

## A Practical Study of

### GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

#### "Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free"

#### Study #8 – Galatians 4:12-20

#### UNTIL: You Got the P.B.A. Disease (Pretty Bad Attitude)

Key Verse: Galatians 4:16

So then have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

#### TEXT:

v. 12 Become as I am, Because I also became as you were brethren. I am begging you, you did me no wrong.

v. 13 But you know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you the former time.

v. 14 And your trial in my flesh you did not despise nor loathe, but as a messenger of God you received me, as Christ Jesus.

v. 15 Where is therefore your declaration of blessedness. For I am bearing witness to you that if possible you would have dug out your own eyes and given them to me.

v. 16 So then have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

v. 17 They are eagerly desiring you but not rightly, desiring to shut you out in order that you might be seeking them.

v. 18 But it is good to be desired eagerly in a good thing always and not only when I am present with you.

v. 19 My little children of whom again I am experiencing the pains of birth until which time Christ should be formed in you.

v. 20 Moreover, I was longing to be present with you at this moment and could change my tone (voice), because I am perplexed (at a loss) about you.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **A Cowboy's Christmas Prayer**

By G. T. Burton

The worn and wrinkled cowboy  
Slowly shaved and combed his hair.  
He picked the finest clothes he had  
And then he dressed with care.

He stomped into his new-bought boots,  
And shrugged into his coat;  
The others would have questioned him  
But his thoughts seemed quite remote.

He stepped out of the bunkhouse,  
And pulled his hat down tight,  
Then climbed aboard his private horse  
And rode into the night.

The single footin' gelding  
Ate miles without a pause,  
And seemed to know the rider  
Had a most important cause.

Twenty miles on through the night  
With the rider deep in thought,  
The stars came out to guide his way  
To the goal the ride had brought.

His horse stopped on a gentle rise,  
Tho' the rider pulled no rein,  
And the cowboy raised his head to stare  
'cross the quiet and lonely plain.

He crawled down off the weary horse,  
And loosed the cinch so it could blow,  
Then walked a yard or two away  
And knelt down in the snow.

He crushed his hat against his chest,  
Raised his face up to the sky,

And then he started talkin'  
Like a friend was standin' by.

"Lord, you see I rode a piece tonight  
'cause I knowed that you'd be here.  
'course you wuz at the bunkhouse too,  
But on this hill ya' seem s' near.

As I look across this prairie  
And see the things you've made;  
Why! Compared t' things us men have done,  
Really puts 'em in the shade.

I thank ya for the love you show  
In ever'thing ya do.  
And I'm proud to be a top hand  
With a loyal, happy crew.

I've still got all my fingers,  
My legs are bowed, but tough.  
Rheumatiz' ain't touched my bones  
And my mind is sharp enough.

Your spirit gives me comfort,  
And I know that when I die,  
You'll let me rest forever  
At that bunkhouse in the sky.

Forgive me when I wander off,  
Like a wild jug-headed hoss,  
And I pray you'll not give up on me  
'fore I learn that yer the boss.

I've rode out here to tell you  
I'm thankful for a Savior's birth  
And to send you Merry Christmas  
From yer folks down here on earth."

Then he mounted up and rode away  
With a casual good-bye nod.  
A cowboy, with his heart at peace,  
In the palm of the hand of God.

(Received via email from Pat Burgess, January 21, 2010)

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

A CHURCH BOARD DECIDED that people in the congregation were embarrassed when the offering plates were passed. So they thought they ought to have a new system that wouldn't embarrass anybody, especially those who couldn't give. They asked the pastor to design a way of handling it so people could give as they came in or went out. So he built several interesting boxes and put them at each door. But these boxes were different. If you dropped in a dollar or more, it made no noise, it was silent. If you have a half dollar, a little bell tingled. If you gave a quarter, it blew a whistle. If you gave a dime, a siren went off. If you gave a nickel, a shot sounded. If you gave nothing, it took your picture!

—Clyde Murdock, *A Treasury of Humor*

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INA CHURCH BULLETIN these words appeared: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. He also accepteth from a grouch."

—Lord Cory, *Quote Unquote*

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DO YOUR GIVIN' while you're livin', then you're knowin' where it's goin'.  
p. 388

## The Trouble with Worry

I hail from a long line of worriers. From my dad, I inherited an inability to sleep until I resolve whatever issue is currently on my mind; from my mom, I received a proclivity for stomachaches before exams.

