

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

Jesus + _____ = Salvation?

July 2012

Lesson #15 - Galatians – *CIRCUMCISION OR A NEW CREATION*

INTRODUCTION

What family traditions are very important to you?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Gal 6:11-18

*Note: Again, Paul mentions his own crucifixion (6:14, see 2:20). Salvation means Christ died for me—**substitution**; sanctification means I died with Christ—**identification**. God's way (to salvation) is the way of **divine accomplishment**; all other ways rely on **human achievement**.¹ Today, the cross is often a polished piece of jewelry; back in Paul's day, the cross was a shameful instrument of pain and death. "Religion" has made the cross a symbol; the Spirit makes the cross a reality in the life of the Christian who lives by grace.²*

1. What kind of letters did Paul inscribe? Why?
 2. Why did certain people want the Galatians circumcised? Jn 12:42-43; Col 2:8; 2:20
 3. Who was being hypocritical? How did the legalists practice hypocrisy? V 13
 4. What were the legalists boasting about? What was Paul's only boast? V 14
 5. How did Paul and the legalists view the cross of Christ differently? V 14
 6. In terms of salvation, how significant were outward religious symbols? Vv 14-15
 7. What was the only thing that really mattered to Paul?
 8. How would you describe the characteristics of a "new creation"? Gal 2:20; Rom 6:4
 9. What did Paul want ended? Col 2: 16-23 How did Paul show that he belonged to Christ?
- Note: In Paul's day, people branded soldiers, slaves and people that dedicated themselves to a god.*
10. How important is it to make a good impression outwardly?
 11. What motivates you to observe certain religious traditions in your church or community of faith?
 12. How did Paul show his love for the Galatians? How do other Christians recognize your love for them?

APPLICATION

- What sacrifices are you willing to make for the cross of Christ this week?
- In the coming weeks, how will your office or sphere of influence know that you are becoming a new creation?

Of course, Paul is not suggesting that the Judaizers should keep the Law, because keeping the Law is neither possible nor necessary. Rather, he is condemning them for their dishonesty; they had no intention of keeping the Law, even if they could. Their reverence for the Law was only a mask to cover their real goal: winning more converts to their cause. They wanted to report more statistics and get more glory. Yes, the legalist is a marked man; so when you detect him, avoid him.

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Instead we want to be "marked men" of God as was the case for Paul: "... for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus." Galatians 6:17 – NIV

¹ MacArthur, J. (1996). *Galatians* (194). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (532). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.