



GALATIANS: WEEK 4

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GALATIANS

WEEK 4: DO GOOD TO ALL PEOPLE

Bible: Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. **Galatians 6:10 (NLT)**

Bottom Line: Do not grow weary in doing good and living a life of faith.

WEEKS 1, 2, & 3 SUMMARY

It's hard to believe we're coming to the end of this series! When we started three weeks ago, we learned that the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to a bunch of churches in the region of Galatia, now Turkey.

He had started these churches and shared the Good News of Jesus with the people there.

But now some Jewish-Christians from Jerusalem were coming in and trying to make everyone follow Moses—and all their rules and regulations—along with following with Jesus.

In the second week, we looked at how God's promise going all the way back to Abraham connects with us today and how our identity is found in Jesus and what he has done for us, rather than in our attempts to obey the law, which has proven impossible for everyone throughout history.

Last week we recognized that we are to be the unified, multi-ethnic community that God has always had in mind. That is possible through the Holy Spirit working in us who have been adopted by God into His family when we are baptized as followers of Jesus.

That all should lead us to love others with the same love that we have for God as we imitate Christ with the attitudes of servants.

Discussion Questions

1. What has been one of the most challenging teaching for you during this series? Which points that have stretched you to grow the most during this series?
2. What questions do you still have that you hope we'll answer with today's lesson?
3. As you think about what we have studied so far, what connections can you make with situations in our youth group/ministry or the church as a whole today?

LESSON

Read Galatians 5:16-26 - How the fruit of the Spirit grows in us

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. **17** The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. **18** But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, **20** idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, **21** envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. **25** Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. **26** Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

If I were to guess, verses 22-23 are probably the most familiar to you in this passage. But let's back up and start from the beginning.

In verses 16-18, Paul again contrasts human effort and the Holy Spirit.

This time, he reminds us that our natural response is to choose foolishly and sin.

He reminds the Galatians that if we are left to our efforts, which is what happens if we try to obey the law on our own, then it will not go well.

He even says that our very desires will be evil unless we let the Holy Spirit develop within us holy desires.

These two natures are at war, and we must decide whose side we want to support.

Verses 19-21 point out the sad, tragic, and evil result if we choose to follow the desires of our sinful nature.

In contrast to that, when we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, He will produce characteristics that are usually known as the "fruit of the Spirit" in our lives.

But did you catch the significant point here, especially considering the context of this whole letter and what's going on in Galatia?

The *Holy Spirit* produces the fruit in our lives, not us.

And Paul makes a little jab at the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, who are all about rules and regulations, by saying that there aren't any laws against the fruit of the spirit.

Paul concludes this section by using the harsh, crucifixion imagery again indicating that those truly following Jesus have nailed the passions of their sinful nature to His cross.

Those sinful desires no longer have any power or control because their power was killed with the death of Jesus.

Our aim is now to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives, which is part of the life of freedom in following Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. People have said that the first step in dealing with problems in your life is admitting you have them.

How does acknowledging our sinful nature that Paul talks about here help us follow and depend upon Jesus?

2. Jesus has said you can tell the health of the tree by the fruit. How can these characteristics of spiritual fruit help us to evaluate our health in following Jesus?
3. It is simpler to follow a list of rules than to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Why do you think God chose this method for us?

Read Galatians 6:1-10 - Bear each other's burdens

1 Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. 2 Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. 3 If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

4 Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. 5 For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

6 Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them.

7 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. 8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. 9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. 10 Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

The first three verses of this chapter are all about humility.

We need to realize that we are not too important to help someone else.

And instead of pointing an accusing finger or making fun of someone who is struggling, our job is to help them.

One way I have seen this described is that seeing someone struggling is like seeing someone carrying something really heavy on their shoulder.

We can wait around for them to pass the burden on to us.

But that's not what Paul says we are to do.

He says we are to gently and humbly—proactively—help that person and share the burden.

That picture is of us walking up to someone, making eye contact, and then lifting the burden off his or her shoulder and moving it onto our own.

Verses 4-5 are simply about not comparing what you do to others because God has given you work to do that fits you.

There shouldn't be competition but, instead, cooperation.

Verses 7-10 offer a stern warning about the consequences of following the sinful nature.

But they also offer encouragement to persist, even when it's hard and we are tired, and to seek out every opportunity to do good for others, especially those who are in this family of faith.

Discussion Questions

1. Sometimes when it comes to serving, we want to be on stage or do something fun or that gets recognition.

Why do you think Paul points out the significance of the hard and humbling work of helping other Believers who are struggling?

2. In a world where we can count followers, likes, shares, and more analytics, how can you be someone who simply serves God and doesn't focus on comparing yourself to others?
3. When is a time where you were tired—physically or mentally—but didn't give up?
4. Are you thankful you didn't? What happened? How does this connect with serving Jesus and loving others?

Read Galatians 6:11-18 - The Gospel helps us discern what really matters

11 NOTICE WHAT LARGE LETTERS I USE AS I WRITE THESE CLOSING WORDS IN MY OWN HANDWRITING.

12 Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save.

13 And even those who advocate circumcision don't keep the whole law themselves. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast about it and claim you as their disciples.

14 As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. **15** It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. **16** May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.

17 From now on, don't let anyone trouble me with these things. For I bear on my body the scars that show I belong to Jesus.

18 Dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Although it isn't lengthy, Paul provided a powerful ending to his letter.

It was common practice to hire a professional scribe to handwrite a letter, especially one that was going to be of such importance to so many people.

But Paul makes it a point to jump in and write the final words of this letter in his own handwriting to add a personal touch.

He calls out his opponents for their selfish motives.

He makes this simple but powerful statement: "What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation."

The transformation by Jesus into a new person matters more than all the rules, regulations, and traditions.

He very simply points out how he has suffered physically for Christ and prays a blessing upon those who are reading the letter.

Discussion Questions

1. Sometimes it is hard to figure out what is most important.

Paul says here it is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.

What would that look like for you or someone your age?

2. In school, you are encouraged to get good grades, perform well athletically, and be involved in activities all to help with your success in life.

Every social media platform encourages you to become famous and go viral so you can be a success.

In a world like this, how do you have the humility that Paul has here to live a life where you do things to help others know Jesus, regardless of any fame or notoriety?

3. This has been such an emotional and powerfully personal letter that you can almost imagine Paul exhaling as he finishes writing these final words in his own handwriting.

What cause or group of people do you care that much about that you exhaust yourself trying to do all you could to help them, as Paul did with these Believers in Galatia?

Summary of Galatians

Galatians is a letter that is often quoted, especially the "fruit of the spirit" section.

But when you realize this was a passionate and personal letter from Paul to believers whom he had introduced to Jesus concerning false teaching of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, you read it differently.

When you see Paul's authority and humility as he pleads with these Christians, it reminds you that life isn't all about numbers and success.

Paul models the intense relational investment that comes with being a believer and doing ministry.

He cares deeply enough that he goes over and over the basics of how foolish it is to try obeying the law and going back to the ways of Moses.

And he states clearly and powerfully what a difference it makes to trust in the gift that Jesus has offered us.

Being a Christian can seem like it's about rules and regulations if you have the wrong focus.

Paul here reminds us that being a Christian is about showing mercy, grace, faith, humility, and love.

In short, it's about trying to love God and love others like Jesus—not to earn God's love—but in response to His great love for us, modeled in Jesus Christ.