It's not all bad, I suppose; worry has historically been a powerful motivator for me. One Saturday night I went to sleep unprepared for the sermon I was set to deliver the next morning. I dreamed all my biblical studies professors, previous pastors, and mentors arrived at church to hear me preach, only to discover that I was shooting from the hip. I woke up in a cold sweat and worked on my sermon till morning.

I'd like to think that my tendency to worry is evidence of my unwavering sense of responsibility. Truth is, worry reveals a deep-seated self-reliance. I might say with Oliver Cromwell, "Put your trust in God; but mind to keep your powder dry." But when I remember God's faithfulness in the past, and remember that he alone has brought me through, I am able to replace worry with worship. This simple action ensures that my faith is not in my keeping the powder dry, but in God's promise to secure the victory.

Brandon O'Brien, assistant editor of PreachingToday.com

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(When You've Been Wronged: Moving From Bitterness to Forgiveness by Erwin W. Lutzer) Chicago, IL: Moody. Copyright– Erwin W. Lutzer, 2007.

. . . God's sovereign control. A two-year-old child in a stroller was rapidly turning his little steering wheel to the right, but he was going to the left, nonetheless. His direction was not determined by him, but by his mother; his steering wheel was not connected to anything that mattered. Just so the wicked: They have the illusion of control, but their fate is in God's hands. How quickly their world can disintegrate; how quickly their lives can be brought to an end. While they do their evil deeds, we believe that God takes up the cause of the oppressed. We don't need to throw spears if we trust in God.

p. 90

## Steven Curtis Chapman on Dealing with Daughter's Death

On May [21], 2008, Christian recording artist Steven Curtis Chapman and his family suffered a devastating loss. Five-year-old adopted daughter, Maria, was struck and killed when Chapman's seventeen-year-old son was backing his SUV out of the family's driveway. After much prayer and counsel, Chapman recently returned to touring in promotion for his newest album. Elizabeth Diffin, a freelance reporter, attended one of Chapman's concerts and writes about the experience:

It's not often you leave a concert reflecting on the words of a song by a different artist. But as I exited the July 24, 2008, Steven Curtis Chapman event, the words of a Matt Redman worship song echoed through my head. Chapman opened the concert with "Blessed Be Your Name" just two months after the death of his 5-year-old daughter, Maria Sue, in a tragic accident at the family's home.

"Blessed Be Your Name" was also the first song Chapman sang May 21, the day of Maria's death, when he wasn't sure he'd ever be able to sing again. Inspired by the story of Job, at one point the lyrics repeat, "He gives and takes away."

"As I sang this song . . . it wasn't a song, it was a cry, a scream, a prayer," Chapman explained to the audience of nearly 5,000. "I found an amazing comfort and peace that surpasses all understanding."

Chapman also shared that after Maria's death, he'd reconsidered the words to all his songs and whether he could still sing—and believe—them. Instead, losing his little girl brought the meaning of some of those songs into sharper focus. One example was "Yours," which addresses how everything in the world belongs to God.

"In this song, in particular, I had to come to a new realization," he said. "There's not an inch of creation that God doesn't look at and say 'all of that's mine.'"

As a result of that realization in conjunction with Maria's death, Chapman added a new verse to "Yours":

I've walked the valley of death's shadow  
so deep and dark that I could barely breath.  
I've had to let go of more than I could bear and  
I've questioned everything that I believe.  
Still even here in this great darkness

a comfort and a hope comes breaking through  
as I can say in life or death  
God we belong to you.

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*Elizabeth Diffin, "Still Blessing His Name,"  
Today's-Christian.com (on-line exclusive)*

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Mary Beth Chapman has written a brand new book called:

(Choosing to See: A Journey of Struggle and Hope by Mary Beth Chapman with Ellen Vaughn) Grand Rapids, MI: Revell. Copyright– Mary Beth Chapman, 2010.

Steven looked down at Maria's table. There was a piece of notebook paper there. Maria had drawn a six-petaled flower with a green stem and two leaves. Only one of the petals was colored in. Blue. Maria's favorite color. The center of the flower was orange.

