





# Galatians

TO THE  
CHURCHES  
IN GALATIA

## EVERYTHING AND NOTHING. GALATIANS 6:1-5

As Paul does for most of the book of Galatians, he reiterates that our righteousness—our right relationship with God—comes only from Christ. It is important for us to understand who we are in Christ, because that will simultaneously bring us humility *and* boldness. Christianity has done great good in the world, and continues to do so, but it seems that the evil wrought by sinful people in the name of Christianity gets more press. Christians by and large are compassionate people, but we tend to fall just like everyone else. Unfortunately, when people see Christianity today, they don't see the love and grace of Jesus—they see crusades, inquisitions, and hypocrisy.

- **What about yourself do you tend to take pride in?**
- **How have you seen hypocrisy diminish the message of the Gospel?**
- **How have you seen the grace of Jesus overcome the failures of people?**

Christianity brings us into a way of looking at, and understanding, ourselves that is different from anything else in the world. When we understand what the Gospel proclaims, we can truly be free and secure even while looking at our own failures. The paradox of Christianity: ***Galatians 6:3-4 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone...*** How do we jump from one end of the spectrum to the other?

- **In what ways/areas do you focus on your self-image or self-esteem?**

**We Are Nothing** – Galatians 6:3 *For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

Donald Guthrie writes, “English translations, of necessity, obscure the emphatic juxtaposition of these two words, something and nothing. The contrast could not be more vividly expressed. There are no grades between. No believer has a right to regard himself as any more than nothing.” Paul was one of the boldest and most courageous leaders in the history of the world. He was not focused on himself, but the Gospel. When Paul was in his religious phase, persecuting the church, his religion kept him from admitting his nothingness and destroyed him from

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the inside out. Tim Keller wrote, “To admit you’re nothing is the end of religion; it’s not the beginning of religion.” When Paul says he is nothing, it DOES NOT MEAN that he thinks he is without value; rather, he knows he has the image of God in him.

- **What does it mean when Paul says we are “nothing”?**
- **In what ways have you been able to confess this?**
- **In what ways are you guilty of “spiritual word inflation”?**
- **How does religion focus on the self? How is the Gospel different?**

**We are Something** – Galatians 6:4 *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.*

Paul, who says, “I am the worst of sinners,” is also continually saying, “Imitate me.” It is important for us to understand the distinction between the Gospel and religion. God knows all our deepest fears and secrets, and rather than Jesus rubbing our faces in it, He redeems and restores us, offering us true life and freedom. We do not base who we are on what other people do or say, but on what Jesus has already done for us. To say, “I’m nothing,” means we know we cannot merit salvation on our own; to say, “I am something” means we recognize our adoption as God’s children.

- **How does being made in God’s image give us value, even though we are “nothing”?**
- **What does Paul mean when he says we are “something”?**

Martin Luther, in his commentary on Galatians, says, “[Though] I still sin, I don’t despair, because Christ lives, who is both my righteousness and my eternal life.’ In that righteousness I have no sin, no fear, no guilty conscience, no fear of death. I am indeed a sinner in this life ... but I have another life, another righteousness above this life, which is in Christ, the Son of God, who knows no sin or death, but is eternal righteousness and eternal life.”

- **In what areas of your life is it easy for you to compare yourself to others?**
- **What does it mean to live in Christ? How is it that without Christ we can do nothing?**
- **What does it mean to take pride in Jesus? What would our lives look like if we took full pride in our adoption through Christ?**

