

(1) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

(2) Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole Law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the Law; you have fallen away from grace.

(5) For through the Spirit --- by faith ---we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

(7) You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

(10) I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

Think on these things:

- 1) Why did Jesus set you free from your sins (v.1)? Now that you have been delivered from your sins, what does Paul urge you to do?

- 2) What is returning to “religion by obedience to the Law” compared to? (v1b) To be “yoked” is to be tied together in actions (we have done this with horses, mules, cattle, and oxen for years). Remember, in context, we are talking about trying to become righteous by living according to the Old (Jewish) Covenant of laws like the 10 Commandments --- i.e., God will be pleased with me and deliver me if I successfully obey His laws. Paul doesn’t think turning back to this kind of relationship with God is a good idea; he considers it a form of what?

- 3) From the Jewish perspective, what kind of people were the Galatians (see Romans 3:27-31)? How does a non-Jew become an accepted member of a Jewish synagogue (see Exodus 12:48-49 and Acts 13:43), a proselyte who comes to faith in the Living God of Israel?

- 4) Skim Genesis 17:1-14. What is the intent of circumcision? Who did it begin with?

5) We know the conflict dynamic in Galatia is that the Circumcision Party (2:12) wants Gentile Christian believer's to be circumcised like the Jewish Christian believers are. What does Paul say that does in relation to Jesus Christ (v.2, 4)? Why is this (v.3)?

6) Again, if you seek to be justified by the Law, you fall away from what (v.4)? _____. Paul says you have been deceived and led astray.

7) By what do Christians eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness? _____

8) To Jesus Christ, being circumcised or uncircumcised is a _____ point today; it counts for nothing (v.6)! What is important to Jesus about your Christian life?

9) Paul says, "You were running well. Who hindered you...? (v.7) V.8 clarifies that this change in their understanding is not due to a message from God; rather, he asks them "who" led you astray? What is the meaning of v.9 in this context, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

10) When one person in a church, or a small group of people, have an unusual belief that ministers and lay leaders have rejected or not heard of before --- and these want everyone else to accept their belief --- should we be cautious? How do you think we should approach the matter (see Galatians 6:1)?

11) Did Paul preach that Christian converts should be circumcised? How do we know (v.11)?

12) How does Paul conclude this matter about a person misleading the congregation (v.12)? Yes, it does seem harsh, but consider it in the sense of birthing new converts to a bad teaching!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: