

ADULT

The Right Relationships

A series by Nathan Maki



SERIES BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must surround yourself with the right kinds of people.

Lesson 2.1

Lesson 2.2

Lesson 2.3

Lesson 2.4

Challenged to Maturity

You've Got What it Takes

Who Are You Following?

Who Is Following You?



The Right Relationships: Challenged to Maturity

A series by Nathan Maki

Lesson Big Idea: To mature as a Christian, you must have someone in your life who challenges you.

Foundation

Scripture Focus: Galatians 2:11–14

Tell the story of Peter and Paul on page 54.

- » *Why did Peter and the other Jews separate themselves from the Gentile believers?* ⚙️
- » *What effect do you think this prejudice would have had on the new Gentile believers?* ⚙️
- » *What kind of discrimination or prejudice could we be guilty of in the church today?* ⚙️
- » *What damage could this cause, and how can we avoid it?* ⚙️

Frame

A. Paul

1. This story in Galatians 2 began a chapter earlier with Paul's own desire for **accountability**.
 - » Galatians 1:1
 - » Galatians 1:10
2. We are not called to please **people**; we are called to please **Jesus Christ**.
3. If you do not truly want to grow, you will not accept a mentor's correction or instruction for very long.
4. Paul went back to Jerusalem again by revelation.
 - » *Why does everyone need to be accountable?* ⚙️
 - » *How has being accountable helped you?* ⚙️

B. Peter

1. Peter was concerned about **public image**.
 - » Acts 10:28
 - » Acts 10:34
 - » *Given these experiences, why do you think Peter still segregated himself from the Gentiles?* ⚙️
 - » *Share a time when you either resisted or gave in to peer pressure. What resulted?* ⚙️
 - » Acts 11:1–3
 - » Acts 11:17–18
2. Past criticism still seemed to influence Peter's present behavior.

C. Paul challenged Peter to maturity.

- » Galatians 2:11
 - » *Was it really necessary for Paul to confront Peter over this? Why or why not?* ⚙️
1. Paul courageously chose to oppose Peter to his face.
 - » Galatians 2:15
 - » Galatians 2:16
 2. Paul could have just let the incident pass and avoided conflict, but he believed **spiritual truth** and **growth** were worth fighting for.
 - » Galatians 2:20–21
 - » Proverbs 27:17


D. Overlooking disagreements and faults will lead to **disunity**.

1. Disunity leads to dangerous **isolation**.
 - » Ecclesiastes 4:9–10
2. Peter's reaction to Paul's rebuke was just as important as Paul's courage in confronting him.
 - » *Tell about a time when you took someone's good advice or criticism and it turned out for your benefit.* ⚙️

Finish

Tell the story of Ole Bull on pages 57-58.

Foundation

Scripture Focus: Galatians 2:11–14 

“We were told that the apostle Peter was here.” The voice of the man at the door was stiff in spite of the welcoming smile with which Lucius greeted him. “We have a message for him from James, the Lord’s brother.”

“Of course, brothers! Please, come in,” Lucius replied, stepping back. “Peter is sitting over there with Paul and the others.”

The two dusty travelers hesitated on the doorstep and then stepped through the doorway. They looked as if they expected a sudden blow to fall on them as they did so. Their eyes swept across the fountain in the small atrium and then settled on the dining room to which Lucius pointed. There, reclining on couches around a low table, were Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, mixed freely with Gentiles such as Titus and Simeon of Niger. The Jewish messengers’ eyes narrowed.

“We’ll just sit here,” one of them said, indicating a pair of benches in a corner of the atrium. “Please let Peter know we are here to see him.”

Lucius crossed to where Peter was sitting. “Some visitors are here from Judea,” he said in a low voice. “They’re asking for you.”

Peter straightened on his couch, his feet hitting the floor. He excused himself and hurried away. The voices carried back to the dining room as Peter greeted the messengers. Their tone was accusatory; his was defensive. Peter returned just long enough to take up his plate and cup with a guilty glance around at the others, and then he crossed the atrium to sit with the Jews.

The discussion around the table died down to awkward silence that seemed to stretch for hours instead of mere minutes. One by one the other Jewish believers excused themselves on one pretext or another and coalesced around Peter and the newcomers in the corner.

Barnabas was the last to go. As his mentor made a move to rise, Paul grabbed his arm. “You too would be drawn away?” he demanded.

“It is Peter,” Barnabas replied, as if that simple statement was reason enough.

It is Peter, Paul thought. Peter who preached the Day of Pentecost revival. Peter who healed the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. Peter who stood up to the chief priests and told them he would rather obey God than men. Peter who was the first to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. And with that final thought, Paul realized there was something he simply had to do, and as the eyes of the Gentile believers he’d won to Christ widened with shock and hurt, he too rose and began walking to where Peter sat.

 **Why did Peter and the other Jews separate themselves from the Gentile believers?**



 **What effect do you think this prejudice would have had on the new Gentile believers?**


 **What kind of discrimination or prejudice could we be guilty of in the church today?**




 **What damage could this cause, and how can we avoid it?**

Frame

Paul

This story in Galatians 2 began a chapter earlier with Paul's own desire for **accountability**.   After his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus and his call to the ministry, Paul set out to make himself accountable to the existing leadership in the church.

