



Part 4: God's Presence for Holy Character Galatians 5:16-26

The character of Jesus is reproduced in us as we rely on the Holy Spirit.

I. Relationship with God: Human Effort or Grace?

Jewish Christians were teaching the Gentile Christians that they had to follow Jewish identity markers like circumcision to really be accepted by God.

“We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” Galatians 2:15-16

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.” Galatians 2:20-21

And it wasn't just the beginning of their relationship with God that was becoming confused by this false teaching, but it was the way they stayed in a right relationship with God.

“...Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” Galatians 3:1-3

Galatians isn't just answering the question about how we start a relationship with God, but also how we live in a relationship with God our entire lives.

For our purposes today, let's look at how God forms in us the very character of Jesus.

"My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Galatians 4:19

II. Relying on the Holy Spirit

A. The Internal Struggle

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature [*sarx*]. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature [*sarx*]. They are in conflict with one another so that you do not do what you want." Galatians 5:16-17

Acts of the sinful nature vs. fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-25).

Only two realms: sinful nature and Holy Spirit (see also Romans 8:1-7).

B. One Command: Live by the Spirit

Not a command to try harder nor a command to "let go and let God." Not a list of behaviors. Paul is using an agricultural metaphor just like Jesus.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

"So I say, live by the Spirit... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Galatians 5:16, 25

C. Cultivating a Spiritual Greenhouse

Teaching – have our minds renewed and change the stories about reality we believe; What is the good life? What does it mean to be fully human?

Practices – work on our hearts indirectly by embodying the practices of Jesus.

"The disciplines are activities of mind and body purposefully undertaken to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order. They enable us more and more to live in a power that is strictly speaking, beyond us from the Spiritual realm..." Dallas Willard

Community – change our relational influences and experience agape love from God through His people.

III. Growing Holy Character

- A. Breakthrough moments – mostly healing & freedom.
- B. Process moments – mostly character change.
- C. Grace every moment.

“...Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” Galatians 3:1-3

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.” Galatians 2:20-21