Galatians – Embracing Grace and Truth

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

💻**828 7580 6094** ► **Thursday November 19, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Till Christ Be Formed in You (Continued)

17 Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them. 18 If someone is eager to do good things for you, that's all right; but let them do it all the time, not just when I'm with you. 19 Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. 20 I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don't know how else to help you. NLT

POINT 3 – HIS WARNING TO THEM

They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them. 18 But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you. (4:17–18) NASB

Paul again warns the Galatians about their real enemies, the Judaizers (cf. 1:7, 9; 2:4). **They eagerly seek you**, but **not commendably**. The term translated **seek** carries the idea of taking a serious interest in someone and was often used of a man courting a woman. "The Judaizers talk like they really care for you,"

Paul was saying, “but they are false and have no genuine love for or interest in you or your welfare.”

Most cults show keen interest and even affection toward prospective members, promising them great personal fulfillment and happiness. As with the legalism of the Judaizers, the true nature of their spiritual enslavement is hidden.

The Judaizers had no interest in the Galatian believers beyond entrapping them in legalism. They were like the scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus said, “You travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” **(Matt. 23:15).** Their true **wish** and objective was to **shut … out** the Galatians from God’s grace and gain recognition and acceptance for themselves (implied in the phrase **that you may seek them**). Their true motivation was “to make a good showing in the flesh” **(6:12).**

But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, Paul went on to explain. He himself had **eagerly sought** them when he first preached the gospel in Galatia. But it was **in a commendable manner**, out of love for Christ and a deep desire for their salvation. And such enthusiastic concern was appropriate **not only when** Paul was **present with** them. He was not jealous of the Judaizers. He did not oppose them in order to preserve his own popularity or leadership but to protect the Galatians’ spiritual well-being. Some years later he wrote from prison, “Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, … [proclaiming] Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice” **(Phil. 1:15, 17–18).**

Paul warned against the Judaizers not because they opposed him and personally wounded him, but because they opposed the glorious, saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (4:17-18)

1. **What stood out to you in this section of the lesson?**

2. **How does Paul distinguish between godly zeal and harmful legalism?**

3. **What does Paul mean by being zealous in a good way ?**

POINT 4 – HIS DESIRE FOR THEM

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you— 20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. (4:19–20) NASB

Speaking like a mother, Paul now addressed the Galatian believers as **my children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you**. He was not arguing like a lawyer before a skeptical jury but pleading like a parent to a wayward child.

Children is used figuratively as a term of special affection. Literally, it referred to a small child, and therefore can be translated here as “little children,” as in the

King James Version. In light of Paul's figure of childbirth, both ideas are appropriate. The Galatian believers were extremely dear to Paul but were acting like infants who refused to be born.

Paul's compassion was always evident. For example, to the Thessalonian church he wrote, "We proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us" **(1 Thess. 2:7–8).**

With the Galatians, however, after having spiritually nursed them in their new life in Christ, he became **again in labor** with them. "That is abnormal and unnatural," he implies. "You have already experienced the new birth, but now you are acting as if you need to be spiritually born all over again. You make me feel like a mother who has to deliver the same baby twice."

But however abnormal and tragic their spiritual condition, Paul would not forsake them **until Christ** was **formed in** them. The verb formed carries the idea of essential form rather than outward shape, and therefore refers to Christlike character. Christlikeness is the goal of the believer's life. "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him," he exhorted the church at Colossae **(Col. 2:6; cf. Rom. 13:14).** God has predestined believers "to become conformed to the image of His Son" **(Rom. 8:29).** "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" **(2 Cor. 3:18).** The Father sent the Son to earth not only to die that men might be saved but also to live as the divine example for those who are saved.

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Paul's great desire was to deal more directly with these issues that would require him **to be present with** the Galatians in person and to be able to **change** his **tone** with them. He hardly knew what more to say or how to say it, because he was so **perplexed about** them. This verb means to be at one's wits' end. He could not understand how they could have been taught the gospel so well, believed it so genuinely, and then appeared to have forsaken it so quickly (cf. 1:6).Every Christian worker experience times when their own resources are completely exhausted. After saying and doing everything they know to say and do, those they try to help—sometimes unbelievers, sometimes believers—remain completely out of reach and even turn against them.

Discussion Questions (4:19-20)

1. **What stands out to you in this section of the lesson?**

2. **What does Paul mean by Christ being formed in you 4:19?**

3. **Why was Paul perplexed about the Galatian believers in Galatians in 4:20?**

4. **How can Christian leaders balance pastoral care with firm correction?**

Closing Prayer