

Galatians 3:1-5

Series: *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore*
Message 2: "Too Good to Be True?"

03 - 15 - 09

What did it mean in the ancient world to give someone the *evil eye*?

In world religions (ancient and modern) what is *unique* to the message of Christianity?

What was going on in the young church in Galatia that prompted this letter from Paul?

In the New Testament era (and throughout Paul's writings), what did it mean to *receive the Spirit*?

In explaining this passage, Bruce Longnecker says, "*The Christian life is one that starts, is maintained, and comes to culmination only through dependence on the activity of God's Spirit.*" In light of this, why does Paul say that the young Galatian church risks going 'backward'?

In this passage, according to Paul (see also 2:15-16, 2:21, 3:11, 3:13, 3:23-25), there can be *no addition* of the Mosaic Law to the life in Christ. What practices in church and society still reflect this misunderstanding?

1)

2)

In a similar discussion in the book, John tells Jake that "*We can't love what we fear*" (p. 38). Why?

Mistakenly in Galatia, and mistakenly today, the Church has often taught that right _____ leads to *right relationship* with God. But according to Paul it is right _____ that lead to right _____.

What is the typical *ironic* Christian response when faced with issues of bad behavior?

Despite critique, why isn't Spirit-living the 'easy way out'?

*"We're not changed by the promises we make to God,
but the promises he makes to us."*

- *So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore* -

So You Don't Want to Go to Church Anymore Small Group Discussion Questions: Week 2: Chapters 3-4

Mixer:

Take a minute to find and share with the group one of your favorite lines from these two chapters. Why did it stand out to you?

Chapter 3:

- 1) On p. 27, John visits Jake at his church. He asks him if he is finding some answers to his questions. Jake ends up admitting, "I'm doing everything I know to do. . . . It seems like the harder I try, the emptier and more frustrated I feel. It just doesn't seem worth the effort." Why do you think this is? What practical steps have you done before to know Jesus better? Did they work? Why or why not?
- 2) On p. 28, John comes across City Center Church's Sunday School theme, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). How did this church use those words in a potentially guilt-inducing way?
- 3) What is the difference between worship in all of life vs. worship that happens when God's people gather together at a set time? Search your Bibles and see if you can find passages that describe the *uniqueness* of "corporate worship". What really is the difference and is corporate worship necessary in the life of the believer?
- 4) On p. 30, John comes across a poster designed to recruit volunteers. It depicts a punk-looking teenager with a caption, "If only someone would have taken the time to teach him about Jesus. Volunteer today." Why does John think this method is wrong? Do you agree?
- 5) In this chapter, John helps Jake realize that "Most of my [Jake's] decisions had been made when I was craving the recognition and honor of other people." Get introspective and be brutally honest, when have you made 'spiritual' decisions that had more to do with the approval of others and less to do with desiring intimacy with God?
- 6) Jake's skepticism concerning John's approach to spiritual growth is epitomized in the question, "But won't people misuse that [spiritual freedom] as an excuse to serve themselves" (p.40)? What risks do you see in a church environment that is all grace and no law? Would anything get done? Why or why not?

Chapter 4:

- 1) When Jake finds out about Bob & Joyce (they got separated because of Bob's use of pornography) he tells John, "This is going to hurt the church" (p. 44). How else do churches make decisions based on "reputation" over genuine concern for body members?
- 2) On pp. 44-45, John and Jake get into a debate on "accountability." John insists it isn't in the Bible and yet one could easily argue that the word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible either. Yet, I *know* we still believe in that! What is the place of accountability in the Christian walk? (Use your Bibles.)
- 3) At the bottom of p. 46, Jake tries to convince John that they aren't seeking to live by the 'law' but by 'New Testament principles'. Is there a difference or are they the same thing?
- 4) At the middle of p. 47, Jake describes this question of John as a bombshell in his life: "Jake, when are you going to get past the mistaken notion that Christianity is about ethics?" (Anyone from NW Iowa feel free to replace "ethics" with "doctrine") Do you agree with this conclusion?
- 5) This chapter (and book in general) talks a lot about moving from law toward freedom in the Spirit. If this is true (Someone read Galatians 3:23-25 out loud), then where *do* good works come from?
- 6) Now read out loud Matthew 7:15-20 and James 2:14-17. Why *should/must* we do good works? What do they have to do with the necessary service-oriented tasks that every church body needs to survive (e.g. serving in nursery, cleaning up after events, heading up ministries, etc.)?

Closing Prayer:

Pray together as a group tonight for our church body to be one reflecting a life in Christ, not merely laws or principles. Pray for people to serve one another out of *love* rather than *accountability*, and for a vision throughout our church body of a group where *brokenness* rather than *goodness* gets used to reflect the glory of Jesus.