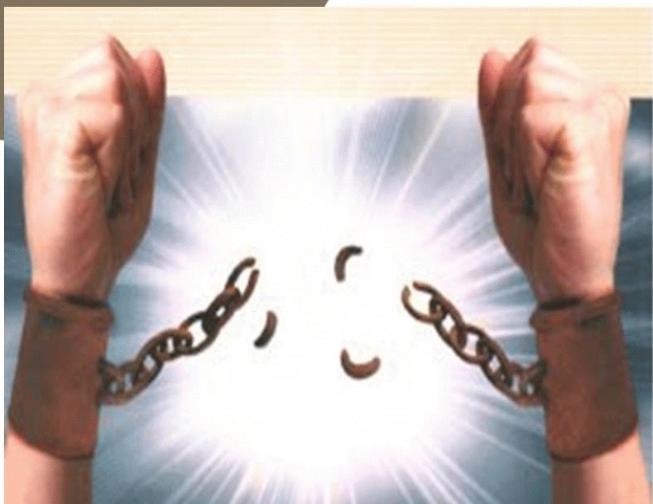


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 12

Day 1

Study: Galatians 6:11-14

Reading: 1 John 3:14-20, Philippians 3:1-9

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

For many years I used to wake up early in the morning and deliver newspapers for a little extra income. One thing that I found to be beneficial was to let the customers know who I was as their paper deliverer. One of the ways I would do this was to include a flyer with their newspapers with my name, phone number and some personal information about me. This wasn't really because I deeply cared about my customers (I only met a few of them), but I did this to keep them happy and for a chance to earn bigger tips. At Christmas time I would deliver Christmas cards with my address and a picture of my family. This helped the people get to know me and one of the great benefits was that I would often get much bigger Christmas bonuses since the customers felt they knew me.

Today, we are going to see how easy it is to run our Christian lives like we would a business (although servant-hood is good for business). We will see that we need to do things for the good of others and not just for our benefit.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul made a very interesting statement in verse 11 when he said, "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand." It is hard to know exactly what he meant by "large a letter." Paul was probably not referring to the length of his letter by this comment. Galatians is not a very lengthy letter when compared to I & II Corinthians and Romans. Most likely, he is referring to the large letters he used to write the letter to the Galatians. Paul normally dictated his letters to others and they did the writing. Many scholars think that Paul had to write in large letters so that he could see what he was writing because he had poor eyesight. This idea comes from different places in Scripture and also from Galatians 4:15 where he thanked them for being willing to pluck out their eyes for him. The real meaning that Paul was trying to get

across by this verse was that he himself was so concerned about the spiritual condition that he wanted to write them directly.

Paul did all that he did for the Galatians because He loved them and wanted to see them do what was right. He contrasted this with the Judaizers who were only concerned about themselves. In general, Jews were not persecuted by the Roman empire like Christians were. One of the reasons they emphasized the Jewish law so much was to save themselves from any type of persecution that Christians would often face. If the Roman leaders saw that they were teaching circumcision it was a benefit to them. They wanted the Galatian Christians to be circumcised so that they could use them for their own selfish purposes (vs 12-13).

The purpose of the Judaizers was totally opposite of Paul's purpose. Paul's desire was to see God glorified, but the Judaizers wanted to glorify themselves and place themselves in better positions. Paul understood that he had no reason to boast because He was a sinner before God. It was only because of the work of Jesus Christ that he was able to do anything. Because of Christ's work, Paul had chosen to forsake the world and give his all to follow Christ (vs14).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Why do you do the things that you do? Do you do things for others only when it will benefit you, or do you do things when you will receive nothing in return? The Judaizers spoke against Paul so that they would avoid any type of persecution and so that others would look highly on them. Paul wrote the letter of Galatians because he loved them and wanted to see them follow God's will for their lives. It is easy to love people and do things for others when you will reap benefits for your actions, but that is not real Christianity. God wants you to give of yourself out of a heart of love. If you want to know if you really love others, then think of the things that you have done for other people this week and ask yourself why you did what you did.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to help you love others in a greater way than you do now.*
- * *Thank God for giving you the ability to love.*
- * *Praise God because He is a God of sacrificial love.*

Day 2

Study: Galatians 6:15-18

Reading: II Corinthians 5:12-21, Colossians 3:1-17

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

If you drive through a large city long enough, you will almost always find an abandoned housing complex that has been condemned. I have seen some of these structures that have looked fairly new, but were abused and condemned. Many of these complexes were built by the city to help house many of the people who were living in run down and condemned houses. The solution that seemed best for the city was to move people into a new housing complex. Many times, the city would find that their new complex was being destroyed, and sometimes, that new complex had to be condemned not too long after it was built. Why does this happen? What the cities don't often understand is that people are sinful creatures who need to be changed from the inside out. True change comes when a person is affected on the inside. You can't just change a person's environment. There must be a change of heart.