Sometimes we may be tempted to say, "I have a calling, so I don't have to be accountable." Paul certainly considered himself called, even claiming the status of apostle. But he maintained that he was not given that title by any man, but by Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 1:1.)  Paul had a supernatural experience with the Lord that left him in no doubt that he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Yet that confident assurance did not lead him to reject accountability.

At the same time, Paul did not seek accountability out of a desire to please men or to get positive affirmation. In fact, he said in Galatians 1:10,  "do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (KJV). **We are not called to please people; we are called to please Jesus Christ.**   Accountability is not about getting a pat on the back, showing off how good you are doing, or proudly laying claim to having a well-known minister as your mentor. Ultimately, we are accountable to Jesus Christ Himself.

Likewise, accountability does not replace personal drive or divine anointing. After his dramatic conversion, Paul immediately began preaching in Damascus and Arabia. No one pushed him to preach; he was compelled by his calling. The same zeal that drove him to tear down the church now drove him to build it up. Accountability will only take you so far. A mentor can only push you so far. In the final equation, you will do what you want to do, what you are driven to do by an inner fire. **If you do not truly want to grow, you will not accept a mentor's correction or instruction for very long.**

Paul knew he was called. He was not concerned about attention or status. He had a personal drive to preach the gospel, and yet still he sought accountability. When he eventually had to flee Damascus over the wall in a basket to avoid being killed, Paul decided it was time to go back to Jerusalem. There he spent fifteen days with Peter and James, no doubt confirming the salvation message he felt called to preach.

Then after having preached across Asia Minor—after fourteen years—**Paul went back to Jerusalem again by revelation.** In other words, God Himself called him to accountability, to confirm the message he had been preaching to the Gentiles. No doubt this visit entailed a more in-depth discussion of the Old Testament law and how it fit with New Testament grace, which was the largest issue in the church at the time.

God's call to accountability for what he was preaching came in spite of the fact that Paul was already preaching the right gospel. (See Galatians 2:6–7.) He was not preaching a false or incomplete doctrine, yet still God called him to be accountable. Accountability is for everyone, not just for those who are struggling. We are all called to be accountable.



 **Why does everyone need to be accountable?**



 **How has being accountable helped you?**


God knows that we need accountability to push us to mature spiritually. Even for those who have an unquestionable calling, a divine anointing, an inner drive, and an accurate message, accountability will still push us to do greater things than we would otherwise be capable of doing and will keep us on track when we may otherwise fall into sin, compromise, or complacency.

LESSON BIG IDEA: To mature as a Christian, you must have someone in your life who challenges you.



Peter

Peter too had an unquestionable calling, having been personally chosen by Jesus to follow Him. He had been given the keys to the kingdom of Heaven. No one could question the zeal of this most outspoken and fiery apostle. He certainly had the true gospel, having been the first to preach the salvation message of Acts 2:38. But **Peter was concerned about public image.**  

It was Peter who was given the keys to the kingdom of Heaven and unlocked the door of salvation for not only the Jews and Samaritans, but also for the Gentiles. After his vision of unclean beasts in Acts 10, Peter was called to teach Cornelius, a Gentile centurion, the way of salvation. Peter stepped across Cornelius's threshold into a Gentile house for the first time, and proclaimed, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28, KJV).  Peter went on to say, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34, KJV).  He preached that God would accept anyone, regardless of racial barriers. As Peter preached, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and all his household, leaving them speaking in tongues to the astonishment of the Jewish believers, and Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of Jesus.


 **Given these experiences, why do you think Peter still segregated himself from the Gentiles?**

 **Share a time when you either resisted or gave in to peer pressure. What resulted?**

Peter faced public criticism for crossing this Jew/Gentile divide. Rather than rejoicing that Gentiles could also be saved, the other believers contended with Peter for going into a Gentile's house and eating with him. (See Acts 11:1–3.)  Having foreseen this challenge to his actions, Peter had already been preparing his defense from the moment he left Joppa with Cornelius's messengers. He took six witnesses with him when he went. Peter went on to prove by his account of the vision and the events at Caesarea that the Gentiles now had access to salvation, and the other Jewish believers accepted this and glorified God. (See Acts 11:17–18.) 

Yet in spite of the positive outcome, this **past criticism still seemed to influence Peter's present behavior.** As Peter visited Paul and the other saints at Antioch, at first he mingled with the Gentile believers freely. But when messengers came from James, he segregated himself once again, reverting to the old Jewish prejudices. And because he was so influential in the church, the other Jewish believers also withdrew from the non-Jewish believers. Even Barnabas, who had founded so many of the Gentile churches alongside Paul, was carried away with this segregation.



Paul challenged Peter to maturity.




"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11, KJV). 


