

The Gospel Student

Gal 3:1-14

Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Galatians 3:3

Getting on the Same Page

In Galatians 3:1-14, Paul is frustrated with the Galatian church. They have accepted Jesus' sacrifice for their sins by faith. But now, they are trying to grow in the faith by their own power. Paul isn't frustrated with the Galatian church because they haven't moved on from the basics of the Gospel message; he is frustrated because they have.

As western affluent Christians, we can relate. We like self-help/self-improvement resources. We want to believe that, ultimately, we can do it on our own. Sure, we may need Jesus for salvation, but then we can take it from there; it's up to us to grow on our own.

Paul disagrees. He tells the Galatians that they have not only been saved by the Gospel, but they are also transformed by this very same Gospel. As Christians, the way we grow is very similar to the way we were saved: We apply the core teaching of the Gospel to our lives over and over again. We take the reality of who Jesus is, what he accomplished for us, and who we are in him deeper and deeper into our hearts.

Instead of just trying harder, we should first remember Jesus, who did the performing in our place. It is His effort on the cross that God counts to us as righteousness. As we do this, we will naturally repent of self-righteousness and the lack of rejoicing in the finished work on the cross, which is always at the root of any sin/lack of ability to change. This is the way to be transformed; we become more like Jesus. We never graduate from the Gospel. And that's a good thing.

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

- Discuss a time when you tried to do something on your own, but realized you needed help.
- Observations? Questions? What was most interesting to you?

Study Read Galatians 3:1-14

- As Christians, why do we tend to so quickly forget the core message of the Gospel?
- Think of a common sin we commit. What are we worshipping/valuing more than Jesus and who we are in him?

- Abraham believes God and so God counts him as righteous. However, he isn't ACTUALLY righteous. The same is true with us: If we have surrendered to Jesus, God counts us as righteous, even though we are still unrighteous. At best, we are simultaneously sinful and righteous. Why is this so important to understand?
- Respond: It's not the amount of our faith that saves and transforms us. It's the object of our faith all the way through.
- As Christians, it's important that we start talking more in the third person instead of the first. For example, "I need to do better with forgiveness," versus "I need to remind myself of the beauty of Jesus' forgiveness for me." Discuss why this is so important.

Apply

- In what practical ways could you remind yourself/ re-tell the Gospel to yourself regularly?