What Does the Bible Say?

The debate over circumcision had become a very controversial issue in the Galatian churches. People were taking sides and causing great division among the church. The division was caused over the law, specifically circumcision. This custom that God had designed as a private sign to remind the Jews that they were God's children had become a work that led to their salvation. Paul made it absolutely clear that circumcision meant nothing. Jesus Christ doesn't make a change on the outside of men before he changes their hearts. Many people try to clean themselves up and become better people only to realize that they can't do it. When God changes the heart of a man, then, what the man does on the outside will begin to change. When God makes the difference in a life, change comes from the inside out. This is not the only time that Paul used the illustration about a new creature. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (vs 15). Paul declared that God's blessings will be upon all those who are led by God. Until

Christ, God's special blessings were upon the children of Israel and those who joined them. Paul stated that God's blessing would be on both the Galatians and the "Israel of God" (Jews) only if they followed God's leading. The blessings that Paul listed, "peace and mercy" are tremendous blessings. In the midst of turmoil in this life, true believers can always have tremendous peace because they can trust that God knows what is best. We also can thank God for the mercy that He shows towards us. Instead of getting what we deserve for our sin, we know that we will have an eternal home in heaven because of Him (vs 16). Paul closed the letter by asking the Galatians not to cause any more trouble for him. The Judaizers had tried to question Paul's authority and sincerity. He reminded them that he bore scars in his body because of the persecution that he suffered for Jesus Christ (vs 17-18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How have you become a new creature since you were saved? One of the greatest things about salvation is that you don't have to try to change yourself. When you submit yourself to God and His leading, He will change you. If your outward actions haven't changed at all since you accepted Christ, then you are probably not saved. True salvation involves repentance. Many people try to accept the benefits of salvation without a heart of repentance. You didn't need to be saved from hell, you needed to be saved from your sins. If you are unsure of your salvation, get it straightened out today. If you know you are saved and you have fallen back into sin, submit yourself to obey the Lord and let Him change you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for making you a new creature.
- * Ask God to change you to be more like Jesus Christ.
- * Praise God because He is a God of peace and mercy.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 6:11-13

Reading: John 10:7-18

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

What did Paul mean in verse 11?

****No one is exactly sure what Paul meant. There are two general explanations. One is that Paul had poor eyesight so he was writing with big letters so he could see them. The other is that he used a secretary to do most of his writing, but he chose to write himself. The point that he seemed to be making was that He was personally concerned for the believers in Galatia.*

What group of people was Paul referring to in verse 12?

Why did this people emphasize that a person needed to be circumcised (vs 12)?

Why would an emphasis on circumcision and obeying the Mosaic Laws keep them from being persecuted (vs 12)?

****In general, the Jews had a protected status in the empire, while Christians who proclaimed Christ faced a greater chance of being persecuted. It was often the Jews who would help lead the persecution towards the Christians.*

What didn't those who boasted about the law do (vs 13)?

Why did they emphasize circumcision (vs13)?

****The Judaizers didn't care about people. They only cared about the number of converts they had so they could boast about all of their followers. Paul, on the other hand, showed genuine concern and love for the Galatians. He was willing to sacrifice for them and be persecuted so they could come to know the truth.*

John 10:7-18

How does Jesus describe Himself (vs 7)?

What do the sheep not do (vs 8)?

What will happen to those who come in the proper way (vs 9)?

What is the difference between the way of Jesus and the way of the enemy (vs 10)?

What does the Good Shepherd do for His sheep (vs 11)?

What does the hired hand not do (vs 12)?

What does the hired hand do (vs 13)? Why?

What does verse 14 reveal about the relationship between God and His children?

What did Jesus do for His sheep (vs 15)?

Who were the other sheep that Jesus was referring to (vs 16)?

****It appears here that Jesus is making reference to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not part of the Jews, but after Jesus came, the Jews and Gentiles would become one in the church.*

What was Jesus willing to do with His life (vs 17)?

****Those who truly care about others are willing to sacrifice for others. This is the point that Paul was making in Galatians 6:11-13.*

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 6:14

Reading: Romans 8:1-11

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

What did Paul want to boast about (vs 14)?

What do you think it means to boast in the cross of Jesus?

What in Paul was crucified because of the cross (vs 14)?

****Paul declared that the world was crucified to him and he was crucified to the world. He was saying that he had been set free from the bondage of sin and the religious deeds the world emphasizes. Yet, at the same time, his life was crucified to Christ and the reason He was living was for Christ.*

Romans 8:1-11

What will believers not face (vs 1)?

What has the Spirit done for us (vs 2)?

What did God do that the Law could not do (vs 3)? How?

What was fulfilled through Jesus (vs 4)?

