

TODAY'S VERSES:

- Galatians 4:8-11
- 1 Corinthians 16:2
- 1 Corinthians 8:2-3
- 2 Timothy 2:13
- Romans 14:5-6

THIS WEEK, I WANT TO FOCUS ON THIS TRUTH OF WHAT JESUS HAS DONE, IS DOING, WILL DO...

MY NOTES:

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| WORTHLESS ELEMENTARY
| PRINCIPLES. GALATIANS 4:8-11

Galatians
TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA



Galatians

TO THE
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WEEK FIFTEEN

WORTHLESS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES. GALATIANS 4:8-11

Paul's admonition today in Galatians is to stop worshipping false gods (or "elementary principles of the world"). In our current mindset, it may be easy to think, "Of course we shouldn't worship false gods." All too often, however, we easily fall into the trap of doing so. False gods (or elementary principles) do not just include pagan rituals or Norse mythology; false gods include *anything* we focus on that leads us away from Jesus and the truth of the Gospel.

- **Can you look around and identify the things (elementary principles and false gods) our world worships today?**
- **What false idols (gods) are you prone to worship?**

Sometimes animal rights activists will convince a zoo or animal refuge to release one or more of their animals back into the wild. On many occasions, those animals will return to the place of their captivity. They find it more comfortable to let others take care of them; they've essentially been conditioned to live in slavery. Paul will refer to Israel's longing to return to the law after God has fulfilled His promises in Christ; many times, their slavery felt more comfortable than their freedom. In this way, the Galatians embraced their freedom from their paganism, but then returned to a different type of slavery.

- **Before Jesus, what did you look to to bring comfort, peace, security, excitement, salvation, and/or completion in your life?**
- **Did you experience true freedom, or was it slavery?**

The Galatians ought to have known that the whole point of becoming a Christian was to escape from the rule of the enslaving 'gods' and find freedom in knowing the true God...or rather, in being *known* by the true God. J.I. Packer in *Knowing God* writes, "What matters supremely, therefore, is not in the last analysis the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that he knows me."

Read Galatians 4:8-11.

- **What is it about the Gospel message that that you find beautiful?**
- **How is it God's knowledge of you, and not your knowledge of Him, that really matters?**

In the ancient world, a "spiritual force" was attributed to the elements of nature, which needed to be appeased in order to grant what people wanted. If you needed rain, for instance, you'd try to appease the god who controlled the rain. If you wanted to become pregnant, you would go to the fertility god. If you wanted to get married, you'd go to Aphrodite and make sacrifices. Paul says, "These gods are not gods and you know it!"

- **What areas of your life need to be set free from slavery through the person and work of Jesus?**
- **Do you ever view God as one to be appeased to grant you what you want?**

Many people today will labor under the assumption that legalism is real faith; it is not. Many today are weary and heavy laden (to borrow Jesus' words), because we are not focusing on and walking in the victory that Christ came and bought for us. The danger so many of us are in, today, is that we think we know God because of our rituals, but that is the wrong standard.

- **What practices, such as Sunday morning gatherings, do you use in your life?**
- **Do those practices build up your relationship with Jesus, or are they a means of receiving something? Could it be both?**
- **What, other than Jesus, has been at the center of your worship?**

Paul reminds the Galatians that God has acted on their behalf, and the effect of that action can be seen in salvation and adoption. If they go back to being enslaved by idols, they are denying not only themselves and who God had made them to be, but also God Himself. The same goes for us today. It is a good thing God is so much better than we are; that truth should draw us back to Him and His grace over and over.

- **Have you experience the "weariness" and "heavy leadenness" that Christ describes?**
- **How can we, as a community, fix our eyes on Jesus' Gospel more than we presently do?**
- **Are there "elementary principles" we could utilize to grow our faith and relationship with Jesus?**