 **Was it really necessary for Paul to confront Peter over this? Why or why not?**



Paul had a choice to make. He could have followed Peter's negative example, which would have done irreparable harm to the relationship he had built with the Gentile believers he had led to Christ. He could have ignored Peter's actions, avoided conflict, and kept eating with the Gentiles himself. Peter was the elder apostle, the hero of the Day of Pentecost. He was the man with the keys to the




kingdom of Heaven. The man who healed the lame man and then won five thousand new believers to Christ. He was the man who defied the priest and scribes. The man whose very shadow falling over people would lead to their healing. Yet **Paul courageously chose to oppose Peter to his face.**

Sparks flew between the two apostles as Paul publicly rebuked Peter. The rebuke had to be public because Peter's actions were public. Yet, even as Paul rebuked Peter to his face in front of them all, he did not resort to personal attacks or name-calling. He did not denounce Peter as a prejudiced hypocrite. Instead, Paul built a bridge based on common heritage and experience. (See Galatians 2:15.)  He focused specifically on the issue by reminding Peter of relevant, spiritual truth that they both knew. He pointed out to Peter, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16, KJV). 


Paul could have just let the incident pass and avoided conflict, but he believed spiritual truth and growth were worth fighting for.   There was a deeper issue here than even prejudice; the very definition of salvation was at stake. Would people be saved by the Old Testament law and by becoming Jews? Or would everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, be saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ? (See Galatians 2:20–21.) 

Sparks must fly in the process of being sharpened. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17, KJV).  Sometimes there must be friction—two strong objects clashing—in order for there to be growth. We owe it to one another to be accountable and to hold one another as close to the truth of the Word of God as possible.

Overlooking disagreements and faults will lead to disunity.   Amos 3:3 asks the rhetorical question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (KJV). Peter and Paul could have simply agreed to disagree, but that would have led to disunity among the apostles, and ultimately among the church. Already some immature believers were claiming specifically to be converts of Peter, others of Paul, leading to disunity that Paul had to address. (See I Corinthians 1:11–13.) How much more disunity would have been caused if these key apostles had been divided on such a pivotal issue?

Disunity leads to dangerous isolation.   Ecclesiastes 4:9–10  declares, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up" (KJV). If we want the safety that comes from walking together, we must come into agreement, even if that means sparks flying at times.

Peter's reaction to Paul's rebuke was just as important as Paul's courage in confronting him. Peter could have rejected Paul's correction, but taking godly counsel is wise, and a source of wisdom. (See Proverbs 12:15; 19:20.) Instead of reacting negatively, Peter accepted Paul's rebuke and would later call him a beloved brother. (See II Peter 3:15.) Rather than spending the rest of their lives as a source of division in the church—Peter leading the Jewish faction and Paul leading the Gentile faction—they showed that the church must lay aside prejudice and be united under one Lord and in one faith. Paul's bravery and Peter's willingness to be accountable led to a deeper relationship and personal growth.

 **Tell about a time when you took someone's good advice or criticism and it turned out for your benefit.**

Finish

How you react to criticism may change the course of your life, leading to either success or failure. Take the case of Ole Bull (u-lay bööl), the most famous Norwegian violinist of the nineteenth

LESSON BIG IDEA: To mature as a Christian, you must have someone in your life who challenges you.

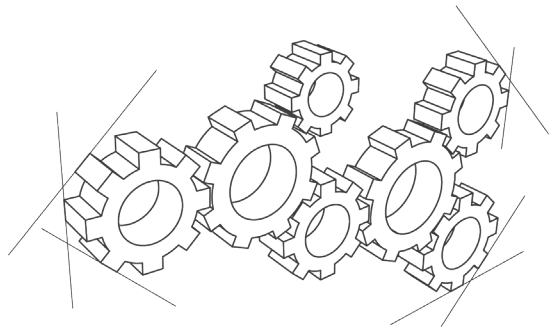
century. At the age of four or five, he picked up his mother's violin and began playing back the songs he had heard her play. By age nine he was playing first violin in the orchestra of Bergen's theatre and was a soloist with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Yet in spite of his obvious talent, his practical father, a chemist, forbid him to play violin and instead sent him to the University of Christiania to study for the ministry. He promptly flunked out and began devoting all his time and energy to the violin. Unfortunately, even though he had great natural ability, his teachers were relatively unskilled, and by the time he started his first concert tour, he wasn't prepared.

In Italy, a Milan newspaper critic wrote: "He is an untrained musician. If he be a diamond, he is certainly in the rough and unpolished."

Ole Bull had a choice to make. He could react with anger and call the critic a fool, who wouldn't know true talent if it slapped him in the face. Or he could take the critique to heart and learn from it. Ole went to the newspaper office and asked to see the critic. The astounded editor introduced him to the seventy-year-old man. Instead of proclaiming and defending his talents, Ole spent the evening with this man, delved into his faults with him, and asked the older man's advice on how to correct them. After that eye-opening night, Ole cancelled the rest of his tour, returned home, and placed himself under the tutelage of truly skilled teachers. For the next six months, he practiced for hours upon hours to overcome his faults. Finally, he returned to his concerts and, when only twenty-six years old, became the sensation of Europe and later of America. He held his last concert at the age of seventy, just before his death. As a testament to his fame, his funeral procession was the grandest in Norway's history. The ship bearing his body to burial was escorted by fifteen steamships and a vast fleet of smaller ships. All because he was willing to heed a voice that said, "You have talent, but you're not there yet. You are good, but you are not yet all you can be."

