

“Imitate Me!”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a **flexible guide** that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

Message Summary

Shortly after Paul planted the churches in the southern region of Galatia false teachers came in and taught that a person must not only believe in Jesus but also convert to Judaism in order to have eternal life. In other words, these false teachers taught people their righteousness was based on their works rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. So Paul wrote to these confused Galatian believers in order to correct this false teaching and help the churches live in the freedom they found in Jesus.

The purpose of Paul’s letter was to demonstrate that righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ. In Chapter 3 Paul argued his point from the example of Abraham, the example of the teaching of the whole of Scripture, and he compared the difference between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. In chapter 4, Paul explained that their faith in Christ which liberated them from their slavery to sin now afforded them the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to identify with Jesus, the True Son and Heir of God. Paul summarized his defense of salvation by faith alone by letting the Galatians know his great concern for their spiritual state. While he has called them “brothers” throughout this letter, there was still some question in his mind as to whether or not he labored in vain over them. After coming to faith in Christ, if they decided to begin practicing the Mosaic Law like the false teachers had encouraged them to do, then in Paul’s opinion, he had labored in vain. In other words, in Paul’s mind, some if not all of the Galatian believers never experienced a real Christian conversion.

One commentator said that Galatians 4:12-20 formed a personal parenthesis in Paul’s overall argument of justification by faith. As he demonstrated his great concern for the Galatians, he appealed to them to “*become as I am, for I also have become as you are.*” In other words, Paul who was a Jew, because of Christ no longer was bound to Judaism and therefore appealed to the Galatians that there was no need for them to become Jews. They were free in Christ. Further, Paul’s words were an appeal for them to imitate him, rather than imitate the false teachers. Because they were new creatures in Christ, their lives were to be lived in response to who they were in Christ rather than what they hoped to gain from Christ. Because they were righteous in Christ they were to live as Christ lived.

Paul’s appeal to the Galatians holds for us today. We are new creatures in Christ. Our lives are to be lived in response to who we are in Christ rather than what we hope to gain from Christ. Since we are disciples who make disciples (2 Timothy 2:2), we must encourage disciples to imitate us as we imitate Jesus Christ. As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community this week examine how you are imitating other followers of Jesus as they imitate Christ. Is this part of your life’s story? Are you becoming more like Christ by imitating other followers of Christ who are seeking to be like Christ? Be prepared to answer these and the questions on the next page as you imitate me as I imitate Christ!

Message Outline

Purpose: I want you to imitate me as I imitate Christ and live in light of the Gospel freed from religion.

Imitate me by...

1. Living freed from the Law. (12a-b)
2. Receiving others with kindness. (12c)
3. Willingly suffering... (13)
 - Resistance from teachers of false gospels.
 - For the sake of the Cross.
4. Serving others even when it hurts. (14-15)
5. Speaking truthfully even if it makes you an enemy. (16)
6. Not compromising the Gospel for status. (17)
7. Showing grace toward the immaturity of others. (18-20)
 - We don’t give up.
 - We accept others where they are but...
 - We expect more by calling them to love Christ!

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Galatians 4:12-20:

1. What does this passage teach about God? (God’s Identity; Theology)
2. What does this passage teach about what God has done? (God’s Action; Christology)
3. What does this passage teach about man/me? (Old & New Creation Identity; Ecclesiology)
4. What does this passage teach about what I should do? (Reveals what I really believe about Questions 1-3; Missional Ecclesiology)
5. What does this passage teach about how I do it uniquely in my context? (personal action steps of obedience)

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**
 - Pray for the Child Dedication Service on October 2nd.
 - Pray that all who have believed the Gospel will obey Jesus in believer’s baptism.
 - Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
 - Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
 - Pray for the Missional Communities to impact their communities with the Gospel.
 - Pray for Missional Communities to multiply into new neighborhoods.
 - Pray for new DNA groups to start.
- **Local:**
 - Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
 - Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.
- **Global:**
 - Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
 - Pray for the team working in SEA, the new believers, for those who have heard the Gospel, and the church planting movement among the unreached.
 - Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries and Bill & Sandy Younger.
 - Pray for Servants Hearts Ministries and Bob & Georgette Kornegay.
 - Pray for Pastor Abraham and his church in Guatemala.
 - Pray for the work of Paul & Sarah Young and Dakota Baptist Church in North Dakota.