

Galatians 4:11: "I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you." *Paul is shocked that the Galatian believers were turning back to being slaves of religion and not toward freedom in Christ.*

Galatians 4:23: "His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise." *The sons of Abraham represented slave ship of the law versus the freedom of God's promise (slave ship: Hagar and Ishmael; freedom: Sarah and Isaac).*

Galatians 3:2: "I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?" *Paul is trying to get the Galatians to consider the true foundation of their faith. The Holy Spirit is proof of salvation and greatest guarantee of eternal glory. We receive the Spirit as a gift of grace at the moment of belief and not through our obedience.*

Colossians 3:23-24: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is Christ you are serving." *We are motivated to actively serve with all our heart by our love for God and people, in response to His grace.*

Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." *When Jesus was asked, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?", He did not quote the first of the Ten Commandments; He quoted this verse.*

James: 1:2-4: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

To consider it pure joy is to choose to see hard situations through God's perspective, trusting He can use them for good. Jesus showed us this. The trials God allows help strengthen believers and are different from suffering caused by sin.

Perseverance is not giving up or giving in but standing firm with courage during difficult times. Trials help us grow stronger and more spiritually mature.

Mature means fully grown, and complete means whole. Without trials, believers cannot fully grow or become spiritually whole.

Romans 5:3-5: "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy spirit, who has been given to us."

2 Timothy 3:12: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"

Matthew 10:22: "You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Galatians 4:8-9: “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not God’s. But now that you know God – or rather are known by God – how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?”

How often do we find ourselves striving toward a goal only to slip back into our old habits? The Galatians were in the same situation as they lived as slaves to the law and not through freedom in Christ. Paul feared for them and felt he wasted his efforts on them (v11). He pleads with them to choose the liberty that is theirs in Christ. The Galatians need to regain their freedom and blessings by faith, not by the law.

1) Walking in God’s Grace. Since we are saved through God’s grace and not through obedience to the law. Salvation comes to us because we’ve been blessed to be *awakened by the Spirit*.

God’s covenant with Abraham to have a son and become the father of a great nation was fulfilled through the birth of Isaac. Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God’s plan in their own effort when Abraham fathered Ishmael with their slave, Hagar. Paul reminds the Galatians of this to illustrate the Isaac’s supernatural birth (and the birth of the nations) to 100-year-old Abraham and 90-year-old Sarah, could only happen through God’s miracle (v23). “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?” (Gal. 3:2). The Galatians were justified by faith, not by works, just as Abraham was and just as we are today. Paul is telling us that our status as daughters, as children of faith in God’s promise, comes about by the Spirit and NOT by human effort.

As a result of being awakened by the Spirit, we are not slaves to religion. We are children of freedom. *Why would we live like slaves to religion when we are called to a relationship with God?* Let us not be a people who are satisfied by checking the boxes of being “Christian” by going to church, serving when it’s convenient, and praying when we need to ask for a favor. *What if Satan’s strategy is not to tempt us to do all the wrong things, but to do the right things with the wrong spirit?* Let us lean in deeply to the relationship that God has designed us for. Our Holy Father provides us with direct access to Him, 24/7. Let’s be a people who walk with Him and know Him intimately. Let’s serve and love Him wholeheartedly (Col. 3:23-24, Deu. 6:5), not because we’re trying to make ourselves right, but because we’ve been made right by God’s grace.

There is immense value in the children of God simply living in relationship with the Father. Don’t let works-based systems of this world seep into the grace-based relationship you have with God.

2) Trusting in God’s Word. Paul’s trials remind us that we need God to help us trust in His Word.

God tells us that we will face trials (James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5). We know that we will even be persecuted for our faith (2 Tim. 3:12, Matt 10:22), especially when we walk by grace and live according to the Word by faith. This persecution can not only come from the world, but also from the religious establishment around us. When you start to live radically by grace, there will be costs. *Are you willing to live according to God’s Word or hear His truths, even when it’s not easy or popular?* To do this we will need God’s help.