To mature, to grow spiritually, we must allow others around us to push us and hone us so that we meet our true potential.

Small Group Leader's Guide



The Right Relationships: *Challenged to Maturity*

Opening Question: How much time do you think it should take someone who has received the Holy Ghost to become spiritually mature? Less than ten years or more than ten years? Why?

Scripture Focus: Galatians 2:11–14

Tell the story of Peter and Paul on page 54.

Group Discussion:

- Why did Peter and the other Jews separate themselves from the Gentile believers?
- What effect do you think this prejudice would have had on the new Gentile believers?
- What kind of discrimination or prejudice could we be guilty of in the church today? ⚙
- What damage could this cause, and how can we avoid it?
- Share a time when you either resisted or gave in to peer pressure. What resulted?
- Was it really necessary for Paul to confront Peter over this? Why or why not?
- Tell about a time when you took someone's good advice or criticism and it turned out for your benefit.
- Who are the leaders in your life? ⚙
- What keeps you from fully submitting to their leadership in your life?
- How is submission an act of worship? ⚙
- How do we make sure everything we do is done to bring honor to the Lord?
- What is spiritual maturity? ⚙
- How do you know when you are growing spiritually?
- How can you model unity?
- Why is unity so important in the kingdom of God? ⚙

Prayer Focus

Lord, help me to be and do what pleases You. Thank You for the leaders You have placed in my life who hold me accountable. I want my life and choices to honor You. Help me continue to mature and grow spiritually. Help me to be a person who models unity and not disunity.

YOUTH

The Right Relationships

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SERIES BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must surround yourself with the right kinds of people.

Lesson 2.1

Lesson 2.2

Lesson 2.3

Lesson 2.4

Challenged to Maturity

You've Got What it Takes

Who Are You Following?

Who Is Following You?

The Right Relationships

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BLUEPRINT

SERIES BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must surround yourself with the right kinds of people.

LESSON BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must have someone in your life who challenges you.

LEARNING TARGET

To realize our need for a spiritual guide or mentor.

KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Galatians 2:11–14

SUPPLIES

pen, paper, Bibles

FOUNDATION

“We were told the apostle Peter was here.” The voice of the man at the door was stiff in spite of the welcoming smile with which Lucius greeted him. “We have a message for him from James, the Lord’s brother.”

“Of course, brothers! Please, come in.” Lucius replied, stepping back. “Peter is sitting over there with Paul and the others.”

The two dusty travelers hesitated on the doorstep and then stepped through the doorway. They looked as if they expected a sudden blow to fall on them as they did so. Their eyes swept across the fountain in the small atrium and then settled on the dining room to which Lucius pointed. There, reclining on couches around a low table, were Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, mixed freely with Gentiles, like Titus and Simeon of Niger. The Jewish messengers’ eyes narrowed.

“We’ll just sit here,” one of them said, indicating a pair of benches in a corner of the atrium. “Please let Peter know we are here to see him.”

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The discussion around the table died down to awkward silence that seemed to stretch for hours instead of mere minutes. One by one the other Jewish believers excused themselves on one pretext or another and coalesced around Peter and the newcomers in the corner.

Barnabas was the last to go. As his mentor made a move to rise, Paul grabbed his arm. “You too would be drawn away?” he demanded.

LESSON BIG IDEA: Finding That Spiritual Someone

"It is Peter," Barnabas replied, as if that simple statement was reason enough.

It is Peter, Paul thought. Peter who preached the Day of Pentecost revival. Peter who healed the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. Peter who stood up to the chief priests and told them he would rather obey God than men. Peter who was the first to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. And with that final thought, Paul realized there was something he simply had to do, and as the eyes of the Gentile believers he'd won to Christ widened with shock and hurt, he too rose and began walking to where Peter sat.

Opening Discussion


- Why did Peter and the other Jews separate themselves from the Gentile believers?
- What effect do you think this prejudice would have had on the new Gentile believers?

Middle-School Exercise

1. Have students pair up.
2. This will be an exercise in faith and prayer.
3. Allow students to share prayer needs with one another.
4. Have them pray over one another and encourage one another as they see fit.
5. Use this as an opportunity to teach practical ministry.
6. No child is too young to pray or minister to someone within the church.






Senior-High Exercise

1. Have students pair up.
2. This will be an exercise in faith and prayer.
3. Allow students to share prayer needs with one another.
4. Have them pray over one another and encourage one another as they see fit.
5. Use this as an opportunity to teach practical ministry.
6. Allow students to pray and discuss freely for a few minutes regarding their needs or requests.
7. Allow the class to interact naturally and step in when you see a moment for personal ministry.


