

Galatians: Faith Formation in Centered-Set Community

Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the recent sermons page at our website and at the Grantham Church Podcast the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, April 6th, 2025



Series Focus: The Apostle Paul wrote a passionate letter to the churches in Galatia that has the potential to lead us to more profoundly experience the liberating work of Jesus in and through Christian community. Paul wrote, “My children—I seem to be in labor with you all over again, until the Messiah is fully formed in you!” Join us for Lent 2025 as we explore this letter to better understand the problem that provoked Paul to write it, and as we seek to gain new insights by using the concept of bounded, fuzzy, and centered-set churches as a lens for interpreting and applying Galatians to our lives.

Sermon Title: Freedom to Follow the Spirit

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:1-26; Romans 7:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Sermon Focus: In the first four chapters of Galatians, Paul has challenged his readers to reject the false gospel, confronted opponents of the gospel of God’s grace, and told the church not to become slaves again to sin. He has explained the purpose of the Mosaic law and how Christ is now forming a centered-set church. In the fifth message of our series, Pastor David unpacks Paul’s meaning of freedom, the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit, as he says we’re all free to follow Christ in the new way of the Spirit.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Pastor David began his message by saying that Paul's ultimate desire is for the Galatians to be fully formed disciples of Jesus (Galatians 4:19). He doesn't just want people to get "saved" or become a Christian, but that they become disciples who are being formed into the likeness of Christ. If you grew up in the church, which message did you hear the most? Do you think that it matters *how* we proclaim the gospel and invite people to accept Christ? If so, why?
2. Take a few minutes to read Galatians 5:1-26 together. Imagine you are the Galatians hearing this part of the letter read aloud. What words or phrases stick out to you? What do you hear the Spirit saying to you through this chapter?
3. In Galatians 5:12, Paul is certainly upset. But Pastor David pointed out that Paul is doing more than expressing anger at the agitators, he is likening them to the cult worshippers of Cybele, who would mutilate and emasculate themselves. He is essentially saying to those who were pressuring Gentiles to be circumcised: "You might as well go the whole way and become pagans!" How does this background information shed light on your understanding of this verse? Also, what implications and application might Paul's words have for us today?
4. Read Galatians 5:13-15 again. Pastor David talked about the meaning of *sarx* (flesh) and why using "sinful nature" (NLT) implies that sin is part of our identity. Rather, it's best to see that while sin "comes naturally" to us (it feels like our default at times), it is not our "nature" or who we are now that Christ, through his cross and resurrection, has undone the powers of sin, death, and the fall. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says we are a new creation! Why do you think it's so important that we *not* see our sin, impulses, and inclinations as part of who we are? Where do you see this biblical truth challenging worldly thinking today?
5. Behavior matters in a centered-set church, but our concern is about the spiritual health of a person, not about a line being crossed. What might it look like for Christians in relationship to hold each other accountable when someone is misbehaving or acting out of their flesh instead of walking in the Spirit?
6. Read Galatians 5:19-23 and consider the works of the flesh vs. the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a disciple. Ask yourself, "Am I being intentional in my own spiritual formation? What are the "acts of the flesh" that I need to deny and repent of with God's help? And how is the Spirit inviting our church to grow and bear more "fruit of the Spirit" as we seek to be a Jesus-centered community?"