

1. The Human Side of Apostleship

When reading the *Book of Acts*, we are often inspired by the boldness and faith of the apostles as they carried the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8, NIV). They performed miracles, endured persecution, and established the early Church. However, Scripture is also honest about their flaws. These human moments are not meant to discredit them but to serve as lessons for us, as Paul wrote:

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us...”
(1 Corinthians 10:11, NIV)

2. Peter's Compromise and Paul's Rebuke

One significant example is found in **Galatians 2:11-14**, where Peter (Cephas) compromised the truth of the gospel due to fear of man:

“When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned...”
(Galatians 2:11, NIV)

Peter, who had previously received a vision affirming that Gentiles were accepted by God (Acts 10:9–16), still withdrew from them when legalistic Jewish believers arrived. This was not a theological mistake rooted in ignorance—it was *hypocrisy* (Greek: *ὑπόκρισις* – *playing a part*), driven by fear of criticism (Galatians 2:12).

3. Even Barnabas?

What shocked Paul most wasn't just Peter's actions, but that **Barnabas**, the “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36), followed him in this hypocrisy:

“The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.”
(Galatians 2:13, NIV)

This was heartbreaking because Barnabas was a trusted, Spirit-filled leader known for defending outcasts (Acts 9:27) and uplifting those whom others had rejected—like Paul and Mark (Acts 15:36–39). His role was central to integrating Gentiles into the Church, making his fall into ethnic favoritism all the more serious.

4. Theological Implication: Justification by Faith Alone

Paul's confrontation with Peter was not just a personality clash—it was a defense of the core of the gospel: **justification by faith, not by the works of the Law.**

“...know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.”
(Galatians 2:16, NIV)

Peter's actions suggested that Gentiles needed to adopt Jewish customs to be fully accepted. This undermined the sufficiency of Christ's atonement and promoted a false gospel (Galatians 1:6–9). By confronting this, Paul defended the doctrine of **Sola Fide**—faith alone—a pillar of Christian orthodoxy.

5. Barnabas' Influence and Responsibility

Barnabas was a seasoned leader, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 11:24). His past actions had helped shape the Church, especially among Gentile believers. He had vouched for Paul (Acts 9:27), and he mentored Mark—who would later write one of the four Gospels (2 Timothy 4:11). He had sacrificed personal possessions (Acts 4:37) and was known for his comfort and leadership.

Therefore, when Paul says “Even Barnabas was led astray,” it’s a lament that such a spiritually mature man could fall into public error. It is a warning that no one—no matter how faithful—can let down their guard (1 Corinthians 10:12).

6. What Does This Mean for Us Today?

The Bible warns:

“I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

(Revelation 3:11, NIV)

Your *crown*—your reward, calling, and spiritual inheritance—can be influenced by others if you allow compromise, fear, or peer pressure to silence your convictions or gifts. Sometimes it’s not Satan, but a respected leader, a cultural norm, or even tradition that derails us.

- If God gave you a gift of healing, but you’re discouraged from using it because your church doesn’t believe in supernatural gifts—ask yourself: *Have I also been taken by their hypocrisy?*
- If you’re gifted in prayer, prophecy, or speaking in tongues, but you’ve silenced your gift to fit in—*Are you walking in the Spirit or under the fear of man?*
- If you know deep down that Christ is calling you into a deeper life, but you settle for tradition because it’s safer or more acceptable—*Have you traded truth for comfort?*

God is asking us today what Paul essentially asked Barnabas:
“Even you? Have you too been led astray by others’ fear and compromise?”

7. The Call to Faithfulness

The call today is the same one Jesus gave in the book of Revelation:

“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne...”

(Revelation 3:21, NIV)

Remain faithful to what God has called you to. Don't allow social pressure, denominational rules, or even spiritual leaders to silence the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Use your gifts boldly. Uphold truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). And remember:

It is possible to be sincere and still be sincerely wrong. That's why we must test everything by the Word (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and walk in the Spirit, not in fear (Galatians 5:16).

Conclusion

Barnabas' fall into hypocrisy was painful but instructive. It shows us that even the most Spirit-filled, faithful, generous, and seasoned

believers can be influenced if they are not vigilant. But it also reminds us of the need to *stand for the truth*, like Paul did, even when others—especially respected ones—veer off course.

Let us be those who, by grace, hold fast to the gospel and keep our crown.

“Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”
(*Revelation 3:11, NIV*)

Be blessed, and be bold in your calling.

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