

Galatians

GOSPEL MINISTRY. GALATIANS 4:12

TO THE
CHURCHES
IN GALATIA

WEEK SIXTEEN

Today in Galatians we see Paul change his tone as he stops talking about theology and speaks in a different way to his hearers. Paul does a “heart to heart” moment as he appeals to his friendship with the Galatians. Paul appeals to friendships family loyalty and a mutual bond established by their common experience of what God has done for them together. Paul calls them “brothers.”

- **Describe something you have written from the heart, maybe in the midst of a fight or disagreement you’ve had with someone.**
- **How do you appeal to friendship, family loyalty, mutual bonds?**

Galatians 4:12 “*Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are...* Entreat means to plead, beg, or to hurt for others; you only entreat for those you dearly love. Historically, Paul is in prison, he is nowhere near the churches in Galatia, which means he has nothing to gain by entreating them (other than restoring them to the Gospel.) He has a heavy heart because he is burdened for these people who he sees as being on the precipice of destruction.

- **How is the law not Christianity?**
- **Why does obedience result from belief and salvation?**

The false teachers in Galatia were teaching that Christianity worked in a legalistic way:

- “Believe in Jesus, obey God’s law, and then you’ll be saved.”

Paul taught them that Christianity worked opposite of that:

- “Believe in Jesus, you’ll be saved, and then you’ll want to obey God.”

The false teachers said belief and obedience go together and **result in salvation**. Paul said belief and salvation go together and **result in obedience**. There is a huge difference between the two. Paul and the false teachers saw two different views of reality that resulted in two different views of God.

- **In what ways did Paul become like the Galatians?**
- **How was he flexible in the nonessentials?**
- **How can you better learn to be flexible in the nonessentials?**

As followers of Jesus we hold the Gospel as unchanging and central to all that we are. When we understand that it enables us to be flexible in open-handed issues and not be offended or overwhelmed by them. When Paul says, “I’ll become like you,” he is not meaning that they or he will stay just the way they are, he says he will meet them where they are and God will change us all to conform to the image and likeness of Jesus. Paul wants to help them change and not stay the same, he tells them the kind of life he wants them to live IS THE LIFE he knows in Christ.

- **To whom, and in what ways, do you need to become more like someone else to show the Gospel?**
- **How do you hold the line of flexibility and being unyielding about the centrality of the Gospel?**
- **How does God change us to conform us into the image and likeness of Jesus?**

Gospel ministry is culturally flexible: “I became like you.” A ministry that’s energized by the Gospel is flexible and adaptable with *everything* that is not the Gospel.

- **How should the Gospel teach us to be culturally flexible?**
- **How can you know others personally, even if it’s not your “thing?”**

Gospel ministry is transparent: “Become like me...”. Paul opens himself personally and shares about his own heart and life and he invites the Galatians to imitate him.

- **How can we be more transparent?**
- **Who do we need to invite into more intimate settings of our lives to see God’s grace in our every day?**

Gospel ministry looks for opportunities in hardship: Problems become possibilities. Paul used every opportunity to speak the truth of what his own life revolved around.

- **What problems of hardship can we embrace as opportunities for Gospel Ministry?**

