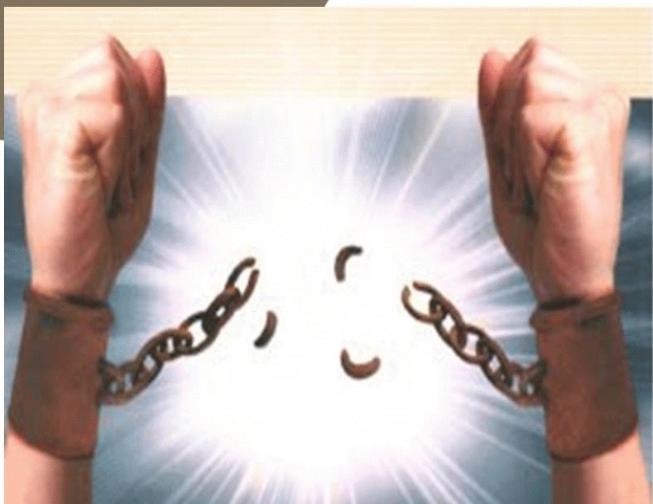


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 4

Day 1

Study: Galatians 2:11-17

Reading: Romans 6:1-23

Memory: James 1:17

When I was a student in college, I became very involved in a local church. The opportunities to minister were very great and I started a discipleship time after one of the evening services where I would minister to a young man. Though I loved doing this, our college had a curfew which caused me to have to give up this discipleship time so that I could make it back to school before curfew. Once I graduated from college, I continued to work at the church, but felt that I had been “set free” to truly minister since I was no longer under some of the strict guidelines of the school. I could take as long as I needed to invest in people without having time limitations.

Today, we are going to read how we are not involved in a religion of dos and don'ts, but rather in a love relationship with God.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul went into great detail to let the Galatians know that his teaching was from God. He let them know of an incident he had with Peter in Antioch where he had to confront Peter because he had done something wrong. Paul told the Galatians how Peter used to eat with the Gentiles in Antioch until a certain group of men came to town claiming that they had a message from James. Apparently they were under the idea that it was wrong for Jews to eat with Gentiles. Because Peter was afraid of what these men might say if he kept eating with the Gentiles, he stopped eating with them (vs 11-12).

Until that time, the church in Antioch had experienced great unity, but their unity soon turned into division. Because Peter decided not to eat with the Gentiles, all the other Jewish believers decided not to eat with the Gentiles. Even Barnabas, one of Paul's closest friends abstained from eating together with the Gentiles (vs 13). When Paul saw what was happening, he chose to confront Peter about the issue. He asked Peter why the Gentiles needed to act like Jews (vs 14). Paul explained his

statement by reminding Peter that all men were born sinners whether they were Jews or Greeks (vs 15). He also reminded Peter that no man, whether Jew or Greek, was justified by obeying the Law. The only way to truly be saved is to place faith and trust in Jesus Christ (vs 16).

By not eating with the Gentiles, Peter was approving of the Judaizers' false teaching which said that a man needed to keep the law in order to be right with God. Paul stated that if this was the case, Christ would have been a sinner because he ate with the Gentiles. Christ came to set men free from the law, not to trap men in the law (vs 17).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you view Christianity as a list of dos and don'ts? Do you think that you are free to sin because you are saved? Those who get caught up in legalism don't only try to make others obey the principles given in God's Word, but they also want them to obey their convictions about the Word of God. They make up a long list of dos and don'ts which turns the focus on keeping the law rather than loving God. They argue that if people don't have to keep their rules then they are free to live a life of sin and God wouldn't want that. They are right by saying that God doesn't want us to live in sin, but they are wrong by trying to force their extra-biblical rules on others. God has given us principles in His Word to govern our everyday lives and gives us the Holy Spirit to lead us. God wants us to love Him and seek His will. When we do this, He will show us what He does and doesn't want us to do. Don't let others trick you into thinking that Christianity is a religion of rules. Instead, remember that it is a love relationship with your Savior and King.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you salvation apart from the Law.*
- * *Ask God to help you develop a stronger relationship with Him.*
- * *Praise God because He is a God of love.*

Thought for the day

“Crucified With Christ”

Study: Galatians 2:19-21

Reading: Colossians 3:1-11, Romans 8:10-16

Memory: James 1:17

There have been several TV shows and much talk about robots. Many people think that a robot can be created in such a way that people won't recognize that it is a robot. The difference between robots and humans is that humans can think and adapt, while robots can only do what their commands tell them to do. With the rise of artificial intelligence, robots are learning to think and adapt but are still limited to being programmed and controlled by men.

God doesn't want Christians to be like robots in the sense that we all look and act the same and have no choice. He does want us to be like robots in the sense that we only do what our master commands us to do. Today, we are going to read about how our lives are not our own, but they are God's.

What Does the Bible Say?

