

BIBLE STUDY

Galatians 1: 6-9, 11-12

Human nature is fickle. Any person who has ever ridden the waves of popularity knows that. Popularity rises or falls on the next bit of noteworthy news that can make or break you. Emotions run hot or cold. Styles come and go. Political parties expand and contract. Against this wall of change stands God who says, "I am the same yesterday, today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

When the Apostle Paul preached at Galatia of free grace: nothing a person can do to earn the love of God, a person can only fling himself on the God's mercy and in an act of faith, you can imagine the response he received. He set the tone for believers to understand that salvation is not about what a person does. It is about what Christ Jesus has already accomplished. Salvation is not about how a person might achieve worthiness, it is about God declaring that salvation is available to who will believe and receive Jesus in lieu of John 3:16. It is not about achievement. It is about acceptance.

Shortly after the Galatians had received Paul's message, Jewish Christians arrived on the scene and taught in addition to believing in Jesus, the new converts needed to follow Jewish laws, including the rite of circumcision, in order to fully please God. An argument ensued then as well as today that some believe they must do something to earn God's salvation.

1. Before you gave your life to Jesus, were there certain kinds of protocols you were expected to keep, hoping that these deeds would make you good enough for God?
2. Are there things you do today with a secret hope or belief that these things will keep you from losing your salvation? Are there things you don't dare to stop in fear that God will be angry with you that He will cast you away?
3. Are there certain rituals that you believe you must follow in order to retain God's favor and protection? How did you develop these beliefs? Did they come from God or your own thinking?
4. What does Paul say in Galatians 4:17-20?
5. Are there situations where religious rituals took precedence over relationships and caused divisions among God's people? How does God feel when his people are hurt?

6. Because Paulk experienced religious bondage in the law and freedom in Christ what does he tell us in Galatians 5:1, 6?
7. Why do you feel that some people who experience spiritual freedom in Christ might be tempted to return to rituals, practices or beliefs that kept them in bondage?
8. What does the phrase< “faith working through love” mean to you?
9. In what ways does the love of God free us to do what God desires, rather than what mankind requires?
10. Paul focused on the motive of the Jewish leaders, noting that they were seeking to elevate themselves as spiritual authorities and to exert power over others. What does he warn us to do in Galatians 6:13-15?