 *Have one or two of your students share an instance when they were supported or helped by another in a difficult or tricky time. This can be a story about a difficult period in life, school, trouble at home, or anything else. Feel free to share your own personal story as well.*


FRAME

I. Paul's Story





- A. This story in Galatians 2 began a chapter earlier with Paul's own desire for **accountability**.  
1. After his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus and his call to the ministry, Paul set out to make himself accountable to the existing leadership in the church.
 2. Paul certainly considered himself called, even claiming the status of apostle. But he maintained that he was not given that title by any man, but by Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 1:1.) 
 3. Paul had a supernatural experience with the Lord that left him no doubt that he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Yet that confident assurance did not lead him to reject accountability.
- B. We are not called to please **people**; we are called to please **Jesus Christ**.  
1. Accountability is not about getting a pat on the back, showing off how good we are doing, or proudly laying claim to having a well-known minister as a mentor. Ultimately, we are accountable to Jesus Christ Himself.

2. No one pushed Paul to preach; he was compelled by his calling.
 3. Accountability will only take us so far. A mentor can only push us so far. In the final equation, we will do what we want to do, what we are driven to do by an inner fire.
- C. If we do not truly want to grow, we will not accept a mentor's correction or instruction for very long.
1. Paul knew he was called. He was not concerned about attention or status. He had a personal drive to preach the gospel, and yet still he sought accountability.
 2. He spent fifteen days with Peter and James, no doubt confirming the salvation message he felt called to preach.
- D. Paul went back to Jerusalem again by revelation.
1. No doubt this visit entailed a more in-depth discussion of the Old Testament law and how it fit with New Testament grace, which was the largest issue in the church at the time.
 2. God's call to accountability for what he was preaching came in spite of the fact that Paul was already preaching the right gospel.
 3. God knows that we need accountability to push us to mature spiritually. Even for those who have an unquestionable calling, a divine anointing, an inner drive, and an accurate message, accountability will still push us to do greater things than we would otherwise be capable of doing and will keep us on track when we may otherwise fall into sin, compromise, or complacency.






 *Why does everyone need to be accountable?*

 *How has being accountable helped you?*


II. Peter's Story


- A. Peter was concerned about **public image**.  
1. It was Peter who was given the keys to the kingdom of Heaven and unlocked the door of salvation for not only the Jews and Samaritans, but also for the Gentiles.
 2. After his vision of unclean beasts in Acts 10, Peter was called to teach Cornelius, a Gentile centurion, the way of salvation.
 3. Peter stepped across Cornelius's threshold into a Gentile house for the first time and proclaimed, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28, KJV). 
 4. He preached that God would accept anyone, regardless of racial barriers. As Peter preached, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and all his household, leaving them speaking in tongues to the astonishment of the Jewish believers, and Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of Jesus.
- B. Past criticism still seemed to influence Peter's present behavior.
1. As Peter visited Paul and the other saints at Antioch, at first he mingled with the Gentile believers freely. But when messengers came from James, he segregated himself once again, reverting to the old Jewish prejudices.
 2. And because he was so influential in the church, the other Jewish believers also withdrew from the non-Jewish believers. Even Barnabas, who had founded so many of the Gentile churches alongside Paul, was carried away with this segregation.
- C. Paul challenged Peter to maturity.
1. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Galatians 2:11, KJV). 
 2. Paul had a choice to make. He could have followed Peter's negative example, which would have done irreparable harm to the relationship he had built with the Gentile believers he had led to Christ.

LESSON BIG IDEA: Finding That Spiritual Someone





- D. Paul courageously chose to oppose Peter to his face.
1. Yet, even as Paul rebuked Peter to his face in front of them all, he did not resort to personal attacks or name-calling. He did not denounce Peter as a prejudiced hypocrite. Instead, Paul built a bridge based on common heritage and experience. (See Galatians 2:15.)  
 2. He focused specifically on the issue by reminding Peter of relevant, spiritual truth that they both knew.
- E. Paul could have just let the incident pass and avoided conflict, but he believed **spiritual truth** and **growth** were worth fighting for.  
1. There was a deeper issue here than even prejudice; the very definition of salvation was at stake.
 2. Would people be saved by the Old Testament law and by becoming Jews? Or would everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, be saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ? (See Galatians 2:20–21.) 

 *Given these experiences, why do you think Peter still segregated himself from the Gentiles?*

 *Share a time when you either resisted or gave in to peer pressure. What resulted?*

 *This would be an excellent time for a personal testimony. Alternatively, consider asking ahead of time for a volunteer in the class to share his or her story.*

III. Disunity in the Body

- A. Overlooking disagreements and faults will lead to **disunity**.  
1. Amos 3:3 asks the rhetorical question, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (KJV).
 2. Peter and Paul could have simply agreed to disagree, but that would have led to disunity among the apostles, and ultimately among the church.
 3. Already some immature believers were claiming specifically to be converts of Peter, others of Paul, leading to disunity that Paul had to address. (See I Corinthians 1:11–13.)
 4. How much more disunity would have been caused if these key apostles had been divided on such a pivotal issue?
- B. Disunity leads to dangerous **isolation**.  
- C. Peter’s reaction to Paul’s rebuke was just as important as Paul’s courage in confronting him.
1. Peter could have rejected Paul’s correction, but taking godly counsel is wise, and a source of wisdom. (See Proverbs 12:15; 19:20.)
 2. Instead of reacting negatively, Peter accepted Paul’s rebuke and would later call him a beloved brother. (See II Peter 3:15.)
 3. Rather than spending the rest of their lives as a source of division in the church—Peter leading the Jewish faction and Paul leading the Gentile faction—they showed that the church must lay aside prejudice and be united under one Lord and in one faith. Paul’s bravery and Peter’s willingness to be accountable led to a deeper relationship and personal growth.

