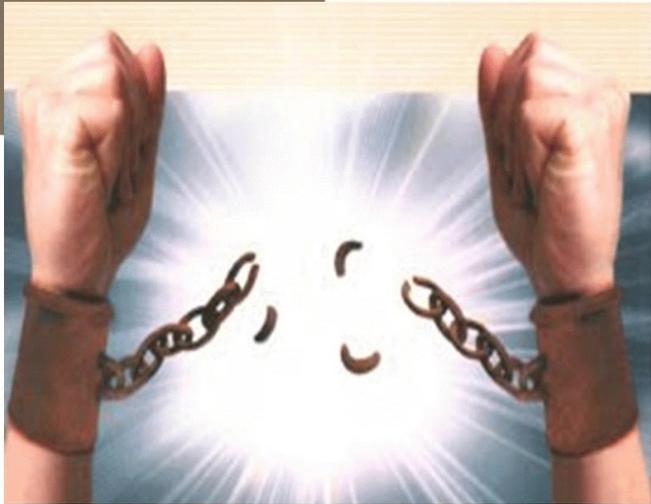


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 9

Day 1

Study: Galatians 5:1-4

Reading: Romans 10:1-11, I John 4:14-21

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

When I was first married, I desired to please my wife, but often found myself doing it in a very selfish way. Many times, I would find myself doing things to keep her from becoming mad at me rather than doing things for her because I loved her. Many of my actions were based on appeasement rather than out of a heart of love. Though I thought I was acting out of love, my true motivation was more selfish since I cared more about me than I did about her. Though I am not perfect, I have observed growth in this area when I look back at the many foolish mistakes I made as a young husband.

Today, we are going to see how Paul declared that if we are trying to find favor with Christ by our actions we must obey every action He has commanded us to do. This is impossible for anyone to do. One of the great benefits of Christ and His love is that we don't have to live a life of appeasement.

What Does the Bible Say?

In chapter 4, Paul had just finished talking about how those who live under the law are like slaves while those who live under grace are free. In verse 1 of chapter 5, he claimed that Jesus was the liberator that set us free so we no longer have to serve the law. He encouraged the Galatians to keep standing strong in what they had been taught and not to wilfully put themselves back into slavery (vs 1).

Paul used circumcision as an example of how the Galatians were trying to keep the law. God had commanded Abraham and all his descendants to be circumcised as a private reminder that they were God's chosen people. By the time of Christ, the Jews had placed a tremendous amount of importance on circumcision. Paul told them that if they thought they needed circumcision in order to be saved, then they didn't need Christ. Salvation is not both from your works and from Christ. It comes either by being perfect in your human efforts, which no man can do, or by Jesus Christ (vs 2-3).

Anyone who is trying to be saved by works can't be saved by Christ at the same time. The word justified means to "declare one righteous." No man can be justified by works since we are all sinners. The only way we can be justified is through the blood of Christ. Paul described those who wanted to be under the law as "fallen from grace." The term "fallen from grace" can be applied to believers and unbelievers. To the unbeliever it means that they have heard the truth of Christ, yet they have turned their backs on the truth. To the believer it means that a person has truly trusted in Christ, but has turned back to trying to keep the law in order to please God. When a person lives in grace, they realize that they don't have to keep all the rituals of the law because God has shown them undeserved favor. Those who seek to follow the law as a basis for being right with God will miss out on the fullness of Christ that has been offered to all children of God (vs 4).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you view the Christian life as a list of rules and regulations? Do you think you have to go to church and have to do your devotions so that God will think highly of you? If you view your Christian life as a list of things you can and can't do, then you have "fallen from grace." Once we have been saved by the grace of God, God doesn't see you as a sinner who is separated from Him, but He sees you as His righteous child because of the blood of Christ. You don't have to live under the burden of trying to meet up to God's expectations. You can't meet them, so you don't have to worry about trying. Many Christians live in fear that God is angry with them because they haven't been good enough for God to be happy with them. You don't have to live that way. You can live a life of freedom knowing that God will still love you and care for you no matter what you do. Does that mean you can sin and not worry about it? To that question Paul said, "God forbid!" (Rom 6:1-2) The key to living in grace comes through the relationship you have with God. You should serve Him and do what is right because you love Him. A love for Him comes when you realize how He first loved you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God that you don't have to live by the law.*
- * *Ask God to help you live for Him.*

Day 2

Study: Galatians 5:5-12

Reading: Matthew 10:16-42

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

When my wife and I were starting our family, we had to walk through a few miscarriages together. When we did, we talked to others and found out that miscarriages were not uncommon. Though it is not talked about much, there were a handful in our extended family and church family. Though they are not easy to handle at the time, miscarriages are part of God's design. God has designed the body to reject babies that will not be able to live outside the mother's womb. Miscarriages are the bodies natural way of rejecting babies that are not properly developing.

