



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

LIVING IN FREEDOM • THREE WAYS TO APPLY GRACE • GALATIANS 5:7-12 •

MAIN POINT

It is important for followers of Christ to know the truth about grace in order to combat false teachings that contradict the gospel.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How would you define “grace”?

Besides your relationship with Jesus, is there another relationship in your life that has taught you about the nature of grace? Who was it with? What did it teach you about grace?

How do you think the world, outside of Christianity, understands grace? Explain.

Everyone runs into false teachings in today's world, whether it is a humanistic pride that says we deserve grace or a teaching that grace can be earned through faithfulness to a set of rules. Paul encountered a false teaching in Galatia and responded to it by teaching about the nature of truth, grace, and freedom.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 5:7-10.

What are the two images that Paul used to describe a life lived in light of the truth of grace?

How does running illustrate obeying the truth?

Have you ever baked with yeast? How does yeast work? Why did Paul use this example to illustrate false teaching?

Paul illustrated his message here with two images. In running a race, people cannot run well if they encounter obstacles or, even worse, if someone cuts into the track and intentionally impedes their run. The Galatians had been running well, connecting to God and to each other, before someone hindered them. The second image is leaven, such as yeast, and its use when baking bread. Just as it only takes a small amount of leaven to make bread rise, it only takes a little false teaching to ruin a whole church.

If the Galatians started well, believing Paul's pure message about the gospel, why do you think they chose to believe the message of the false teachers?

Do we have the tendency today to abandon grace as the basis of our relationship with God? Why or why not?

Paul encouraged the Galatians by reminding them that they had not always been tripped up by false teaching. They were at a time connected with God before the false teachers came along. The deception certainly did not come from Christ, yet there was something appealing about it. Even today, there is something appealing about measuring ourselves by our good works rather than God's grace.

Why can it be tempting to measure our worth and progress by our works rather than on God's grace?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 5:11-12.

What was the accusation leveled against Paul and his teaching? Was it true that Paul preached circumcision?

What do circumcision and emasculation have in common? What is the point that Paul was trying to make about the Judaizers?

If Paul was teaching circumcision, what would it say about the cross?

Paul, never one to mince words, argued that if circumcision was so effective, then maybe the false teachers should go a step further and emasculate themselves. His point remains

true today: If there is a single thing that we can do to earn the favor of God, then the cross becomes irrelevant. The cross once and for all did what was needed to redeem people to God—and nothing can take its place.

For Paul, what was the truth that set believers free from false teaching?

How does that freedom connect people to God?

Jesus Himself is the truth that sets people free. The truth of His person and work is what gives a believer freedom from sin and freedom to connect with God. It was the truth of Christ that Paul put forth to bring freedom to the Galatian church. The freedom that comes from God's grace in the death of Christ gives everyone an unhindered relationship with God.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What false teaching about grace are you currently tempted to believe?

How can you stay on course spiritually and avoid the hindrances to the truth? How can you help others around you to do this?

Why is it so important to know and stay focused on the truth of the gospel when thinking about evangelism?

Do you tend to be a grace assassin where you focus on external works instead of unmerited grace?

Do you tend to be a grace abuser where you push the edges of God's grace to suit your passions and desires?

Do you tend to be a grace ambassador who embraces God's grace and freely extends God's grace to others?

PRAYER

Pray that God would guard you from believing false teaching on grace by His Spirit. Pray that you might be used in the life of others to point them to the truth, that they may no longer believe lies and instead believe the gospel.

COMMENTARY

| GALATIANS 5:7-12

5:7-10 The Galatians had started running the race of the Christian life well, but the Jewish teachers prevented them from continuing. The implication of the proverbial statement, A little yeast leavens the whole lump of dough, is that, even if the teaching of the Judaizers was initially accepted by only a few in the Galatian churches, it would spread quickly.

5:11-12 Apparently, a rumor from the Jewish teachers claimed that Paul still preached circumcision in certain circumstances, evidently a misunderstanding of Paul's actions designed to "become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some" (1Co 9:22). In that spirit, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Ac 16:3). But Timothy was circumcised to become a Jew ethnically so he could minister to Jews. This had nothing to do with becoming a Christian. Those who are disturbing you were the Jewish teachers who emphasized circumcision.