If men are not saved by works, they don't need to do good works in order to keep their salvation. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law when He died on the cross, but Peter was rebuilding the Jewish system of worship by abstaining from eating with the Gentiles. Paul stated that he could never go back to the Jewish sacrificial system after he had experienced the liberating truth of Christ (vs 18).

Paul was not at all for throwing out the Old Testament. In fact, they didn't have the New Testament at that time so Paul greatly relied on the Old Testament. When Paul referred to the "law," he was mainly talking about the Old Testament rules and regulations that God had given to Israel in Exodus through Deuteronomy. Paul didn't want to forget any of the Old Testament because he knew it was the Word of God. The law was useful to show men that they were sinners. If God had not told us about sin through the law, then we wouldn't realize our need for a Savior.

Paul knew that the penalty for breaking the law was eternal death apart from God. Galatians 3:24 says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Paul knew that he was a sinner because of the law, but also knew that he

wasn't under obligation to obey the law since he had been saved by the blood of Christ. It was no longer his obligation to obey the law, but it was his responsibility to obey God (vs 19).

Christ came to earth to die on the cross so man would no longer be obligated to keep the law. When a person accepts Christ, they are giving their life to live for Him and serve Him. Once a person is saved, their life is no longer theirs to do with as they please, but their life is surrendered to do the will of Christ. Christians do not have to live a life of works, but they live a life of faith in Jesus Christ. A Christian will do good works, but their motive for service should be the love that Christ offered them when He died on the cross for their sins (vs 20).

Paul closed the argument he presented in chapter 2 by letting the Galatians know that salvation doesn't come by works. If it did, Christ wasted His time by coming to earth and dying on the cross. Salvation is offered to all men by the grace of God. There is nothing that a person can do to earn their salvation (vs 21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Does your life reveal you are a Christian? Are you living in selfishness or are you living a selfless life? At the moment of salvation, you gave up all your rights to control your life and turned them over to God. Does God have full control of your life? If He doesn't, there are two possible reasons why. The first reason could be that you have never been saved. Some proclaiming Christians will be surprised when they stand before God and realize that they never gave their life over to Him (Matt 7:22-23). Your life should be different the moment you accept Christ as your Savior. The second reason that God doesn't have full control of your life could be because you have allowed sin in your life. Ask God to show you what sins you need to remove so that your life will be totally yielded to Him.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to show you any area of your life that you are not willing to give to Him.*
- * *Thank God that you are not saved by works.*

Day 3

Study: Galatians 2:11-12

Reading: Acts 10:1-48

Memory: James 1:17

What did Paul have to do when Peter visited him at Antioch (vs 11)?

How were Peter's actions described at the end of verse 11?

Why do you think Paul used such a harsh description to describe Peter's actions?

Do you think this confrontation was easy for Paul? What does his willingness to confront Peter show about Paul's understanding and belief in what he knew to be true?

What had Peter been doing with no problems before men came claiming to be sent by James (vs 12a)?

What did Peter do after the men came (vs 12b)?

Why did he do this (vs 12b)?

Are there any ways you can find yourself acting like Peter?

Acts 10:1-48

Who is one of the main characters of this narrative (vs 1)? How is he described (vs 1-2)?

What did he see (vs 3)?

What happened in verses 4-6?

How did Cornelius respond (vs 7-8)?

What was Peter doing while men traveled from Cornelius to visit him (vs

9)?

What happened when Peter became hungry (vs 10-11)?

What was unique about this sheet (vs 12)?

What did God tell Peter he could do (vs 13)? Why was this so shocking to Peter (vs 14)?

What did God declare to Peter (vs 15)?

How many times did this take place (vs 16)? Why do you think God did this so many times?

What was Peter's reaction to this (vs 17)?

How did God reveal that this was all part of His plan (vs 18-23)?

What did Peter do the next day (vs 24-25)?

How did Peter respond to Cornelius (vs 26)?

What had God shown Peter (vs 28)?

What did Peter declare to Cornelius and those who were with him (vs 29-43)?

What happened to Cornelius and those who believed with him (vs 44-46)?

What did they do in verse 48?

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 2:13-14

Reading: Romans 14:1-12

Memory: James 1:17

Why did Paul have to rebuke Peter (vs 11-12 - review)?

Who else responded like Peter did (vs 13)?

What does this reveal about the pressure that the Judaziers put on the Jewish believers (vs 13)?

What did Paul see about the actions of Peter, Barnabas and many of the other Christian Jews (vs 14a)? What do you think Paul meant by this?

What argument did Paul use to help Peter and the others see the error of their way (vs 14b)?

Why do you think this had become a major issue in the churches in Galatia?

How can you see similar problems that happen like this in today's Christianity?

Romans 14:1-12

What are we supposed to do with those who are weak in the faith (vs 1)?

How would you define a "weaker brother"?

****The term weak is often associated with something negative in our society, but this is not true for this passage. A way that might help you understand this better is to replace the term "weak" with the term "sensitive." Because everyone comes to Christ from different backgrounds, there will be different views on some of the external parts of Christianity.*

What are we not to argue about (vs 1)?

