

Weekly Study Guide

March 19, 2017

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Daily Readings

Monday

Galatians 1

Thursday

Galatians 4

Tuesday

Galatians 2

Friday

Galatians 5

Wednesday

Galatians 3

Saturday

Galatians 6

Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.

Group Discussion Guide

CONNECT

What is the longest walk you've ever taken (in time or distance)? Share something memorable about it.

LEARN AND APPLY

The letter to the Galatians is the result of a disagreement between two groups of early Christians. One group of Christians believed it was right and necessary for all followers of Jesus to obey the whole law of the Old Testament. Paul, the writer of Galatians, was part of another group who taught that the Christian life should be guided by the crucified and risen Jesus and by His Spirit.

- Consider the first view sympathetically for a moment. What are the advantages for a community to live by a written law?
- Now, read Galatians 2:19-21, Galatians 3:2-3, and Galatians 4:19.
- What does Paul say about how we are related or connected to Christ?
- How is the Christian life supposed to be guided if not by God's law?
- There is a very lively and transformative spirituality in these verses. We have been "crucified with Christ." "Christ lives in me." We "receive the Spirit." Christ is "formed" in us. How do you react to this? Are you excited, energized, confused, and/or nervous? Why?

Life in the Spirit of Christ is described again later in this same letter as a contrast between Life in the Spirit and Life in the Flesh. Read Galatians 5:16-26. (The word flesh can be confusing. In this passage it is mostly used as a shorthand term for an ungodly sphere or way of life. In other places it just means physical life, like a synonym for "body." Biblical Christianity does not teach a world-view where "spiritual," invisible things are good and bodily and physical things are bad.) In this passage Paul uses three different images for describing life in the Spirit: walking, warring, and fruit-bearing.

- Consider the image of walking in or with the Spirit in verses 16, 18, and 25. What does this image suggest to you about life in the Spirit?
- Consider the image of war or conflict between Spirit and Flesh in verses 16-17 and 24. What does this image suggest to you about life in the Spirit?
- Consider the image of fruit-bearing in verses 19-23. What does this image suggest to you?

For us the cross means the death of an old life and the beginning of a new one; it is a description of how we lay down our lives to live in love for others. What do you think the Spirit is saying to you or your group, or doing in you or your group, to grow you in the way of the cross?

PRAY

In your prayers today, offer your surrender to the cruciform Spirit of Jesus. You can use this prayer (or use your own words if you like): "Jesus, live in us and be formed in us. Holy Spirit, bear fruit in us and teach us to walk where you lead."