

Galatians Study

Gospel-centered ministry (4:8-20)

Lesson 6: June 23, 2010

1. What kind of religion did the Greek Galatians have before they heard the gospel – a Biblical one or an idolatrous one? What kind of religion are they in danger of turning to now? What are the implications of Paul calling a prospective lapse a “turning back” to idolatry?

“Earning one’s own salvation through scrupulous Biblical morality and religion is just as much enslavement to idols as outright paganism and all its immoral principles”. In the end the religious person is as lost and enslaved as the irreligious person because they are trying to be their own savior and lord but in different ways.

2. In verse 9, Paul says that they know God and then seems to correct himself and says, “...or rather are known by God.” Why does Paul add this correction? What principle is he getting across? How is this an antidote for works-righteousness?

“Christians who are no longer sure that God loves and accepts them in Jesus, apart from their present spiritual achievements, are subconsciously radically insecure persons, much less secure than non-Christians, because of the constant bulletins they receive from their Christian environment about the holiness of God and the righteousness they are supposed to have. Their insecurity shows itself in pride, a fierce defensive assertion of their own righteousness and defensive criticism of others. They come naturally to hate other cultural styles and other races in order to bolster their own security and discharge their suppressed anger. They cling desperately to legal, pharisaical righteousness, but envy, jealousy and other branches on the tree of sin grow out of their fundamental insecurity...”
-Richard Lovelace

“It is our insecurity regarding our acceptance with God which is the reason we make idols.”

3. What brought Paul to the Galatians? What does that teach us about suffering and thwarted plans (2 Cor. 12:7-10)? Can you provide personal illustrations of this in your own life?

4. How and why had the Galatians' relationship with Paul changed (14-16)? What is Paul's purpose in bringing up this change?

5. (v16-17; 19-20) How does Paul's ministry differ from the ministry of the false teachers as to its goal and means?

6. (v.12-14; 19-20) What other characteristics of healthy relationships can you draw from these five verses? Does this characterize your small group fellowship?

Putting Faith Into Action:

A friend calls you on the phone and is telling you how nothing is going as they have planned – their house is a wreck, their children are out of control, their spouse is distant and they feel like their life is spinning out of control. How do you counsel this friend with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Questions for Young Worshippers

1. Why would the Galatians want to gouge out their eyes for Paul?

2. What does it mean to be “enslaved” to something or someone? (v.8)

3. Have you ever asked God for something that you didn't get? Why do you think God didn't give you what you asked for?