FINISH

How you react to criticism may change the course of your life, leading to either success or failure. Take the case of Ole Bull, the most famous Norwegian violinist of the nineteenth century. At the age of four or five, he picked up his mother’s violin and began playing back the songs he had heard her play. By age nine he was playing first violin in the

orchestra of Bergen's theatre and was a soloist with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Yet in spite of his obvious talent, his practical father, a chemist, forbid him to play violin and instead sent him to the University of Christiania to study for the ministry. He promptly flunked out and began devoting all his time and energy to the violin. Unfortunately, even though he had great natural ability, his teachers were relatively unskilled, and by the time he started his first concert tour, he wasn't prepared.

In Italy, a Milan newspaper critic wrote: "He is an untrained musician. If he be a diamond, he is certainly in the rough and unpolished."

Ole Bull had a choice to make. He could react with anger and call the critic a fool, who wouldn't know true talent if it slapped him in the face. Or he could take the critique to heart and learn from it. Ole went to the newspaper office and asked to see the critic. The astounded editor introduced him to the seventy-year-old man. Instead of proclaiming and defending his talents, Ole spent the evening with this man, delved into his faults with him, and asked the older man's advice on how to correct them. After that eye-opening night, Ole canceled the rest of his tour, returned home, and placed himself under the tutelage of truly skilled teachers. For the next six months, he practiced for hours upon hours to overcome his faults. Finally, he returned to his concerts and, when only twenty-six years old, became the sensation of Europe and later of America. He held his last concert at the age of seventy, just before his death. As a testament to his fame, his funeral procession was the grandest in Norway's history. The ship bearing his body to burial was escorted by fifteen steamships and a vast fleet of smaller ships. All because he was willing to heed a voice that said, "You have talent, but you're not there yet. You are good, but you are not yet all you can be."

To mature, to grow spiritually, we must allow others around us to push us and hone us so that we meet our true potential.

Discussion Questions:

- Tell about a time when you took someone's good advice or criticism and it turned out for your benefit.
- What are some instances when you did not receive the desired outcome?

Middle-School Finish:

1. Discuss the relationship of David and Jonathan and the importance of having right relationships in your life.
2. Did David and Jonathan compliment each other spiritually?
3. Why is it so important for students to have friends they can relate to and talk to about God and spiritual things?
4. Why is it so important for students to have mentors in life, even at an early age?

Senior-High Finish:

1. Discuss the importance of right relationships within the church.
2. Why is it important for students to have close friends who are also involved in church and have a spiritual walk?
3. Why is it important for students to also have a mentor to lead and guide them?
4. Why would it be important for students to have a boyfriend or girlfriend who believes the same as they do?
5. How might these relationships affect their personal walk with God?

The Big Picture

- We are called to be mature and dependable as Christians.
- We must have good leaders and mentors in our lives in order to challenge us to always do better for the Kingdom.

Final Reflections

- What kind of discrimination could we see in the church of today?
- What damage could this cause and how can we help to not only avoid it, but also destroy it?
- Was it really necessary for Paul to confront Peter over his maturity? Why or why not?
- Why do we need someone to challenge us as Paul challenged Peter?

LESSON BIG IDEA: Finding That Spiritual Someone

✦ *Allow students time to share what they have written.*

SELAH

Using the following points, take this time to guide your students in prayer.

- Jesus, please help me to follow Your will and do what pleases You.
- Thank You for the special leaders and mentors You have put in place in my life.
- Let my choices be ones that always honor and praise You.
- Help me to continue to grow spiritually; speak to me daily.
- Help me to always be the person who models unity within the body.

✦ *Allow time for students to update their Personal Discipleship Guide.*

CHILDREN

The Right Relationships



SERIES BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must surround yourself with the right kinds of people.

Lesson 2.1

Lesson 2.2

Lesson 2.3

Lesson 2.4

Challenged to Maturity

You've Got What it Takes

Who Are You Following?

Who Is Following You?



The Right Relationships: Challenged to Maturity

BLUEPRINT

SERIES BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must surround yourself with the right kinds of people.

SERIES MEMORY PASSAGE

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

LESSON BIG IDEA

To mature as a Christian, you must have someone in your life who challenges you.

STUDENTS WILL compare the apostle Paul to the pastor of the church and explore how the Lord often challenges us with the Word and from the pulpit.

