

Galatians 2:1-10

Offense and Defense

Scripture: Galatians 2:1-10

Memory Verse: Acts 15:10 "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

Lesson Focus: As Paul continues his testimony, we see him going to great lengths to defend the **true** gospel. Revisiting some of the book of Acts we will see how God used Paul both on offense and defense to preserve the truth of the gospel.

Activities and Crafts: Football Offense Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion Qs for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Gospel Floatie

Starter Activity: Offense or Defense?

Sports season is upon us! Consider getting the lesson started with some discussion on the difference between offense and defense. *

Q: In sports, if you are on offense, what are you trying to do? A: Score a goal or a touchdown!

Q: And if you are on defense, what are you trying to do? A: Stopping the other team from scoring a goal or a touchdown!

Teachers: We will leave a couple of cones and a little soccer ball for you in class. * Consider setting it up in your room and invite a couple of volunteers to simulate a little soccer game. Have one be the goalie and the other be the kicker trying to score a goal. Afterwards, ask the kids who was on offense and who was on defense!

Last week, we studied Paul's own testimony of how he went from persecutor of the gospel to a preacher of the gospel! Before he was a Christian, he was on offense for the bad guys with the "goal" of putting Christians in prison! But now as a preacher of the gospel, he's on offense for the good guys, the church! *

As Paul continues to share his personal testimony, we're going to see him go on defense now. This is because the bad guys have this new game plan of peddling their counterfeit gospel. Like a good goalie, Paul wants this to be stopped! Let's open our Bibles and see how Paul goes on defense!

Bible Study:

Galatians 1:23-24: This is where we left off last week. Paul describes how he changed teams (bad guys to good guys)!

Galatians 2:1: A lot happened in these fourteen years. If you were here last year, you may remember how we studied the book of Acts describing Paul's several missionary adventures preaching the gospel (on offense!). The first adventure was with Barnabus to the region of Galatia, to whom he is writing this letter!

Read Acts 13:38-39 which is an excerpt from one of Paul's sermons in Galatia. *

Q: Would you say Paul was on offense or defense here? A: Offense! *

And then read **Acts 13:49** to see the result: **Touchdown!**

As a result of this missionary journey many new churches were planted. These churches are now under attack by the bad guys which is why Paul is on defense! *

Galatians 2:2: Paul goes to church HQ in Jerusalem to discuss and defend the true gospel with church leadership. This is also something that we covered in Acts! **Read Acts 15:4-5** which gets to the heart of the issue. Paul preached that Gentiles (non-Jewish people) are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus (the true gospel). But the bad guys said that wasn't enough. They said Gentiles had to also obey the Jewish laws to be saved. Who was right?

Praise God that the church agreed with Paul! **Read Acts 15:10-12.** * Jews and Gentiles both are saved by God's grace through faith alone! This is the true gospel!

Galatians 2:3: Titus was likely one of the non-Jewish believers who was won over by the gospel in those 14 years of Paul's gospel ministry. The bad guys said he needed to be circumcised which was one of the Jewish laws. (**Teachers:** Please do not go into any detail about circumcision and rather direct kids to ask their parents about it if they are really curious).

Galatians 2:4: And here is why the true gospel is worth defending: it alone brings liberty or freedom! In **Acts 15:10**, Peter described the religious rule-keeping required by the bad guys as a heavy burden or "yoke" around their necks.

Let's say that you are learning how to swim and you are trying to stay afloat at the deep end of the pool. But you are getting tired and can't make it to the edge.

Q: What would you want someone to throw you? * A: A floatie! Anything that will relieve you of the burden of staying afloat! That's what the true gospel is like! It frees you from having to stay afloat on your own!

Q: But what would you say if someone threw a heavy brick at you instead? A: It will sink you for sure! That's what the "counterfeit" gospel of the bad guys was like. Instead of freely receiving grace from a Savior, you were told to try harder and be better: a heavy burden no one can bear!

Galatians 2:5: Praise God that Paul worked so hard to **defend** the true gospel which frees us from the burden of trying to earn God's love with good behavior! *

Galatians 2:6: The church leadership not only stood by Paul and the gospel of grace, but they agreed nothing should be added to it!

Galatians 2:7-8: As we saw in the book of Acts, Peter was the primary instrument God used to bring the gospel to Jewish (or circumcised) people, but Paul was the primary instrument God used to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (or uncircumcised). Both needed to hear the one true gospel and God appointed these men to lead the efforts to reach each group.

Galatians 2:9: After Paul successfully defended the gospel at this very important church meeting, he is sent out on more missionary adventures to bring the gospel to new Gentile lands. We also covered those adventures in our study of Acts.

Read Acts 19:8 which describes what he did in the city of Ephesus.

Q: Would you say Paul was on offense or defense here? A: Offense!

And then read **Acts 19:20** to see the result: **Another Touchdown!**

Galatians 2:10: Before Paul was sent out he was encouraged to remember the poor.

Q: What do you think this means? A: Extend lovingkindness to those who in need.

The freedom Christians have in the gospel is not a freedom to now steal, lie, and do whatever we want to get whatever we want. No, Christians now have been freed by King Jesus and they are called to follow Him. And He wants us to extend lovingkindness to others, especially those in need! This is our offense! * (**Teachers:** Consider spending a few minutes pointing out your class's Compassion child and encourage kids to give. Again, not to earn God's love, but because they are loved!)

Key Point: We've seen Paul on both offense and defense for the gospel today. How about you? Are you willing to go on offense for Jesus this week?

Q: What are some ways that you can do that?

A: Helping those in need, praying for others, sharing the gospel with someone, etc.

Or maybe you're not even sure if you are on Jesus's team! Talk to your leader today about trusting in the true gospel and become a member of Jesus's team just as you are! The "gospel floatie" is there for you to freely receive and cling to!

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Acts 15:10-11. What "yoke" were the bad guys trying to put around the necks of the early church believers?

Second

Read Galatians 2:10. What is Paul encouraged to do here? Why is it so important for Christians to heed this?

Parent Challenge

What are some ways, like Paul, that you can be on "offense" for Jesus this week?

By His Grace,

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