

# GALATIANS 4:8-20 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

TURNING BACK ISN'T THE WAY FORWARD - ([SERMON MP3](#))

**1.) Sometimes when we look at those around us (friends, family, church members), we see slow spiritual growth or perhaps shaky spiritual foundations.** Galatians 4:12-20 reminds us of our need for patience. The Christian life is not necessarily marked by straight-line growth.

- ☀ *How does love respond to people when they're not spiritually where we hoped they would be? How does love respond to "snail-paced" or "roller coaster" sanctification?*
- ☀ *What specific things can we learn about a proper response from the way Paul dealt with the Galatian church? What does 2Corinthians 11:28-29 explain about Paul's heart toward the church?*

**2.) The progress of the gospel is often accompanied by the suffering of its messengers.** One of the church fathers named Tertullian said, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. The church advances as it proclaims a crucified Lord and lives a crucified life."<sup>2</sup>

- ☀ *God's regular pattern is to display his strength in and through the weakness of his servant. Can you think of a time when God allowed suffering and difficulties into your life in order to work out His good plan? Be prepared to share an example with your study group.*
- ☀ *How is Romans 8:28 an encouragement to you right now in the midst of the trials or difficulties you are facing?*
- ☀ *Look up some of the following verses and notice how suffering was the means God used to spread the gospel (2Corinthians 1:3-11; 2:14-15; 11:23-29; Colossians 1:24-29).*

**3.) Before salvation, what and whom were you enslaved according to (Galatians 4:3, 8, 9)?** Consider your personal experience as well.

- ☀ *Notice the phrase in (v. 9), "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again..." How does God knowing you reassure you today?*
- ☀ *How does remembering that God knows you free you from the temptation to worship idols?<sup>3</sup>*

**4.) In speaking against falsehood and telling the truth to the Galatian Christians, Paul took a risk.** Have you ever told someone you love a hard truth about something in their lives? What happened?

☼ *In addition to Galatians 4, what other texts instruct us to speak the truth, confront in love, or address a circumstance of brokenness even when it's hard?*

☼ *Has someone ever told you the truth about yourself or about a situation you were in, even though it was hard to hear? How did you respond?*

**5.) What memories of his time in Galatia did Paul relate?** What is significant about these actions on the part of the Galatian church?<sup>4</sup>

**6.) What has particularly struck you about the nature and conduct of true gospel ministry?** Do you ever find it appealing to have people relying on you in some way? Why? Could you be motivated by the same goals as the false teachers?<sup>5</sup>

**7.) The false teachers want followers who glorify them;** Paul wants partners who glorify Christ.

☼ *How does Psalm 86:8-12 inform the discussion regarding where glory should be directed and why?*

*"There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever."*

☼ *At the heart of confronting wrong teaching and sinful behaviors is the deep concern for God's glory versus self-glory. Discuss how the concept of living for God's glory alone separates Biblical teachers from false teachers:*

### PRAYER REQUESTS


## DIGGING DEEPER QUESTIONS

**8.) Take a look at Galatians 4:14-16.** What was the contrast between how the Galatians had originally received Paul and how they now regarded him? Why?<sup>6</sup>

**9.) Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8.** How do Paul's tender words here echo Paul's heart as revealed in Galatians 4:19-20? How do these passages square with the common misperception of Paul as being an insensitive and impatient minister of the gospel?

**10.) How has your understanding of living by grace grown during this study of Galatians?**