Steven saw something bleeding through from the other side of the paper. He turned it over. Maria had colored an orange butterfly, and written a word she'd never, ever put down on paper before.

Maria could write her name and little things such as "I love you," but she hadn't started writing other words yet. Since Stevey Joy was a little older and a year ahead of Maria in preschool, she had a list of words to learn. Steven's best guess is that Maria must have copied one of the words off the list.

And the word she wrote was SEE.

*SEE.*

Staring at Maria's artwork, Steven had tears spilling down his face. It was like Maria was speaking to him from heaven, from the very realm of eternity, saying "SEE? Can you *SEE*? Everything is going to be all right. I am here with Jesus. I am fine. Heaven is real, the gospel is true, you just have to SEE!"

p. 157



We are pursuing the **BOOK OF GALATIANS** and we are coming into **Study #8**.

The **KEY VERSE** to the whole book is:

**Galatians 5:7** (DAV)

You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

Using the title **“YOU WERE RUNNING WELL”** we have pursued **SEVEN SUBJECTS** to this point:

1. You Were Running Well UNTIL: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error (Galatians 1:1-9)
2. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Forgot What God Was Doing in Your Life (Galatians 1:10-24)
3. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Divine Direction Was Not Discerned (Galatians 2:1-10)
4. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (Galatians 2:11-21)
5. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself (Galatians 3:1-14)
6. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Failed to Read the Instructions (Galatians 3:15-29)
7. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Didn't Graduate (Galatians 4:1-11)

This now brings us to **Study #8** in our series in the **BOOK OF GALATIANS**:

8. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Got the P.B.A. Disease (Pretty Bad Attitude) (Galatians 4:1-11)



Our **KEY VERSE** is going to be:

Galatians 4:16 (DAV)

So then have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

(Eating Problems for Breakfast: A Simple, Creative Approach to Solving Any Problem by Tim Hansel)

With the right attitude, all the problems in the world will not make you a failure. With the wrong mental attitude, all the help in the world will not make you a success.

Warren Deaton

He was the sort of man who would go after Moby Dick with a row boat, a harpoon, and a jar of tartar sauce.  
p. 22

As Eugene Kennedy said, “One of the most common and naive sentences in the English language is perhaps the following: ‘If I can just get through this problem, then everything will be all right.’ There comes a time—and it may well be the birth of maturity—when we come to realize that when we get through our present problems, there will probably be another one, perhaps slightly more difficult, waiting to take its place.”  
p. 29

The second reason for saying “I can’t” is that we magnify our problems instead of our Lord. We humans have the capacity to distort almost anything. Consider the following paraphrased portion of a well-known verse in Psalm 34 (the Hansel version): “O come let us magnify our problems together. Let us talk about them until they become impossible.” We magnify our problems by doubt, anxiety, worry, procrastination, and self-preoccupation. How many times have you heard someone say, “My problems are worse than anyone else’s.”  
p. 30

(From Here to Retirement: Planning Now for the Rest of Your Life by Paul Fremont Brown)

The people who don't have attitude problems in retirement are the ones who have learned to live in terms of an absorbing interest or goals that give a lasting feeling of self-fulfillment. They live for something outside themselves that they feel is important. They have found a way to satisfy their need to be needed by getting involved and thinking good thoughts before they retire—prescription and treatment that also build self-esteem.

If you cannot carry your present engrossing interests over into retirement years, you need to search now in new directions which will be satisfying and give you that lasting feeling of self-fulfillment. The younger you are when you start the easier it is.

When depressing, negative thoughts have you in their clutches and you don't have someone around like my wife to stir up your thinking, try this for starters:

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagles's (Ps. 103:2-5).

The rewards are enormous: strength for the bad times and anticipation and joy for the good times; great years and exciting living.  
pp. 103-4

(You Don't Have to Quit by Ray and Anne Ortlund Ortlund) Nashville, TN:  
Oliver-Nelson. Copyright - Anne and Ray Ortlund, 1988.

How do you explain the people who “calm down and toughen up”  
through tears and toil and trial until they finally make it?

How do you explain Glenn Cunningham, who was burned so severely  
in a school fire that doctors said he'd never walk again—but who in 1934 set a  
world's record by running a mile in 4 minutes and 6.8 seconds?

