

## **Growing Deeper**

### *Hollow: Reclaiming our heart, our life*

#### **Week Four: Misguided Zeal**

##### **Galatians 4:12-20**

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read Galatians 4. What do you suppose is the most famous verse in that chapter? Why?
2. Galatians 4:4 says, “When the set time had fully come....” Who determines when something is the “right time”? When is the “right time” to pick vegetables or fruit? How do you know? How is that like life?
3. Do you consider yourself a patient person? Read Galatians 5:22. Patience is found in a list of various virtues. What are those virtues called?
4. What’s the difference between a “fruit” of the spirit and a “gift” of the spirit?
5. Do you think all mature Christians should demonstrate the fruit of the spirit, including patience?
6. If you are not by nature a patient person, what can be done to increase your patience?
7. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a greater measure of God’s spirit to demonstrate and benefit from the fruit of the spirit.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Reread Galatians 4:1. What makes a slave and an under-aged child alike?
9. What is the ultimate difference between a slave and an under-aged child?
10. Who determines (according to Galatians 4:2) when a child is no longer to be treated like a slave? What is the point of comparison between us and an under-aged child in this reference?
11. According to Galatians 4:3, before we became “mature” of faith, how (and to what) were we enslaved?
12. How were the chains of our slavery broken?

13. Some are slaves to this world and some are slaves to the law. What's the difference? What's the same?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to always treasure the freedom of the gospel and never again revert to legalism.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Galatians 4:7 states that true sons (who are no longer slaves to the world or to legalism) now think of God as a dear father. What's the difference between a loving father and an abusive father? How is that similar to those who are living under legalist religion, and those living under grace?
16. Fearful children and loving children will both try to do what pleases their parents. So what's the difference?
17. In the letter to the people of Galatia, Paul is concerned about slippage of faith. Where was the danger coming from according to Galatians 4:17? (See Galatians 1:6-7 for additional help.)
18. Read Galatians 4:9-10. What was the proof that they were returning to slavery?
19. Are there Christians today who are living under the slavery of "do's and don'ts" that distort the true faith for rules and traditions? What does that look like today?
20. What's the relationship between good works and faith versus salvation by works and demanded obedience? (See Paul's explanation in Ephesians 2:8-10.)
21. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more gracious towards yourself and towards others who believe and especially towards those who still think the true faith is a form of religious behavior.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. Paul spoke of a personal health struggle while living among the people in the region of Galatia – modern day Turkey. From the hint in Galatians 4:15 and Galatians 6:11, what can we deduce about the nature of Paul's infirmity?
23. How would this infirmity have been a hindrance to his ministry?
24. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. How did Paul attempt to deal with his infirmity?
25. Why did God not release him from his hardship?

26. Do you think God still acts that way towards faithful Christians today?
27. According to Romans 8:28, what can Christians be sure of despite the circumstance of their life?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for patience in accepting the hindrances you are enduring in life.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

29. Begin by reading Galatians 4:17-23. When is zeal good and when can zeal be bad?
30. Do you know people who are zealous for the wrong thing? Give an example.
31. Was Paul zealous for the people of Galatia? What was Paul willing to do out of zeal for their good? (See Galatians 4:16.)
32. What did their misguided zeal rob from the people who were being drawn back into legalism? (See Galatians 4:15.)
33. Do you know people who view the Christian faith as a burden? How so?
34. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. What did Jesus offer to those who follow Him by grace through faith vs. those who make faith into rules?
35. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray the words of David from Psalm 51:10-12.

**Week Five-*The Figment of Freedom***  
***Galatians 5:1-6, 13-15***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read Galatians 5. Which verse(s) do you remember hearing before? What makes that concept or quote memorable?
2. Paul is forcing the issue. What two different paths to God are represented in this discussion? Which path does Paul condemn as wrong?
3. How is accepting the obligation to keep God's law like slavery?
4. If you had only Galatians 5:5-6 for understanding Christianity, how would you describe the truth of the Christian faith?
5. Circumcision was something God commanded of the Israelites from the time of Abraham as a sign of faithfulness to God. Read Colossians 2:16-17 and explain why those Old Testament expectations are no longer required of the faithful. What purpose did they serve? Why is that purpose no longer needed?
6. Paul said those who have accepted the obligation to still abide by the Old Testament laws have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4) What does that term mean?
7. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray a prayer of gratitude to God for a relationship based on love rather than obedience to laws.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. What does "freedom" mean to you? What does it mean as a citizen of a nation, as a Christian, as an individual?
9. Some people are enslaved by chains and guns. What are some other ways people are enslaved?
10. Read Galatians 5:9. What does it mean?
11. Describe how "a little yeast" could creep into your faith, your congregation, your witness? Give an example of how legalism might get started in a church today.
12. Why do some prefer rules rather than a relationship and accomplishments based only on faith expressing itself

through love? (Galatians 5:6)

13. If the law is not given to show us the path to God, why do we still teach and believe in the Ten Commandments?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to always maintain a proper understanding of the Law and Gospel as given to us by God.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Read Galatians 5:13-15. What's the difference between the freedom we have in Christ versus a license to sin?
16. How might some misunderstand the freedom of faith and believe that any and every thing is perfectly acceptable to God?
17. Consider Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 10:23-24. What point does he make about the perfection that is given to us in Christ Jesus (not earned) and the continuing expectation that we live godly lives?
18. Galatians 5:14 says that the entire law of God is fulfilled in one word. What is that word? Read also Romans 13:8-10. If we could demonstrate "perfect love," why would there be no need for the law?
19. Are we able to demonstrate perfect love? Why not? Based on that understanding, what then is one of the important purposes God's law provides for imperfect people?
20. Do you know someone who seems to define the Christian faith as obedience and seems more oppressed by being religious than enjoying the freedom and joy of a relationship with God? How can we help people who have distorted the Christian faith and become legalistic?
21. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for Christian leaders, Bible Class teachers, and Christian parents to teach the faith based on love and gratitude for all God has done for us in Christ, rather than expectations of obedience.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. Read Galatians 5:17-22. What does Paul mean when he talks about the war between the flesh and the spirit? Is everything physical sinful (eating, sexuality, exercise, seeing, hearing etc.), or does he define flesh in a different way?
23. What does he mean in Galatians 5:18?

24. In the Greek language, present-tense verbs imply ongoing action. All the deeds of the flesh are present tense, suggesting more than a one-time action. Why is that important?
25. Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:29 describe blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as the only sin that is unforgivable. How would you explain that phrase?
26. If denial of faith is the only sin that ultimately leads to eternal death, why are deeds of the flesh on a list of behaviors that can lead to ultimate judgment?
27. How do guilt and shame, or hardness of heart, have the ability to ultimately affect your faith?
28. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for continued sensitivity to the destructive nature of sin and its potential to lead you and others away from God.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

29. Finish reading Galatians 5:22-26. What is the difference between a gift of the spirit and the fruit of the spirit? Which one is unique to a person, and which one is found in all mature Christians?
30. Read the conclusion of Galatians 5:23, but inserting the phrase, “Against such values God has placed no limits.” Why are these qualities the natural result of mature faith?
31. Which of these qualities do you find easiest for you? Hardest?
32. What can be done to increase this fruit in your life?
33. What does God warn against at the end of the chapter after listing the fruit of the spirit?
34. Read Luke 22:24. What were the disciples arguing about? How did Jesus deal with their behavior?
35. Read Paul’s reflection on the subject in Philippians 3:4-9. What did Paul want to boast about?
36. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the Lord to send an extra measure of His Holy Spirit into you.

**Week Six - *Death by Comparison***  
***Galatians 6:1-5***

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Read Galatians 6. How would you summarize Paul's main point in this concluding chapter?
2. Paul begins the chapter encouraging Christians to watch out for each other in spiritual matter. In Galatians 6:9-10 he expands his concern to taking care of each other in temporal matters as well. Read John 13:34-35. Why is taking care of each other such a high priority for the Lord?
3. Someone has said, "Christians don't need more instruction and training, they need more exercise." Do you agree... do too many Christians equate maturity of faith with biblical knowledge rather than acts of compassion and faith? Explain your answer.
4. Do you think most churches do a good job at restoring fallen Christians? Explain.
5. Paul added an important word to describe the spirit of our efforts to restore another person. What is that word (See Galatians 6:1) and why do you think Paul added it?
6. What other danger in Galatians 6:1 did Paul warn against when one Christian attempts to restore a fallen believer?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be the Christian who walks into a struggling Christian's life when most of their friends are walking out.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Read Galatians 6:12. Based on this verse, what does Paul mean by "the law of Christ"? For additional insight read John 15:11-13.
9. Are you more inclined to offer help or request help? Is requesting help difficult for you? Explain why or why not.
10. Someone has said there is a ministry in allowing others to minister to you. Do you agree?
11. Read Luke 6:34 and Luke 14:12-14. What reason(s) does Jesus give for helping others in need? What benefits have you experienced from helping others in the past?
12. Consider the counsel of Galatians 6:3-5. What's the downside of self-promotion?

13. There are people who have every right to feel proud of doing good. Read Matthew 6:1-4. Why is it always better to be humble about doing good?
  
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater opportunities to help those in need and to do it with a humble spirit.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

15. Read Galatians 6:4-5. What's the danger of comparing yourself to others who may be better and do more or may be worse and do less than you?
  
16. Consider the example of Jesus and Peter walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee after his resurrection as told to us in John 21:20-22. What did Jesus say to Peter when he attempted to compare his life to the life of another disciple?
  
17. Do you agree we are all different? In what ways? Giftedness? Opportunity? Family of Origin? Experience? Education? --- Is it possible even to make a valid comparison between members of one family? Why or why not?
  
18. Read Paul's thoughts about others passing judgments on his life in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5. Why did the criticisms and comparisons of others not matter to Paul, based on this passage?
  
19. What unique opportunities does your present life circumstance provide for you to make a difference in things that matter?
  
20. Do you more often consider yourself more blessed or more challenged when compared to others? Is there a difference?
  
21. Finish your FIFTEEN by reading Paul's thoughts on the subject in Philippians 4:12-13. Then pray to see every situation as an opportunity to demonstrate your faith in Christ.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

22. Read Galatians 6:6-10. Compare verse 6 to 1 Corinthians 9:7-11. What point is this passage addressing? Why did something need to be said? Should the sincerity of a Christian worker be tested by insufficient remuneration? Why or why not?
  
23. In Galatians 6:7-8, Paul is teaching about the consequence of behavior. Is this the Bible's version of Karma? What goes around comes around?
  
24. Describe the difference in behavior between those who "sow to please the flesh" and those who "sow to please the



spirit.” Provide an example of each.

25. How can temporal things be used for spiritual purposes? How can spiritual things be used to help in temporal ways?
26. What determines whether something is wrong or right? Godly or ungodly?
27. One of Stephen Covey’s life principles was to begin with the end in mind. Is that a helpful way for Christians to decide if something is worthy or unworthy of their time and resources? Explain.
28. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more spiritually minded in deciding the daily activities of your life.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

29. Read Galatians 6:9-10. Why is it important to find ways to do good to specifically to help those who share our Christian faith?
30. Read Galatians 6:11-18. What did Paul want the Galatians to know in verse 11? Why do you think that was important?
31. Paul concludes this chapter by again addressing the major issue of the entire letter: the importance of resisting the attempt of some to turn the Christian faith into a religion of obedience and tradition rather than a loving relationship based on grace through faith in Jesus. Is that still a problem in the church today?
32. In verse 13 Paul points out that even those who urge others to live perfect lives of obedience fall short themselves. If they know it is impossible, why do they urge others to accept that teaching?
33. According to verse 14, of what will Paul always boast? According to verse 16, what is the result of a proper faith based on grace through faith in Jesus?
34. What marks was Paul referring to in verse 17? Have you suffered in some ways for your faith in Jesus? Do you bear the marks of one who has been faithful despite the unpopularity of your faith? Explain.
35. Conclude your final FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the courage to boast about the privilege of suffering for the cause.