

“Proof of Love”

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

False teachers went to the Galatian churches shortly after Paul planted them and taught that they must practice the Mosaic Law and believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life. In other words, they taught works-righteousness rather than Christ’s-righteousness. 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.

Paul spent the majority of his letter explaining that righteousness is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And because they had trusted in the righteousness of Christ for their own righteousness, they were now free and no longer under the obligation of the Law. Further, these Galatian gentiles were now part of God’s family and had the promised Holy Spirit dwelling within each of them. These believers were free in Christ.

As Paul always does throughout each of his letters, Paul not only taught the Galatians the doctrinal truths of justification by faith but helped them understand the practical implications of these truths. In Galatians 5:13 Paul said, “*For you were called to freedom.*” He went on to say their freedom in Christ was given to them, not for themselves, but to love others. They were set free to love. This happens through serving others, meeting their needs, and obeying Jesus’ commands to fulfill the law of neighbor love. For Paul, and for us, this is the fruit of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Just as Christ loved us, we love others. Just as Christ served us, we serve others. Just as Christ was led by the Spirit, so we are led by the Spirit.

But how do you know you are living in light of your faith? Paul had an answer for that too! Paul said “*walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh*” (Galatians 5:16). He went on to explain that the proof you are living in light of your faith in Christ is displayed by whether or not you are walking by the Spirit or in the flesh. Even though believers have been justified by Christ, they live in the “now but not yet” time where there is a war that goes on between the flesh and the Spirit. Knowing whether one walks in the flesh or in the Spirit is easily discernable. Those who walk in the flesh produce identifiable works of the flesh. Those who walk in the Spirit produce fruits that only can be the product of the powerful working of the Holy Spirit.

As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community ask yourself whether you daily walk in the Spirit or still walk in the flesh. How would others describe your walk? Are you producing works of the flesh or fruit of the Spirit? What area of your life do you need to submit to the Spirit’s leading? Will you share it with your MC? Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal these things to you so that you might know how to love others and thereby displaying your love for Jesus. Walking in the Spirit is your proof of love!

Message Outline

When we walk by the Spirit:

1. We are in a war with the flesh. (16-18)
 - We must submit to the Holy Spirit daily.
 - When we submit to the Holy Spirit there is observable victory over the flesh.
 - We are not freed to sin but freed from sin.
2. We can easily discern if we’re living in the flesh or in the Spirit. (19-23)
 - Works of the flesh:
 - Sexual sins.
 - Failure to Worship.
 - Disrupting community.
 - Unconstrained lifestyle.
 - Fruit of the Spirit:
 - Product of the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.
3. We triumph over the flesh because we have crucified it with Christ. (24)
 - We died with Christ.
 - We are observably victorious over sin.

Therefore as we share the Lord’s Supper...

1. Let’s encourage one another in the battle.
2. Let’s love one another in the failures.
3. Let’s rejoice with one another in the victory.

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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 5:16-24:

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 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 for J & A and their children as they prepare for the mission field.
- 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.