

Galatians 5:7-12

Introduction: This paragraph is marked by the outer parameters of the words ἐγκόπτω (5:7) and ἀποκόπτω (5:12). In between are three uses of the root word πείθω (5:7, 8, 10). Consider the following information from a recent survey (cf. PowerPoint slides).

There are two possible persuasions—5:7-9

- 1) But first, an encouraging observation—5:7a ⁷ *You^{pl} were running* [impf. act. ind. τρέχω] *well* [καλῶς];
 - a) There is an absolute standard by which the spiritual progress of others may be evaluated.
- 2) Persuasion by the truth—5:7b *who* (singular) *prevented* [aor. act. ind. ἐγκόπτω] *you^{pl}* (who hindered/cut you off) *from being persuaded* [pres. pass. inf. πείθω] *by* (and thus obeying) *the truth?*
 - a) Many false-brothers attempted to break the stride in the spiritual progress of these genuine believers (1:7), but this refers to their leader. These false-brothers were enabled by Satan (cf. 2nd Corinthians 11:13-15).
 - b) **Every** teacher is attempting to persuade you to do/believe something.
 - c) Truth was the course, and obedience was the progress. (Eadie)
 - d) These believers were now attempting to complete the race through self-dependence rather than God-dependence.
- 3) Persuasion by error—5:8-9 ⁸ *This persuasion* [πεισμονή] *is not from Him* (God the Father; cf. 1:6) *who calls* [pres. act. ptc. καλέω] *you^{pl}*.
 - a) ⁹ *A little* [μικρός] *yeast* [ζύμη] *leavens* [pres. act. ind. ζυμώω] *the whole lump* (of dough).
 - i) Even the smallest amount of bad doctrine can negatively impact an entire congregation.
 - b) False doctrine, like yeast, is never content to settle for just a little influence. First it's the religious calendar (4:10), then circumcision, then

The teaching of error brings agitation—5:10-12

- 1) Godward confidence—5:10a ¹⁰ **I** (emphatic) *am persuaded* [pf. act. ind. πείθω] *in* [εἰς] (reference to) *you^{pl} in* [ἐν] (the sphere of) *the Lord that* [ὅτι] *you^{pl} will adopt no other view* [fut. act. ind. φρονέω];
 - a) Even though the bewitching is a strong force (cf. 3:1), the false-teachers will fail. The novelty will wear off.
- 2) There is a Godward penalty for agitating God's people—5:10b *but the one* (the leader of the false-teachers) *who is agitating* [pres. act. ptc. ταρασσω] *you^{pl} will bear* [fut. act. ind. βαστάζω] *his penalty* [κρίμα], *whoever he may be*.
 - a) In this context Paul is referring to the confusion and turmoil caused by those who insist that Gentile believers must observe the Mosaic law. (NET)
 - b) God will be impartial in His judgment of these false-teachers, whoever they are. Not one of them will be exempt.

- 3) A logical question based on an assumption—5:11 ¹¹ *And I, brothers, if [1st class condition] I am still preaching [pres. act. ind. κηρύσσω] circumcision, why am I still being persecuted [pres. pass. ind. διώκω]?*
- a) *In that case [ἄρα] (if Paul preached the necessity of circumcision for Gentiles) the stumbling block [σκάνδαλον] of the cross has been abolished [pf. pass. ind. καταργέω].*
- i) Because the Jews were stumbled over the teaching of Christ's death as a curse on the cross. Cf. 1st Corinthians 1:18-25. They could/would not speak of an instrument of shame and agony as the means of salvation.
- ii) The cross rejects any and all human attempts to be right with God. Righteousness is found only in what Christ has done on behalf of sinners. People don't like to hear that their self-efforts are stained with sin, that everything they do is insufficient to make them acceptable to God, and that the only basis for a right standing with God is the cross of Christ. (Schreiner)
- b) If Paul **was** teaching that Gentiles should be circumcised (as some false-teachers apparently claimed he was doing), why are the other false-teachers, who also insisted on Gentile circumcision, still persecuting him?
- 4) A hyperbolic wish—5:12 ¹² *I wish [aor. act. ind. ὅφελον] that those who are disturbing [pres. act. ptc. ἀναστατόω] you^{pl} would even castrate [fut. mid. ind. ἀποκόπτω] themselves!*
- a) This would be familiar to these Gentiles because of the self-castration necessary for worshipers of the goddess Cybele.
- b) If they made themselves eunuchs, it would disqualify these men from worshiping in the temple (cf. Deuteronomy 23:1).
- c) Consider a similar thought in Philippians 3:2.

Take-home truth: How you live your daily life demonstrates what you truly believe.