What two types of people are mentioned in verse 5?

What do you think verse 6 means?

What does the fleshly mind not do (vs 7)?

What cannot please God (vs 8)?

What does verse 9 say about Christ and the Spirit?

What does it mean that our bodies are dead because of sin (vs 10)?

What will Christ do for His followers (vs 11)?

I John 2:1-6

What happens when we sin (vs 1)?

What is Christ for us (vs 2)?

****Many translations that attempt to translate word for word declare that Christ is the “propitiation” for our sin. This word means “appeasement” or “satisfaction.” It was only the death of Christ on the cross that satisfied our sin debt. No other payment for our sin would be accepted.*

What will be evident in a person’s life if that person has come to know Jesus (vs 3)?

What does verse 4 boldly declare?

How does this truth balance out with what we have been reading in Galatians about keeping the Old Testament Law?

****As believers, our desire will be to keep the commandments of God. We will not do this perfectly, even as verse one mentions the importance of having Jesus Christ as our advocate when we sin. A true believer will desire to keep God’s Word and will feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit when He sins.*

How can you know you are a believer (vs 5)?

How should believers live (vs 6)?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 6:15-16

Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

What does not count for anything (vs 15)?

What does matter (vs 15)?

****What you do on the outside is not what saves you. Salvation comes through faith and the Spirit changes a person from the inside out.*

What rule is Paul talking about (vs 16)?

What two things listed in verse 16 will come from true salvation?

- 1.
- 2.

Why are these two things such a benefit in life?

What do you think is meant by the “Israel of God” (vs 16b)?

****This appears to be a reference to the Jews who believed in Jesus Christ. Paul had made it clear that being Jewish wasn’t enough for salvation, but it is also clear in Scripture that God has a special place in His heart for the Jewish nation.*

Philippians 4:4-7

What do we need to choose to do (vs 4)?

Why is it so important we rejoice “in the Lord” (vs 4)?

How can you do this?

What should people see in our lives (vs 5)?

****The Greek word in the beginning of this verse is translated several different ways. It means moderation, reasonable, calm, considerate. It carries the idea of thinking through a situation and choosing to trust rather than panic and worry.*

What does the end of verse 5 mean?

****This could mean that the Lord is coming soon or that the Lord is always near. Both are true and both should be a reminder to us that there is no reason to worry or fear.*

What are we not supposed to do (vs 6)?

What are we supposed to do (vs 6)?

Why is this easier said than done?

What do you think you can do in your life to make this a regular practice?

What will you experience when you follow the prescription in verse 6 (vs 7)?

How is the peace of God described (vs 7)?

What will this peace do?

If this is promised, why do think that many believers don't experience this peace on a regular basis?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 6:17-18

Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Memory: Proverbs 3:15

What did Paul say not to do (vs 17)?

What did Paul have on his body (vs 17)?

****Paul's body was scared from the persecution he faced because of his love and devotion to Christ. He didn't get these marks from trying to keep the law, but received them from proclaiming Christ. To say that a person was saved or could be made right before God without Christ would mean that all of the suffering that Paul went through was in vain.*

What did Paul emphasize in his salutation (vs 18)?

What is grace?

Why is grace so important?

Why do you think Paul mentioned "spirit" here at the end of the chapter (vs 18)?

****Much of what Paul talked about in the book compared the work of the flesh to the work of the Spirit. Here, Paul is not referring to the Holy Spirit, but the spirit inside of man. The Holy Spirit communes with your spirit.*

2 Corinthians 11:23-33

****People in Corinth had been putting Paul down, accusing him of living for selfish gain. Paul didn't want to brag about himself and what he had gone through, but he wanted the people to see that what he did he willingly did for God.*

What did Paul give as proof that he was a servant of Christ (vs 23)?

How many times had Paul been beaten with 39 lashes (vs 24)?

***In the Old Testament law (Deut 25:1-3), the maximum number of whippings that could be delivered as punishment was 40. The Jews cut that number down to 39 so they would not accidentally go over.

What other things did Paul go through (vs 25)?

What dangers did Paul continually face in his journeys (vs 26)?

What hardships did Paul face (vs 27)?

What pressure did Paul feel (vs 28)?

What do you think verse 29 means?

***It appears that Paul was saying that he felt great pressure to always make the right choice. Because he was honored and respected by so many people, the choices and decisions he made on a regular basis affected many more people than just himself. Those who are leaders can relate to this. Leaders have extra pressure because of the greater influence they have.

What was Paul going to boast in (vs 30)?

What did Paul emphasize (vs 31)?

What did Paul say about his time in Damascus (vs 32-33)?

What did Paul's actions show about his faith?

Why do you think God allowed Paul to suffer so much?

Personal Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Bible Memory

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. 11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, 12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, 14 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.