel?? Does yours? So, you are guilty of being a flip flopper, a hypocrite!
- **Verse 14 says, “But when I say that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...** When Paul compared the gospel of grace and Peter’s conduct he said, “These two don’t line up! Peter, your walk doesn’t match your talk!”
- One of the strongest pieces of evidence of the Divine authorship of the Bible is the fact that the Bible doesn’t try to gloss over the mistakes and failures of the main characters.
- If ordinary people had written the Bible, they would have covered up the faults of the heroes.
- But this book is full of the stories of great people who failed tremendously. That should give hope to every one of us who has ever failed.
- We’ve all made poor choices and dumb mistakes, but God can still redeem your life and use you.
- The most well-intentioned believer can go astray, can fall into sin. If we were honest, we would admit it happens daily.

## II. **Barnabas’ example reminds me that if we are not careful anyone can be lead astray.**

- **Verse 13, “And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.”**
- The word “hypocrite” or “hypocrisy” is used twenty-three times in the New Testament. Of those twenty-three times, Jesus used it twenty. Peter used it once in his first epistle, and the other two times it appears here in **Galatians 2:13**.
- A hypocrite was an actor who used a different mask to play different characters.

- Like an actor with a mask, a hypocrite is two-faced. They wear one mask about what they **SAY** they believe, but they wear a different mask for their actions.
- Hypocrisy is contagious. Peter's two-faced hypocrisy influenced the other Jewish Christians, including Barnabas, to act the same way.
- Barnabas is an important Christian leader in the book of Acts. His real name is Joseph, but he was such an encourager that people called him by that nickname, Barnabas (Son of Encouragement).
- Rabbit trail, what would your spiritual nickname be? What are you known for?
- Barnabas is seen elsewhere encouraging the apostles to accept Paul after his dramatic conversion. He was Paul's encourager on the missionary journeys.
- But despite all the good things about him, he followed Peter's bad example and behaved as a hypocrite in front of the Jerusalem Jews. Paul would have said, "Come on Barney! You're too graced to be two-faced!"
- **Application point:** I can't be led astray... IF I am following Jesus.
- We need to learn that even the godliest examples like Peter and Barnabas can fall under temptation. If you are following anyone but Jesus, you're setting yourself up to be disappointed.
- In case you didn't already know this or aren't aware, I am just as capable as anyone of falling into temptation, sinning, and being led astray.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus, He is the only perfect leader.
- When someone points out the problems in the churches, believers or preachers don't waste your time defending them, point them to Jesus.
- When someone says, "I knew a preacher who stole money from his church and then gambled it away." Just say, "I don't doubt that, but let's talk about Jesus. Why do you think Jesus went to the cross?"
- When they say, "I knew a woman who went to church every Sunday, and she was the most vicious gossip I've ever known." Just say, "Yep, I think I might know her myself. But let's talk about Jesus. He was buried and three days later, the tomb was found to be empty. What do you think happened to the body of Jesus?"
- People love to point out that the church is full of hypocrites. Sometimes when I invite someone to church, they respond, "Oh, the church is full of a bunch of hypocrites." I smile and say, "You're exactly right, but come on anyway. We always have room for one more!"

### III. **Paul's example reminds me that it is a believer's responsibility to help those who are going astray.**

- **Verse 14, But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"**
- First, he confronted him publicly. When I read this passage for the first time I remember thinking, "Why didn't Paul go to Peter one-on-one?" After all, didn't Jesus give us a plan for reconciliation in **Matthew 18**?

- Jesus instructed us to go to our brother one-on-one, and then if he won't hear you, take someone else. And then if he still won't listen, then you take it to the church. Why didn't Paul do that?
- If someone has personally offended you or sinned against you, then you should go to them privately. But Peter's hypocrisy didn't just affect Paul: It affected others. And it was a public sin against all the Gentile Christians in the church. That's why Paul confronted him publicly.
- Second, Paul confronted him gently. Notice Paul simply asked Peter a question. He said, "You're a Jew, but you've been living like a Gentile. WHY are you forcing Gentiles to live like Jews?"
- We don't know how Peter answered the question. He might have denied his behavior or excused his behavior. It wasn't Paul's job to "fix" Peter. It was his job to simply point out to Peter the inconsistency between his beliefs and his behavior.
- Later in the same letter Paul gives us some specific directions about helping someone who is going astray. He wrote,

**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal.6:1-2)**

- What is the law of Christ? Jesus only gave us one law, and it has two parts. He said to love God with all of your being and to love your neighbor as yourself. Love requires us to help someone when they are on the wrong track.
- Application point: Grace frees me to be true faced to those who stumble.
- Instead of being two-faced, why don't we strive to be true faced with others? When we notice a fellow believer on the wrong track, we should speak the truth in love.
- If I see you driving toward a bridge that is out, the kindest, most loving thing I can do for you is to tell you to stop and to go in another direction.
- Most of us don't like confrontation or conflict and we avoid it like a plague.

**Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

- There have been plenty of times in the 15 years I've been pastoring when I made the wrong call about something. I've made plenty of mistakes and I'm sure I'll make some more.
- But as I reflect on those failures, I thank God for the friends who came alongside me to help me see the truth.
- So, be a friend when you see a friend who stumbles. Help them get back on their feet and point them in the right direction.

## **Conclusion**

How did the story end for Peter? If **Acts 15:7-11** did happen after **Galatians 2**, we see his heart, but what if **Acts 15** was first than **Galatians 2**?

Well, first and second Peter were written after Acts and Galatians. So, the answers could be found there. Peter wrote extensively of God's grace. (**1 Peter 1:10, 13; 4:10; 5:10, 12; 2 Peter 3:18**)

How did Peter feel about Paul? Was he angry? Did he change churches and bad mouth him?

**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:15-16**

Despite the failings of both Peter and Paul, both men faithfully presented God's message of grace, and Peter closes out his own writings by encouraging his readers to **"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).**

How will you respond when you flip flop, compromise, give into peer pressure, and or sin?

We know we are STILL capable of doing it all. Even in our best intentions we can fall.

We know that if we aren't careful, we can lead others astray. We might even think we are doing right by the situation; to only find out later we got it wrong.

It is also our responsibility to hold each other accountable, we need to remove "stop judging me" from Christian verbiage. We are to hold each other accountable and be straightforward with the truth. Now, we must do it with grace, love and care.

**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal.6:1-2)**