

Romans 1:16

For I am **not ashamed** of the gospel, for **it** is the **power of God** for **salvation** to **everyone** who **believes** ...

We must overcome our **fear of people** ...

- ✓ People-pleasing
- ✓ Needing the approval of others
- ✓ Fearing rejection
- ✓ Not worrying about being labeled

We must overcome our **fear of people** with the **fear of the Lord**.

- ✓ Recognizing His holiness
- ✓ Respecting His Name and His ways
- ✓ Prioritizing His approval over human opinion

We must seek to **please God alone** and to pursue the **honor He bestows**.

- ✓ Audience of One = *Coram Deo*

Malachi 3:16-17

Then those who **feared the Lord** spoke with one another. The Lord **paid attention** and heard them, and a **book of remembrance** was written before him of those **who feared the Lord and esteemed his name**.¹⁷ "They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my **treasured possession**

Famous in hell

Honored in heaven

B.L.E.S.S. others in His Name

Begin w/prayer

Listen

Engage

Serve

Share

Famous in hell

Honored in heaven

B.L.E.S.S. others in His Name

(willing to be) Unpopular on Earth

Galatians

- Received the Gospel in faith
- Lost the Gospel through fear of people
 - Church: circumcision = win approval
 - Peter: racism = feared disapproval

Galatians 5:7

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying **the truth**?

1) The Gospel is **true and God honors **truth**.**

- Truth may be hard, inconvenient & offensive.
- Truth ultimately sets us free!
- Subjective vs. Objective

Galatians 5:8-9

This **persuasion** is not from him who calls you. ⁹A **little** leaven leavens the whole lump.

2) Learn to recognize the **compromise**

The devil hates the Gospel for the same reason we (naturally) get **offended by it.**

- Satan can never duplicate or mimic a passion for God's honor.

Revelation 12:9-12

... that ancient serpent, who is called the **devil and Satan**, the **deceiver** of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth... ¹⁰And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the **salvation** and **the power** and the kingdom of our God and the **authority** of his Christ have come, for the **accuser** of our brothers has been thrown down ... And they have **conquered** him by the **blood of the Lamb** and by the **word of their testimony**, for they **loved not their lives** even unto death ... the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that **his time is short!**”

- His lies are exposed. The truth is in Christ.**
- His pride is defeated. He will not replace God, nor reign.**
- His fate is sealed. He cannot live by self-determination.**
- His time is short & his anger fierce. He faces a reckoning.**

Galatians 5:10-11

I have **confidence in the Lord** that you will take **no** other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, **whoever** he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the **offense of the cross** has been removed.

3) Learn to get **confidence from the Lord and to maintain the **offense** of the Gospel.**

Galatians 1:10 (NLT)

Obviously, I'm **not trying** to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would **not** be Christ's servant.

OLD SCHOOL

Rugged Cross
Justice & Love
Death to self
Christ is King

NEW SCHOOL

Symbol of coolness
Love is love
Self-help
Self-will + God's help

4) The Gospel ceases to offend when we cease from **self-sufficiency & self-determination** and come **broken and empty**.

Galatians 6:14 (NLT)

As for me, may I never **boast** about anything **except** the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been **crucified**, and the world's interest in me has also **died** ...

Galatians 6:17

From now on let **no one** cause me trouble, for I bear on my body **the marks** of Jesus.

Stigma #1: There is **only one true faith → Jesus & His Gospel.**

- Jesus did not leave room for "multiple" faiths.
- His resurrection is a historical fact (v. *Tiberius*).
- If what is true carries life-and-death consequences, persuasion is an act of love.
- What is important is that we respect other people; but not necessarily their beliefs → kindness & gentleness ... B.L.E.S.S.

Stigma #2: We do **NOT have the right to do **what we want** (self-determination).**

- There are creational realities → We thrive on boundaries.
- Doing what we want does not end well.
- The Bruce Jenner issue & born this way ... ?

The Bruce Jenner Issue & Born this Way...

- Identity is not primarily sexual but theological.
- We are all born alienated from what we were created to be.
- The answer is not to take matters into our own hands ...

- The answer is new birth into new creation in Christ.
- Made for infinite delight, anything finite will not satisfy.

Stigma #3: There is **a real hell** and **people** really go there.

- Jesus taught it more than anyone.
- Real love cannot exclude anger and justice.
- Seriousness of Sin & the infinite worth of Yahweh
- Hell is a logical trajectory
- Jesus: both condemned and the Judge of all

Stigma #4: God does **allow suffering**.

- God has ways ...
- Where do we even get the idea of justice & fair play?
- God Himself suffers *with us, for us, & instead* of us.
- Our future is not a consolation for the life we never had but a restoration of the life we were supposed to have = the best is yet to come

Romans 1:16-17

For I am **not ashamed** of the gospel, for **it** is the **power of God** for **salvation** to **everyone** who **believes** ... For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from **faith for faith**, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by **faith**."

John 6:67-69

So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "**Lord, to whom shall we go?** You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have **believed**, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."