

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS FOR GALATIANS

WARM UP

On a scale of 1 to 10 about being a rule follower, (1 = usually challenges rules and often breaks them and 10 = always follows the rules) how would each person in your group score themselves? Having read the Gospels and Romans, how would you score Jesus? Why?

What stood out most from Sunday's sermon on the book of Galatians?

EXPLORATION

1. Galatians is a letter to the church in the region of Galatia. According to the accounts in Acts, this would include the churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. In each one of these places, Paul and his companions suffered persecution, up to and including being stoned, at the hands of the Jews. On all three of his missionary journeys, Paul returns to these churches to check on them and encourage them in their faith. At one point Paul hears that these churches, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, have been convinced by a group of Jews that they must keep the Old Testament Law. So Paul writes this letter. Read Acts 15:1-12, and Gal. 2:11-16. **Why does Paul and Peter say we should not try to keep the Law?**
2. We spent quite a bit of time reading the Old Testament this past year, including what is technically called "the Law". From this letter to the Galatians and other Scriptures, a person might conclude that the Law is bad. Read Galatians 3:19-28. Based on these verses and those in Question #1, **what is the value of the Law?** When you read through the Old Testament, **what did it teach you about our need for Jesus?**
3. Read Gal. 3:11-21. Paul describes our relationship to the law and to Jesus. What has Jesus done for us? Paul and Jesus reiterate this reality of Christ living in us elsewhere (Rom. 8:10-11, & John 17:22-23). **What are the everyday implications of this truth for you?**

4. Read Gal. 5:5-6, 16-18 & 22-26 and John 15:1-5. Think about this imagery of bearing fruit. Unlike elsewhere, Paul is not writing here about spiritual gifts. These are the characteristics, virtues and ways of interacting with others that believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, should “produce” (no pun intended). **Based on what you have read, why do you think they are called “the fruit of the Spirit”?** Surely people who don’t believe in Jesus accomplish stuff, even some of these “fruits” to a certain extent. **Then why do you think Jesus said to his disciples in John 15 “apart from Me you can do nothing”?**

5. In Gal. 6:1-4 Paul talks about how to interact with others when they sin and how to view our “works”. Interestingly, having written extensively about why a person should not attempt to keep the Old Testament Law, Paul uses the phrase “the law of Christ” in 6:2. **What do you think Paul meant by this phrase?** You might look at John 14:15-21 to hear Jesus address this issue.

APPLICATION

Very few of us were born Jewish and even fewer of us would have been raised practicing Jewish Laws and traditions. But the Jews are just an example of our human tendency to come up with rules and criteria for being righteous. It often sounds negatively like “At least I don’t _____” (e.g., smoke, drink alcohol, watch R rated movies, etc.), or “At least I am not _____” (e.g., homeless/gay/a Democrat/a Republican, etc.). Or it might sound positively like “At least I _____ (e.g., go to church every week, read my Bible regularly, give money to feed the poor, etc.). While some of these things could be considered righteous acts, Paul makes it clear here in Galatians (3:11 & 5:13-16) and Jesus makes it clear in His teaching (Luke 18:9-14), this kind of self-righteousness is not real righteousness at all. **Take some time to think if there are things you may have put in the blanks above and then repent of any form of righteousness that is not what you received from Jesus when you put your faith in Him.**