

BACKGROUND PASSAGE(S): Galatians 1:1-5:26; 1 Peter 4:11; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 5:28, 15:18-19; Deuteronomy 23:1

KEY VERSE(S): Galatians 5:6 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”

Explain what Paul means when he writes: “...waiting for the hope of righteousness.” What role does the Holy Spirit have in our eagerness to wait? What is “hope”? What is the difference, if any, between being declared as righteous, and being righteous?

Paul (and we) has spent considerable time contrasting the Judaizers false teaching and the true gospel. How would you answer this question if posed by someone to you: “What is the difference between working for righteousness and working from righteousness?”

In **Galatians 5:7** Paul states the Galatians “ran well”, and were “hindered” from “obeying the truth”. What is the result of someone stepping in front of you, bumping into you, cutting you off in a running race? What is the “truth” that Paul is referring to here? Apply this as you evaluate your own “spiritual race”. What hindrances can you identify that may be keeping you from “obeying the truth”?

Compare Galatians 5:8 with Galatians 1:6 and 2:4. What can we learn about ourselves from what was happening in Galatia? Why was it so “easy” for them to be persuaded? Relate this to “the one who calls you”. How important is it for us to be absolutely sure our actions are a result of “faith through love”, and how do we come to know they are?

Compare Galatians 5:9 with Galatians 5:16-21; Matthew 5:28, 15:18-19. Describe the possibility and reality of “little sins” and even seemingly insignificant thoughts growing into a harvest of sinful behavior. How do we continue to run well in our spiritual race and not allow sin’s yeast to permeate our lives?

Read Galatians 5:12. The phrase “cut off” in the NKJV is the word “mutilate” and most often used of castration. What is Paul trying to communicate in this verse? (cf Deuteronomy 23:1 and research “The Cult of Cybele”)

What is your “take-away” from this week’s study and how can it be applied to your daily walk with Christ?

Perhaps the most common error people make when studying the Bible is to read meaning into the verses as opposed to discovering meaning from proper context. Here is a basic method to use when studying a verse or passage that will help you avoid this. Always begin each time of Bible study with prayer, asking God to help you understand what you are reading correctly.

1) Observation

What does the passage say?

Read the passage then look back to see what the passage is saying. Look for repeated words, key phrases, and cross-references. Think about questions that you have after reading. Allow your curiosity to lead you further in understanding.

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? What else do you notice?

What other questions arise from the passage?

2) Interpretation

What does the passage mean?

After observing what was said in the text, interpretation seeks to understand what God, through the book's author, is seeking to communicate through this text. Context is crucial to determining the meaning. Outside resources like Bible dictionaries and commentaries can help at this point.

What is the context? Why is the author bringing this up?

What is God saying through this passage?

What is the main point of this passage?

3) Application

How do I need to respond?

It's easy to read through passages, especially those familiar to us, without taking time to stop and think about how we can practically apply the truths we studied.

How should I live my life in light of this passage?

How does this truth compel me to be transformed?

What does it look like to put this into practice?

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

-James 1:22-25 (NKJV)