Today, we are going to see that facing rejection for standing up for the truth is not always an easy thing to go through, but God can use that rejection for our good.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul mentioned three characteristics of a godly Christian life in verse 5. First, the believer is led by the Holy Spirit rather than the flesh. Second, the believer lives by faith rather than by works. Third, the believer lives with the assurance that Christ's righteousness has paid the price for sin. This is in contrast to the person who is under the law living in constant fear and anxiety not knowing if they have done enough to receive or keep their salvation (vs 5).

True salvation and true Christian living isn't determined by outward actions. Circumcision was an outward sign in those days that many people thought they needed in order to be saved. Today, it would be things like baptism, church membership, offerings, etc. Paul told the Galatians that true Christianity comes from the inside. It comes from a faith in God and a love for Him because of who He is and what He has done (vs 6).

Paul often paralleled the Christian life to a race. He alluded to a race in verse 7 when he told the Galatians that they were running well. In any

sport, focus is very important. When a runner loses focus on the goal he is trying to obtain, he will slow down. The Galatians had allowed men to come in and hinder their spiritual growth and their effectiveness for Christ. Paul let them know that this distraction didn't come from God (vs 7-8). He used the illustration of leaven (yeast) to show the Galatians how they had been turned away from God. Compared to the flour and other ingredients used in baking, the amount of yeast that is added is very small. Yet, that little amount of yeast causes the whole loaf of bread to rise. It only took a couple of false teachers in the Galatian church to start to turn the Galatians' hearts away from the truth (vs 9).

Paul told the Galatians that he was confident that they would put a stop to the false teaching and remove the false teachers from the church (vs 10). Paul reminded them that he was still being persecuted, just like he was when he was in Galatia. The reason he was persecuted was because he was preaching against the Judaizers. If he had changed his tune, he would no longer be persecuted (vs 12).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you scared of being rejected when you take a stand for Christ? Sometimes you will be rejected by friends when you take a stand against their evil. Other times, you will be rejected by the unsaved when you try to share Christ with them. Paul used the fact that he was still being persecuted by the Judaizers to show the believers that he was still doing what was right. Paul wanted the Galatians to take a stand against the false teaching because even a little of it was ruining the church. This is why it is so important for you to know what God says in His Word. When you rely only on others to tell you what God wants, you can be led astray, often without knowing it. When you let God speak to you directly through His Word, you will be able to better see the leaven in your life as well as when others are teaching what is false.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for using the rejection that comes into your life for good.
- * Ask God to help you take a stand for Him.
- * Praise God because He is worthy of our loyalty.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 5:1-3

Reading: James 2:8-13, Romans 3:1-9

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

Why did Christ set us free (vs 1)?

****Christ has set us free from slavery to the law and religious regulations. We should not then choose to live in the slavery of these things, but we should thrive in the freedom we have in Christ.*

What are we challenged to stand firm about (vs 1)?

****If you remember, even Peter and Barnabas at one time gave into those who emphasized the law. Religious peer pressure can exist that will enslave you into a religion instead of setting you free to live in Christ. You must choose to stand firm in your faith and understanding of the freedom you have in Christ.*

Why did Paul refer to those who placed a great focus on keeping religious duties as "slaves" (vs 1b)?

Why do you think Paul began verse 2 by saying "I Paul?"

****He had been the one who brought them the Gospel and he was pleading with them to remember who he was and what he had done for them. He wanted them to remember the message he had given them.*

What would happen to their need for Christ if they placed an emphasis on the law (vs 2)?

What must a person do to be righteous by keeping the law (vs 3)?

How is this something that is impossible? Why do you think this is so hard to believe?

James 2:8-13

What is the royal law (vs 8)?

What is sin according to verse 9?

What happens if the law is broken in one point (vs 10)?

****Though this understanding is not in the same type of context as what we have been studying in Galatians, the understanding is still the same. One sin makes a person a sinner and makes a person guilty.*

What illustration did James use in verse 11?

How are believers supposed to live (vs 12)?

What is the law of liberty (vs 12)?

****The Old Testament law is described as a law that enslaves. The “royal law” (vs 8) is founded in love and it brings freedom.*

What did James say about judgment and mercy (vs 13)?

Romans 3:1-9

How did Paul reveal the value of the law (vs 1-2)?

What question did Paul ask in verse 3?

What was the answer (vs 4)?

****In verses 5-8, Paul refuted the argument used by some people that stated that God was glorified more when people sinned more.*

What did Paul conclude (vs 9)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 5:4-6

Reading: Romans 3:10-26

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

Who is cut off from Christ (vs 4)?

What does it mean to be cut off from Christ (vs 4)?

****It means to be freed or released. To put an end to; to invalidate. Those who attempt to be justified by the law don't need Christ. Those who need Christ for justification, don't need the law.*

How does the hope of righteousness come (vs 5)?

What is this in contrast with?

****The Spirit is in contrast with the flesh and faith is in contrast to trusting in one's self.*

What doesn't count for anything for those who are in Christ Jesus (vs 6)?

What is it that counts (vs 6)?

How does faith work through love (vs 6)?

****Love was from God who sent Jesus to deliver us. Those who understand true salvation seek a life that is filled with a love toward God and a love toward others.*

Romans 3:10-26

What did Paul declare (vs 10)?

