

Small Group Guide: Galatians 3

Freedom in Christ: Faith vs. Legalism

Review the Message (5 minutes)

Main Point: Our salvation and standing before God is not based on our ability to follow rules or earn God's favor, but solely on faith in what Jesus has done for us on the cross.

Key Scripture: Galatians 3:1-29

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Problem

1. The Galatian Heresy (v. 1-5)

- What were the Judaizers teaching that was so dangerous to the Galatian church?
- Paul asks, "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing of faith?" (v. 2). Why is this question so important for understanding salvation?
- Have you ever caught yourself thinking that you need to "do more" for God to be pleased with you? Share an example.

2. The Example of Abraham (v. 6-9)

- How does Abraham's example prove that justification comes by faith and not works?
- What does it mean to be "sons of Abraham" through faith rather than through heritage?

The Purpose of the Law

3. The Law as a Curse (v. 10-14)

- Why does Paul say that relying on the law puts us under a curse?
- How did Jesus redeem us from the curse of the law? What does it mean that He "became a curse for us"?

4. The Law's True Purpose (v. 19-25)

- Paul describes the law as a "tutor" (or guardian). What did the law accomplish before Christ came?
- In what ways does the law:

- Confine us under sin?
- Keep us under guard?
- Act as a strict disciplinarian?
- How does understanding the law's purpose help us appreciate grace more fully?

Our Identity in Christ

5. Sons of God (v. 26-29)

- What does it mean to be "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"?
- Paul says we have "put on Christ" like clothing. How does this change our identity?
- What does it mean that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" in Christ? How should this truth affect how we view others in the church?

Personal Application

6. Why Legalism Appeals to Us

- The sermon mentioned three reasons we fall into legalism:
 - **Pride** (wanting to be the hero of our own story)
 - **Worldly thinking** (believing we must earn everything)
 - **Neglect of relationship** (doing right things without love for God)

7. Which of these resonates most with you? Why?

8. Freedom Check

- Are there areas in your spiritual life where you're trying to earn God's approval rather than resting in what Christ has done?
- What "rules" have you created for yourself or others that God hasn't required?
- How can we pursue holiness without falling into legalism?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have someone read these aloud:

1. **Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone** – We cannot earn it, add to it, or improve upon what Jesus has done.

2. **The law was never meant to save us** – It was given to show us our sin and our need for a Savior.
3. **Jesus took the curse we deserved** – He became sin for us so we could become the righteousness of God.
4. **Our identity is now in Christ** – We are sons and daughters of God, heirs according to the promise.
5. **Unity in the body of Christ** – All believers are equal at the foot of the cross, regardless of background, status, or gender.

Practical Application (10 minutes)

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Examine Your Heart:** Set aside 20 minutes to pray and journal. Ask God to reveal any areas where you're relying on your own performance rather than Christ's finished work. Confess these and thank Him for His grace.
2. **Meditate on Your Identity:** Write down 5-10 truths about who you are in Christ (based on Scripture). Read these daily and thank God for what He's done.
3. **Extend Grace:** Identify someone you've been judging based on external standards. Pray for them and look for an opportunity to show them grace this week.
4. **Share the Gospel:** Think of someone who might be trying to earn God's favor through good works. Share with them the freedom found in the gospel of grace.