



## Clothed in Christ

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### Week 5

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#### Alpha Prayer Points

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those who came to Spring 2023 Alpha and who are meeting now in twice-monthly post-Alpha groups. Pray that as they learn and experience spiritual practices, they would feel drawn to the love of Jesus.
- Pray for God to prepare the hearts of those who will come to the October 7th Movie & Taco event. May they be drawn toward friendship with Jesus.
- Fall 2023 Alpha starts October 26th at 8am. Pray that Presbyterian School parents come, and for momentum for others to join. Pray also for God to raise up leaders and for smooth logistics.

#### How Did it Go?

*10 Minutes*

Provide support, encouragement, and accountability to one another in putting the word of God into practice. We want to find ways to live out the scripture we study together.

- What from the study last week were you able to put into practice this week? (For example, last week we talked about areas of hypocrisy in our lives. Were you able to begin to identify some of these and repent from them?)
- Describe ways you have or could befriend someone from another culture, welcoming them with the love of Jesus.
- In August, the church studied the Art of Neighboring about building deeper connections with our neighbors. What is the cultural mix of your neighborhood and

how well do you know your mission field next door? (See [The Art of Neighboring :: RightNow Media](#)).

## Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **GALATIANS 3:15-29**.

## Head

*15-20 Minutes*

Observe the text and the author's main points.

1. A form of the word "promise" appears eight times in this passage. What promise is Paul referring to here? By whom, to whom, and when was the promise given? (See Gen 12:1-3; 17:3-8.)
2. The word "law" appears 10 times in these verses. Paul states that the law was not given to save God's people. Why was the law given and what did it accomplish? (See v.19 and vv.23-25.)
3. Paul's primary purpose in this passage is to prove two things about the relationship between the law and the promise:
  - a. The law is not superior to the promise, and
  - b. The law is not contrary to (does not set aside) the promise.

Which verses make these points most persuasively to you?

## Heart

*15-20 Minutes*

Envision how the text - when applied - might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

1. This is one of several passages in Paul's letters in which he makes it clear that salvation and righteousness are gifts from God that we receive by grace through faith, and not through works or following the law. Read these verses out loud to each other: Rom 3:27-28; Rom 4:13-16, Eph 2:8-9.
2. Though God's word is unwavering, it is still a struggle to believe that it is not necessary to try to "please God" in order to be saved. What challenges do you face personally in believing this?
3. A commentator on this section of Galatians 3 wrote: "Your Christian life ought to take on new wonder and meaning as you realize all that you have in Christ. And all of this is by grace—not by law! You are an adult [child] in God's family, and heir of God. Are you

drawing on your inheritance?”<sup>1</sup> What does the commentator mean by “drawing on your inheritance”? How would you answer him if he asked you this question?

## Hands

*10 Minutes*

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives. These are specific, concrete examples but they are not the only way - they are idea-starters for how to put the word of God into practice.

### Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Either in your small group or in the coming week in your quiet time with the Lord, thank God for His gift of grace, and ask Him to help you be more accepting of the countercultural message of our faith which is that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and nothing we can do to make Him love us less.
- Paul says in vv.27-28 that we “are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus,” and that, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Unity in Christ transcends ethnic, social, and gender distinctions. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and show you ways to approach, and even seek out, relationships with other believers who do not think, act, and behave as you do.

### Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- The legendary boxer Muhammed Ali, in an interview with Reader's Digest in 2001, was asked what his religion meant to him. Ali, who had converted to Islam, said:
- “One day we’re all going to die, and when we do we will come before God, who will judge us. He will weigh the good things we have done and the bad things we have done. If the good outweighs the bad, we will go to heaven. If the bad outweighs the good, we will go to hell.”
- Most of the world’s religions, including Islam, incorporate a form of earning favor with God through doing good works. Muhammed Ali died in 2016, but if you could go back and discuss religion with him, how would you articulate the difference between the Christian gospel (as described by Paul in Galatians) and other religions when it comes to God’s favor?
- This week pray that God will give you an opportunity to share the gospel with someone who needs to hear it, perhaps especially someone whose religious heritage lies in another, more works-based faith?

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. The Bible Exposition Commentary, New Testament, Volume 1: Matthew - Galatians. Colorado Springs, CO, David C. Cook Publishers, 1989. P. 704.

## Reaching Beyond

- This church gives access to RightNow Media (RNM) as a gift to its covenant partners and visitors. RNM contains online resources such as video commentaries and study guides to help grow our faith. If you have not already registered, visit: <https://fpchouston.org/ministries/adults/rightnow-media/>. You can also download the app.
- This week explore the RNM resources for Galatians by logging in to your account, enter “Galatians” in the search function, and scroll down through the many resources offered. Sample a few of them to dig deeper and to gain additional background and perspective.
- Watch for an email inviting you to a Neighborhood Connect event in October to meet and deepen relationships with other covenant partners and friends who live close to you. Info about discipleship, service opportunities, and upcoming events will also be shared. Email [neighbors@fpchouston.org](mailto:neighbors@fpchouston.org) for more information.
- How else might God be stirring you to put this passage into practice this week?