Galatians 4:16: "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?" *Paul valued the friendship of the Galatians, but he would NOT compromise the truth just to keep them happy. The purity of the gospel was more important than their friendship. Let us also love others enough to tell them the truth.*

Galatians 4:18: "It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you." *We are to be zealous for the Gospel and not any man or "law".*

Romans 12:11: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." *We are not to become lazy in serving God, we are to serve enthusiastically for His glory.*

Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

1 Thessalonians 4:3a: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified..."

1 Corinthians 1:30: "It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption." *Salvation is not earned through one's own strength but given by the grace of God.*

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." *We are no longer condemned for our sins because Jesus paid the ultimate price to make us right before God. We are now dead to our old way of living. Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, empowering us to live a life of obedience.*

Hebrews 10:10: "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

2 Thessalonians 2:13b: "to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

John 17:17: "Sanctify them by the truth; your Word is truth."

Galatians 4:19: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," *Having Christ in us should change our internal nature, not merely our outward behaviors. If a religious system does not produce the image of Christ in the lives of its followers, it is not truly Christian.*

Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore you go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." *The "Great Commission" has not changed since the moment Jesus shared it. As followers, we accomplish this by His power and for His sake, through His Spirit.*

Colossians 2:6-7: "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." *We come to faith in Christ with nothing to offer. At the foot of the cross we receive the gift of Christ, and this guides our daily living. We are to abound in thankfulness by living a Christ-centered life. It is through gratitude that we see clearly of "every good and perfect gift" that comes from God (James 1:17).*

Paul risked his own reputation with the Galatians by telling them the truth instead of telling them what they wanted to hear (v16). As long as God's Word is guiding us, let's ask God to help us hear it and receive it, even when it's not easy or popular. We must be faithful to the Word, even when it exposes blind spots and areas of our lives that need radical change. Even when it contains truths that we don't want to hear. Only then can we find true relationship and fulfillment in God's promises.

Can you think of a hard truth in your life that you may not want to face? Confess it to God or ask Him to reveal these truths to you so that you can follow Him with your whole heart.

3) Providing Zeal for His Purpose.

Lord, give us great zeal for your purpose. To be **zealous** or have **zeal** is to have a deep, passionate devotion that leads to action, especially toward God and what honors Him. Paul tells the Galatians that zeal is not wrong, but it must be directed toward a moral goal. He wanted them to be zealous for the Gospel and not for any man or law (v18). Through our love of Christ, we are fueled toward obedience, boldness, and faithfulness (Romans 12:11). Jesus was driven by His devotion to God's glory and the salvation of His people (Luke 19:10). His zeal flowed from love and obedience, not anger or pride. Healthy zeal is rooted in God's Word, shaped by humility, and focused on Christ, not self or the world.

Lord, give us a passion to be conformed to the Image of Christ. We are called to live in freedom through Christ. Part of that freedom is living through the sanctification of Christ shaping us, molding us, changing us, and forming us into His image (1 Thess. 4:3a, 1 Cor. 1:30). **Sanctification** means to be set apart or made holy in Christ. In Galatians 2:20, Paul reminds that Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit. The journey of sanctification is not a linear or straight-line process. We will have ups and downs.

How does sanctification happen?

- Through Christ. We are made holy by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Our holiness is based on what He accomplished there and NOT our performance. (Hebrews 10:10).
- By the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works in us to change our desires and our actions. It is God's power at work within us. (2 Thessalonians 2:13b)
- Through God's Word. God uses scripture to shape, correct, and renew us. His Word guide us into truth and obedience (John 17:17).

Lord, give us a passion to see others transformed for the glory of Christ. Through the process of sanctification, we are to see others come to Christ and also be transformed (v19). We should pray for each other, teach each other, and model the Christ-life before each other because we want to fulfill the *Great Commission* to "make disciples of all the nations.." (Matthew 28:19-20). May God help us to be a people who are not satisfied until Christ is formed in us, until we take on the shape of Christ - inside and out. Having Christ in us should change our inward spirit, not merely our outward behaviors. If a religious system does not produce the image of Christ in the lives of its followers, it is not truly Christian (Col. 2:6-7). **May God help us to be a people who are not satisfied until Christ is formed in us, until we take on the shape of Christ.**

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