How do you explain Itzhak Perlman, born of parents who survived a  
Nazi concentration camp, and himself paralyzed from the waist down when  
he was four years old, who became one of the world's truly great concert  
violinists?

How do you explain a little fellow who was called a slow learner, even  
retarded, but who grew up to be Albert Einstein?

And how do you explain the unknowns, the little people you and we  
would like to relate to, who also go through hard situations and come out  
winners?

p. 11

“By  
perseverance  
the snail  
reached  
the  
ark”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

p. 25

We heard about the terrible flood that came to Tooleysville one time,  
and one fella in his house was looking dismally out the window. Tooleysville  
looked like an ocean with buildings in it.

Then he noticed an amazing thing. A hat floated downstream, turned  
around and floated upstream again, turned and floated downstream, turned  
around and went up. . . .

“Hey, Mildred!” he called to his wife. “You won’t believe this. Come  
look at that crazy hat!”

“Oh, that’s Henry next door,” said Mildred. “He swore come hell or  
high water he was going to get that lawn mowed this afternoon.”

pp. 75-76

You can't control what happens to you but you can control your attitude.

In these verses, Paul turns to the personal again to let them know that his love for them has not changed.

One of the most discouraging things to a Christian is loneliness, the feeling that no one cares and that they are the only Christians.

Love is never found by looking for it, only by giving it.

Psalm 102:7 (NIV)

I lie awake; I have become  
like a bird alone on a roof.

1 Kings 19:10, 14 (NIV)

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." . . . He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

But God said in:

1 Kings 19:18 (NIV)

Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."

2 Timothy 4:16-17 (NASB)

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

One of the things that Paul wants to make real and personal to these Christians in Galatia is the fact that he deeply loves them and desires to be one with them in Jesus Christ. This is the reason he has been writing so strongly: to help them have a clear understanding of their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ and their relationship to the law.

How many times have relationships been hurt and things have happened simply because there has been a change of attitude on the part of one of the parties involved in the situation?

Genesis 4:1-8 (NIV)

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Genesis 31:2 (NIV)

And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.

PHILEMON and ONESIMUS,

SAUL and DAVID,

EUODIAS and SYNTYCHE,

PAUL and BARNABAS;

these are just a few.

Anders says:

### **Argument from Their Troubled Relationship (vv. 12-16)**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *The controversy over legalism separated Paul from his close friends, the Galatians. Therefore, the law cannot be mature and true because it has separated intimates.*

p. 51

Barclay titles this section:

### **LOVE'S APPEAL**

*Galatians* 4:12-20

p. 40

Barclay says:

HERE Paul makes, not a theological, but a personal appeal; here he is using not the argument of the intellect but the appeal of the heart. He reminds them that for their sake he had become a Gentile; he had abandoned the ways and privileges of his people; he had cut adrift from the traditions in which he had been brought up; he had become what they are; and now his appeal is that they should not seek to become Jews, but that they might become like himself.

p. 41

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

## **2. Their past and present relationships (4:12-20)**

If the reader is inclined to think Paul has been impersonal in dealing with the problems at Galatia, the present passage should remove any suspicion. It is true that Paul has dealt with the issues facing the Galatians as doctrinal ones and has even been somewhat distant in addressing his converts, at best calling them “brothers” (cf. 1:11; 3:15). Now, however, all this changes, and his deep pastoral concern for the Galatians surfaces as he intensifies his appeal to them by again calling them “brothers” and then “dear children.” Moreover, he bases his appeal on their past and present relationship to one another; first, their past relationship to him (vv. 12-16), and second, his past and present relationship to them (vv. 17-20). He contrasts the former with their present actions; the latter he contrasts with the actions of the Judaizers.

p. 731



Bickel & Jantz say:

You should follow my example, just as I follow Christ.  
—Paul

### *A Soft Heart and a Brilliant Mind*

There's no question that Paul is a skilled writer. As he continues to develop his brilliant argument for justification by faith, he has come at the Galatians from four different angles:

- The Galatians' own experience of receiving the Holy Spirit proves that salvation comes by faith;
- Jews and Gentiles alike become spiritual descendants of Abraham when they believe, as Abraham did, in the God who justifies by faith;
- God's promise to Abraham was not changed by the law; and
- Jews and Gentiles alike have been set free from the law and are now full-grown children of God.

