

The Dangerous Path

Initial reception and friendship

1. The Galatians received Paul warmly with joy as a messenger from God when he first came to them.
2. They respected him, like he was Christ Jesus Himself.
3. But then something [changed](#).
 - A. As they moved back to their old ways, they regarded Paul as an enemy because he continued telling them the truth.
 - B. When you turn from the Lord's way, godly people in your life [irritate](#) and bother you. And your God-assigned spiritual leaders and spiritual authorities make you flat out [mad](#).

The process of relational deterioration and alienation

1. Some one had [poisoned](#) them.
2. The false teachers worked to alienate "to lock out" "to shut out" "to separate" the Galatians from Paul and his teaching so as to lock the Galatians in to their false teaching and influence.
3. That pattern is still visible to day.
 - A. Those who are wrong work to [separate](#) people from the spiritual leaders who teach God's Word and ways.
 - B. Answer this question:
Who is trying to alienate you from the spiritual leaders in your life?
Beware of that person; beware of those people; beware of that influence.

Paul's concern for them was pure.

1. His concern for them was [selfless](#), like that of a mother for her baby.
2. Paul wanted these Christians to be [transformed](#) into the image of Christ.
 - A. Did the doctrinal issue warrant such a reaction?
 - B. If they had reason to question Paul's teaching, was there a better way? Was there a Biblical way to respond?
 - C. How about you?
Has someone poisoned you against a brother or sister in Christ?
 - D. This is an opportunity to demonstrate your Christianity, to do what the Bible says, to follow Jesus' instruction and teaching on this matter.

They changed, not Paul.

1. Their opinion of him changed as [they](#) changed. Paul did not change.
2. Their [appetite](#) for truth had changed.

They no longer wanted to believe and behave according to God's word.

- A. They drifted back into the old ways, the world's ways.
 - B. They drifted away from sound doctrine.
 - C. They drifted away from Paul and their spiritual authorities personally.
 - D. They drifted away from God.
 - E. They still did church; but it was [churchianity](#), not Christianity.
3. Usually the dividing issues are not doctrinal.
The dividing issues are usually policy issues or relational conflict issues.
 - A. Discontentment on any issue, not handled the way the Bible says to handle it, always leads to alienation, to separation.
 - B. Conflict over any issue, not handled the way the Bible says to handle it, always leads to alienation, to separation.
 - C. Personal offenses, not handled the way the Bible says to, always lead to alienation, to separation.
 - D. On the other hand, discontentment, conflict and offenses handled God's way leads to restoration and reconciliation.

God's way of handling problems... (Matt 5:23-24; Matt. 18:15-17)

1. Go talk about in privately, just the two of you, and reconcile.
(if no satisfactory resolution, then)
2. Go talk about it with him with one or two others
(if no satisfactory resolution, then)
3. Go tell the matter to the church (bring the church leaders into the discussion)
(if no satisfactory resolution, then)
4. The church leaders should put him out of the fellowship of the church.
(Excommunicate the unrepentant person.)

Want to avoid alienation from your spiritual family and spiritual leaders?

1. Guard your [mind](#). Phil. 4:8, Romans 12:2
2. Guard your [heart](#). Prov. 4:23, NIV
3. Guard your [tongue](#). Psalm 34:14, Psalm 141:3, Psalm 15:1-3
4. Cling to God's word as truth. Psalm 119:160, John 17:17
5. Resolve all issues and conflicts the way God's Word says. Matt 5:23-24 and Matt. 18:15-17, Ephesians 4:29-32, Colossians 3:12-13

Message

The path away from loving, respecting and following your spiritual leaders is paved with poisonous gossip and prideful refusal to reconcile.

The path away is paved with poison and pride.