What example did Paul give (vs 2)?

How did God view the one who ate only vegetables and the one who didn't (vs 3)? How should we do the same?

Why do you think an issue like this would cause problems?

****Most meat that could be purchased had been offered to idols. For many, especially Jewish believers, this would have been something very difficult for them to participate in. For others, who grew up eating meat, it wouldn't have been an issue for them.*

Why are we not supposed to pass judgment on each other (vs 4)?

What other example was used in verse 5?

What do you think the end of verse 5 means?

When making your decisions about what God does and does not want you to do, what should be your main consideration (vs 6-8)?

Why do you think Paul concluded the way he did in verse 9?

****Paul is basically declaring that Jesus died for every person, specifically here, those who are believers. Whether a person chooses to not do something (die to themselves) or do something (live for the Lord), the Gospel gives us freedom to make the choice before God.*

What must all men do (vs 10-11)?

Why is verse 12 so vital to understand when judging others?

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 2:15-16

Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Memory: James 1:17

What did Paul declare about his origin (vs 15)?

Why do you think Paul called the Gentiles "sinners"?

****It was clear to Paul that both Jews and Gentiles were sinners. (See Romans 1-3) The Jews often viewed the Gentiles as sinners while they viewed themselves as righteous. Paul appears to be pointing this out to show how their view of Gentiles being worse people was not correct.*

How is a person justified with God (vs 16)?

What does it mean to be justified?

****It is a legal term which mean to "declare to be righteous." It was similar to a declaration of innocence, but more than that it was that a price had been paid which caused a guilty party to be declared as innocent.*

What does not make a person right with God (vs 16)?

What is emphasized about works several times in this verse (vs 16)?

Ephesians 2:1-10

What condition was every man born into (vs 1)?

How did all men live before they were saved (vs 2)?

What were we by nature (vs 3)?

What was God rich in (vs 4)? What does this mean?

What did God do for us when we were dead in our sins (vs 5)?

What do you think verse 6 means?

****We have been delivered from the bondage of our sins and have been given the ability to experience the fullness of life that salvation has to offer in this life. This is in addition of the eternal life with Christ that we are promised.*

What does God want to do for us (vs 7)?

How have we been saved (vs 8)?

Why does Paul make it clear that it is not any effort of our own that saves us (vs 8)?

What would people be able to do if they could earn their salvation (vs 9)?

Have you seen this evident in any religious group that claims that it is their works that save them? Explain.

What does it mean that we are God's "workmanship" (vs 10 - ESV)?

Who is the One who does the work in us and through us (vs 10)?

What are we saved to do (vs 10)?

What do you think is meant by "good works" (vs 10 - ESV)?

How did God prepare these good works "beforehand" (vs 10)?

****Before you were born, God planned for you to become His follower and developed a wonderful and specific plan for your life.*

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 2:17-21

Reading: Romans 6:1-14

Memory: James 1:17

What argument was Paul attempting to make in verse 17?

****It is clear that we are justified through faith in Christ Jesus. If we are justified by faith, we can't be justified by keeping the works of the law. Salvation has to be either by faith or by the law. If it is by the law, then what Christ taught about faith would be causing us to sin. This could not and did not happen.*

What did Paul say would make him a sinner (vs 18)?

****Trying to establish that our faith is by works is actually sin. This is because we are attempting to trust in ourselves and not in God. Adding works to either bring about salvation or to keep one saved is a distortion of the Gospel. We are saved by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and we are continually made right through that same work.*

What does trying to keep the law do (vs 19)?

****Trying to keep the law brings about death and condemnation.*

What does Paul mean when he says that he died to the law (vs 19)?

****Paul realized the law did not bring righteousness. He had a choice. He could live for the law or live for God. Though the law was given by God, the law was meant to reveal God, lead people to worship God, and reveal how great their sin was. For many Jews, the law was what they worshiped and not the God of the law.*

What was crucified with Christ (vs 20)? What does this mean?

How was Paul living daily (vs 20)?

****Paul was not saved by faith, but continually made right by keeping the law. He was saved by faith and continually justified by faith.*

How would the grace of God and death of Christ on the cross become meaningless if we would be saved by keeping the law (vs 21)?

Romans 6:1-14

****Many people who grow up with a legalistic view struggle with a full understanding of grace. They feel that a person living by grace can live however they want since God will no longer hold them accountable for their sin as a believer.*

What question did Paul know some of the legalists would have (vs 1)?

What was his answer (vs 2)? Why?

What illustration does Paul use in verses 3-4?

What was the point of this illustration (vs 4b)?

How will a true understanding of grace lead a person to strive to live a life that is free from sin (vs 6)?

What does it mean that we have been freed from sin (vs 7)?

What does not have dominion over us (vs 9)? What does this mean?

How can you consider yourself dead to sin (vs 11)?

How will a person who truly understands grace choose to live (vs 12-13)?

What do you think verse 14 means?

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

James 4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. 11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.