Let’s begin by reading

> Galatians 2:3-5 (NIV), “Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.”

In these verses, Paul highlights three important characteristics about these intruders:

1. They are false brothers

2. They infiltrate secretly

3. Their goal is to spy on and undermine Christian freedom

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1. False Brothers

In Scripture, believers are often called “brothers” or “brethren,” indicating genuine family unity in Christ (1 Corinthians 16:20; Galatians 1:2). However, Paul warns about the existence of false brothers—people who may outwardly appear as believers but whose hearts are not truly surrendered to Christ.

These false brothers enter the church not to serve Christ but to pursue selfish ambitions—whether financial gain, power, or other personal agendas. Some may even be outright agents of Satan, working to sabotage and destroy the body of Christ from within (Philippians 3:17-19):

> Philippians 3:17-19 (ESV):
> “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.
> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.
> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they

> glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”

Such false brothers have infiltrated all levels of church leadership and membership—pastors, apostles, prophets, worship leaders, and ordinary believers.

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2. Secret Infiltration

These false brothers do not always appear openly hostile. Instead, they infiltrate the church secretly and subtly, disguising themselves as genuine believers to gain trust and influence (2 Corinthians 11:13-15):

> *2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NIV):*
> *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ”.*

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

This deception makes it difficult for the church to immediately recognize them. They blend in, but their hidden agenda is to undermine the truth of the gospel and to impose legalistic burdens on believers.

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3. Spying on Christian Freedom

The core issue these false brothers target is the freedom believers have in Christ. This freedom means believers are no longer under the bondage of Old Testament ceremonial laws, such as circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, dietary restrictions, or religious festivals (Colossians 2:16-23):

> Colossians 2:16-17 (NIV):
> “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.
> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the

> reality, however, is found in Christ.”

Paul emphasizes that this freedom is not a license to sin but a release from the legalistic demands that cannot truly save or sanctify (Colossians 2:20-23). Such legalism focuses on external observance rather than the inward transformation by the Spirit of God.

Theological Reflection

The Christian freedom Paul defends is grounded in the gospel of grace. This freedom liberates believers from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13) and invites them into a new covenant relationship where the Spirit of God writes the law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3).

False brothers who spy on this freedom seek to reimpose the old yoke of slavery, thus nullifying the sufficiency of Christ’s work on the cross. This threatens the very essence of the gospel and the believer’s identity in Christ.

Therefore, the church must be vigilant, testing every teaching

and tradition against the clear message of Scripture and the liberty Christ has won (1 John 4:1; Galatians 5:1).

Summary

- False brothers are infiltrators who enter the church under false pretenses.
- They act secretly to spy on and undermine Christian freedom.
- Their goal is to enslave believers again under the law, opposing the true gospel.
- Christians are called to stand firm in the freedom Christ provides and reject legalistic burdens.

Shalom.

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