Early Elementary (Grades 1-3)

TOOL BOX

FOUNDATION

- PowerPoint 2.1
- *Book: Guinness Book of World Records*
- Paper, pencils, timers or stopwatches

FRAME

- Series 2 memory verse poster (TRP)
- White paper, scissors, pencils
- *Template: Snowman* (TRP)
- *Visual: Paul Confronts Peter* (TRP)

FINISH

- Activity papers, pencils
- Smartphone or video camera

SELAH

- *Series song and lyrics: “My Four Friends”*
- Prayer

Late Elementary (Grades 4-6)

TOOL BOX

FOUNDATION

- PowerPoint 2.1

FRAME

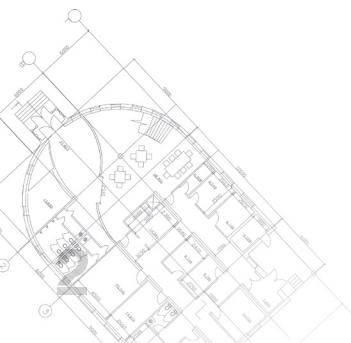
- Series 2 memory verse poster (TRP)
- Ball for dodge ball
- Paper, colored pencils or markers, bubble map example (TRP)
- *Visual: Paul Confronts Peter* (TRP)

FINISH

- Activity papers, pencils
- Construction paper (1 per student), markers, large manila envelope

SELAH

- *Series song and lyrics: “My Four Friends”*
- Prayer



Foundation

Early Elementary (1-3)

What Would You Rather?

Ask the following questions. If students choose the first option, they go to the right side of the room. If they choose the second choice, they go to the left side.

After they make each choice, discuss some of the challenges one would face with each choice.

- **Would you rather skateboard 100 miles or surf 100 miles?**
- **Would you rather face a shark or a cobra?**
- **Would you rather jump off a cliff or out of an airplane?**
- **Would you rather be without knees or without elbows?**
- **Would you rather live in the Sahara Desert or Antarctica?**

Ask a Partner

Have students come up with their own "Would You Rather" questions and discuss with a partner.

Discuss how we face challenges on a daily basis.

Reflection

- **What challenges do you face at school? at home? with your friends? in your relationship with God?**
- **Who do you rely on to help you with these various challenges?**

Late Elementary (4-6)

World Records

Bring in a copy of a *Guinness Book of World Records*. Share a couple of world records with students.

Group Challenge

Have students form groups of five or more. Give each group a challenge to complete.

Challenge suggestions:

- *Physical challenge:* Give group a timer or stopwatch. Have one student time the group to see how long students can stand on one foot. The last student standing is the winner.
- *Singing challenge:* Give group a piece of paper, a pencil, and a timer. Instruct them to sing as many different songs as they can in one minute, singing one line of each song. Have one student write down the songs the group sings. Groups can compete against each other to see which group came up with the most songs.
- *Art challenge:* Give each student a sheet of paper and a pencil. Students draw a portrait of the pastor in thirty seconds. The drawing that looks most like the pastor is the winner.

Reflection

- **What is the purpose of a challenge?**
- **Are challenges good or bad? Why do you think so?**
- **Who are the people in your life who challenge you?**
- **How does your pastor challenge you and other saints to be better?**
- **Why do we need our pastor?**

Personal Challenge

Share a story about a personal challenge. Explain why it challenged you and the outcome. Explain to students that some challenges in life are healthy for us.

Challenge Brainstorm

Ask students to brainstorm positive personal challenges and write their answers on the whiteboard.

Then ask students to brainstorm spiritual challenges such as time spent reading the Bible, fasting, praying, or giving.

Reflection

- **How have you been challenged to grow as a Christian by your parents? your teachers? your pastor?**
- **Why is it important to have people in our lives who challenge us to live better lives?**

Frame


Early Elementary (1-3)

Late Elementary (4-6)

Series Memory Verse

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). (TRP) 

Sharpen Your Memory

Display the memory verse (TRP) . Ask students to read the verse several times.

Challenge students to find a partner and help each other learn the memory verse in five minutes or less.

Reflection


- **What does the verse mean?**
- **How do people in our lives help us stay "sharp" spiritually?**

Snowball Stack

Prior to class, cut five-inch circles out of white paper, one per student.

Give each student a white circle to represent a snowball. Assign each student a word from the memory verse and have students write their word on their snowball.


Have the class stack the snow balls in order (first words on the bottom) and tape them to the wall. Have the class say the verse together.

Give students a snowman template (TRP)  to decorate and have them write the verse on the back.

Reflection

- **Why is it important to have friends?**
- ☆ **Why is it more important to have godly friends?**

Memory Verse Dodge Ball

Display the memory verse (TRP) . Ask students to read the verse several times.

Choose a student to be "It." The other students run around the room. The student who is "It" throws a ball at the other students. If a student is hit, that student says the memory verse. If the student can say it, that student becomes the new "It."


Reflection

- **How can you help your friends get closer to God?**
- **What does the verse mean?**

Circle of Influence Bubble Map

Distribute paper and colored pencils to students. Instruct them to write the memory verse on the top of their papers.