Was this just something he came up with?

****Paul takes time to quote a few Old Testament passages to help the*

people see that it was God's plan all along for people to come to Him through faith.

How is the pursuit of man described (vs 11-12)?

****Note that the emphasis is on "all" and "no one."*

What do verses 13-18 reveal about all men?

Why was the law given (vs 19)?

What will not happen through the law (vs 20)?

What does happen through the law (vs 20)?

What does it mean that righteousness came apart from the law (vs 21)?

How does the law testify to this (vs 21)?

How does the righteousness of God come (vs 22)?

What is the condition of all men apart from Christ (vs 23)?

Why are justification and redemption such important terms (vs 24)?

What does "propitiation" mean (vs 25)?

****Many newer translations don't use this biblical Word, but it is an important one to stop and look at. The word means a place of forgiveness, a substitute. In ancient Greek religion, the term was used to describe a substitute that appeased a deity.*

What is Christ to those who have faith in Him (vs 26)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 5:7-9

Reading: I Corinthians 9:24-27, Matthew 6:5-12

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

What did Paul say about how the Galatians had been living (vs 7)?

What was Paul asking them (vs 7)?

****Paul used the illustration of a runner who had been running a good race, but was then sidetracked by something.*

What did Paul declare about the message that had persuaded the people to live and act differently than Paul had taught (vs 8)?

What illustration did Paul use (vs 10)?

****The illustration of a little leaven was used many times in the New Testament. In those days, when bread was made, a small chunk would be left out of the bread to sit and ferment. This fermented lump (leaven) would then be added to the new bread to cause the bread to rise. It would be similar to the yeast that we buy in stores today.*

What was Paul's point in verse 9?

****Even though the false teaching of the Judaizers only slightly differed than the teaching of Paul, those small differences had led to big problems. The whole doctrine of salvation had changed, which was catastrophic in the lives of those who were persuaded by it.*

I Corinthians 9:24-27

How are we supposed to run the race of life (vs 24)?

****Paul is not saying that only one person gets to go to heaven, but he used racing as an illustration to help challenge believers to press on in the truth they had learned.*

How do athletes have to live in order to win (vs 25)?

What is the difference between earthly athletes and spiritual athletes (vs 25)?

How did Paul choose to run the race of life (vs 26)?

****Paul used the illustration of a runner to say how he ran with purpose, then he used the illustration of a boxer who didn't just box at thin air. Shadow boxing was useful in training, but nothing was like sparing with another boxer and actually boxing in a match.*

How did Paul live like an athlete in the spiritual realm (vs 27)?

Why is discipline so important (vs 27)?

Matthew 16:5-12

What did the disciples forget (vs 5)?

What did Jesus warn the disciples about (vs 6)?

What did they think Jesus was talking about (vs 7)?

Why did Jesus not want them to worry about earthly bread (vs 8-10)?

What did Jesus say again (vs 11)?

What did the disciples realize Jesus was talking about (vs 12)?

Why was deception compared to leaven in bread?

How do you know what is false teaching of a religion and what is the truth of Jesus?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 5:10-12

Reading: I Corinthians 1:18-31

Memory: Proverbs 3:12

What was Paul confident about (vs 10)?

What did Paul know would happen to the leader of the false teaching that had led the people astray (vs 10)?

What argument did Paul use to reveal that he wasn't teaching the need for circumcision and keeping the law (vs 11)?

How was the preaching of the cross offensive to the Jews (vs 11)?

****If Paul preached that salvation was by the law, then there would be no reason for the cross. The Jews had put Jesus to death so the preaching of it was very offensive to the religious leaders.*

What was Paul's wish for those who were leading the Galatians astray (vs 12)?

****Paul used a little play on words here in verse 12. The religious Jews were teaching the need for circumcision, the cutting of the flesh. Paul wished these false teachers would cut themselves off from the church so they would no longer be hindering or bothering the church.*

I Corinthians 1:18-31

What is the message of the cross for the unbeliever (vs 18)?

What is it to the believer (vs 18)?

What was Paul's quote of Isaiah 29:14 proving (vs 19)?

What did God do with the wisdom of the world (vs 20)?

What did God use to reveal Himself (vs 21)?

Why is preaching described as simple when compared to the wisdom of men (vs 21)?

****A prime example of this in today's society is the teaching of evolution. The teaching of creation is rather simple. The teaching of evolution becomes more and more complex as things that can't be explained are trying to be explained.*

What did the Jews and Greeks want (vs 22)?

****The Jews wanted miracles and the Greeks (Romans) wanted to be able to reason and explain everything.*

What was Paul determined to preach (vs 23)? Why was this so important?

What would the preaching of Christ become (vs 23)?

What is the preaching of Christ for those who believe (vs 24)?

What powerful statement does Paul make in verse 25?

What example did Paul use when talking to the believers (vs 26)?

What did God choose to use (vs 27-28)?

Why did God choose to use these things (vs 29)?

What did Jesus become for us (vs 30)?

What will happen when we realize that salvation has nothing to do with us (vs 31)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my 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.