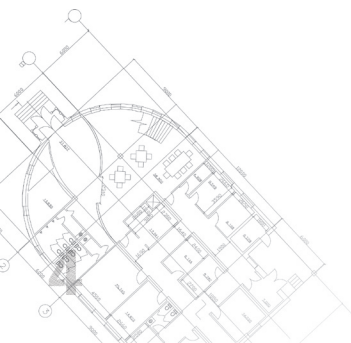
Have students think of the people in their lives who influence them and have caused them to become better people.

Show the bubble map example (TRP)  to students. Below the verse on their papers, have students create a bubble map of people who have impacted their lives.

Note: Students should write their name in the center and the names of those who have influenced them and why in the outer bubbles.

Reflection


- **What does "iron sharpeneth iron" mean?**



Early Elementary (1-3)

Late Elementary (4-6)


Bible Lesson: *Paul Confronts Peter about Hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11–21)*

- **What does it mean to be prejudiced or to discriminate?** 
- **Should Christians be prejudiced? Why or why not?**

Choose students to play the roles of Peter and Paul. Divide the remaining students into Gentiles and Jews and have them sit on opposite sides of the room. Students pantomime the story as you tell it.

Peter was a friend of the Gentiles. He would often eat with them and fellowship with them.

One day, James sent some Jewish men whom Peter respected greatly to visit him. These men thought the Gentiles should follow the ways of the Jews, and they looked down on the Gentiles for not following the Jewish ways. When those men came, Peter decided not to eat with the Gentiles because he was afraid of what the Jewish men would think about him. Not only was Peter avoiding his Gentile friends when his Jewish friends were around, but he was influencing others, such as Barnabas, to also snub their Gentile friends.

Show Paul Confronts Peter visual (TRP) . Paul found out Peter was behaving in this manner, which was not following the gospel. He called him out on it in front of everyone.

He said to Peter, “You are a Jew by birth. If you are a Jew and follow the Gentiles’ ways, then why do you expect the Gentiles to follow the Jews’ ways if you don’t follow them yourself? We know that we are justified with God by our faith in Him, not by

works of the Law. No one will ever be made right with God by obeying the Law.”

Paul was telling Peter that he needed to live a consistent life. If this is what you do and say with the Gentiles, then that is what you need to do and say with the Jews. You can’t be going back and forth all the time. We’ve all sinned, but when we’re striving to live like Jesus, we do our best to live the way He wants us to.

God doesn’t want us to be wishy-washy Christians. He wants us to be consistent. He wants us to always be trying to mature and grow as Christians. Sometimes that means the leaders in our lives will need to point out areas we can improve, just as Paul did with Peter. These leaders want us to be the best Christians we can be, and if we will follow their direction, we will grow closer to God and become more like Him, just as Peter did.

Discussion Questions:

- **Have you ever experienced someone treating you one way when they were with you, but then treating you differently when someone else was around? Share how that experience made you feel.**
- **Describe how the Gentiles may have viewed Peter as a result of his actions.**
- ☆ **Identify how your pastor has been like Paul in your life.**

Finish

Early Elementary (1-3)

Late Elementary (4-6)

Family Connection

Review the instructions on page two of the activity paper and give students a chance to discuss how they will carry out this assignment. If your class has consistent attendance, consider offering a reward for those who return the Family Connection and provide time in class to discuss the activity.

Activity Paper: Thank You, Pastor!

Ask students to draw a picture and write a letter of thanks to your pastor, telling him why he is appreciated.

Thankful Video

Use a smartphone or video camera to record students saying why they are thankful for their pastors and church leaders. Video students and send the video as a text message to the pastors, letting them know they are appreciated. Students can read from the thank you note written in the above activity for the video.

Note: Check with parents for permission to video or photograph students.

Activity Paper: Paul vs. Your Pastor

Ask students to fill in the Venn diagram comparing Paul to your pastor.

Thank You Notes

Explain how the pastor of the church is very important to the church. Give students construction paper and markers. Have them make cards thanking the pastor for being a godly leader and mentor, giving specific examples on their cards.

Place all cards in a large manila envelope and give them to the pastor.

Selah

Prayer

Dear Lord: Thank You for placing our pastor in our lives. Thank You for giving him Your Word to share with us. Bless our pastor and his family. Help us to listen and follow him as he follows You. In Jesus' name, amen. 🙏

Reflection

Have your pastor or a member of his family come into your class. Have him share prayer requests for his family. Lead your students in prayer for the requests.

Series Song Share

Have students listen to the series song 📻, "My Four Friends." Give students the lyrics 📄 and have them sing along.

Reflection

Have the class individually give thanks to God for the good relationships in their lives. Have them pray for their leaders and friends that they would always serve God.

The Good Shepherd

Read or have students read John 10:1–15, the story of the shepherd and his sheep. Choose a couple of questions from the reflection list below and encourage students to participate in a discussion.

Reflection

- **Compare and contrast your pastor to the shepherd.**
- **Compare and contrast yourself to the sheep.**
- **Share some "wolves" that may appear in your life.**