Now Paul takes a new approach, and it's very personal. In his fifth proof for justification by faith, Paul appeals to the wonderful and mutually trusting relationship he had with the Galatians when he first taught them—and they first received—the true gospel message. By comparison, Paul reminds them that the false teachers had selfish motives. They were looking out for themselves, not the Galatians. As you study this section, take special note of Paul's emotions, which show he has a soft heart as well as a brilliant mind.  
p. 94

Bickel & Jantz say:

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Have you found that to be true? We sure have. Especially when it comes to talking about God and the reality of His plan to save us through Jesus Christ. The facts alone aren't enough for most people. You may be able to tell others about God in a way that makes perfect sense to you, but if you just recite the facts about God without sharing something of yourself, your words may fall on deaf ears. People need to know that you love them and care about them in a way that shows your heart before they will listen to the words of your message.

p. 95

Dunnam says:

### THE POWER OF THE PERSON AND THE PERSONAL

p. 84

Dunnam says:

Here is one of Paul's tenderest passages. He has been firm in his confrontation, and still "calls a spade a spade." (*"They zealously court you, but for no good,"* v. 17.) Yet, he pulls back the curtain of his own inner soul, revealing his anguish and pain, his personal limitations, his feelings of failure, his overwhelming sense of appreciation (*"you received me as an angel of God,"* v. 14), his willingness to change, his overarching commitment to those whom he considered his spiritual children. He pulls out all the stops in the organ of his soul as he appeals for a response to himself as a person and to the power of the personal.

p. 85

Gaebelein says:

Then what a tender appeal follows! He reminds them of the former days when he preached first the gospel unto them. In the infirmity of the flesh, physical weakness, they had not despised nor rejected him, but received him as an angel of God, as the Christ whose blessed ambassador he was. Then they enjoyed great blessedness and would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. But where was their blessedness now? Had he become their enemy in speaking the truth to them? He addresses them as His little children “of whom I travail in birth again.”

p. 222

Hendriksen says:

It is characteristic of Paul, the tactful shepherd of souls, the warm-hearted master-psychologist, that his rather sharp reproof (verses 8-11) is followed immediately by tender, urgent, intensely personal appeal. This paragraph is one of the most gripping in all of Paul's epistles. The apostle implores and agonizes, because he cannot endure the thought that they whom he addresses and who at one time had treated him with such sympathetic consideration and had accepted his gospel with such enthusiasm would now continue to wander farther and farther away from home. Hence, lovingly, as a parent speaking to children, for such in a sense they are . . .

p. 169

Lenski says:

The break in thought is marked by the turn to admonition and thus also by the warm address “brethren” (see 1:11). The transition from the previous section is made in a natural manner by v. 8-11.

p. 215

**Lucado says:**

Paul writes the Galatian Christians to reiterate the idea that salvation is by faith in God's promise, not adherence to God's law. He also stresses that God wants his children, by faith, to be transformed, to become like Christ in their thoughts, characters, and actions.

p. 72

**Luther says:**

Up to this point Paul has been occupied with the doctrinal aspect of the apostasy of the Galatians. He did not conceal his disappointment at their lack of stability. He had rebuked them. He had called them fools, crucifiers of Christ, etc. Now that the more important part of his Epistle has been finished, he realizes that he has handled the Galatians too roughly. Anxious lest he should do more harm than good, he is careful to let them see that his criticism proceeds from affection and a true apostolic concern for their welfare. He is eager to mitigate his sharp words with gentle sentiments in order to win them again.

pp. 172-3

**MacArthur says:**

Until this point in the letter, Paul's approach has been confrontational and impersonal. He has been writing like a scholar or debater, marshaling every possible argument and illustration to get his message across. He has taken the stance of a determined lawyer in court or a learned theologian in the classroom, giving a dispassionate and irrefutable presentation. He has referred to the Old Testament to teach the Galatians the basic truth of the gospel he had taught them many times before: salvation is by God's grace alone, forgiving man's lawbreaking sin and becoming effective through man's faith alone. He has used both his own experience and that of the Galatians to reinforce his teaching. But for the most part, he has sounded detached, seeming to be more concerned about principles than people.

pp. 113-14

MacArthur says:

. . . verses 12-20 are the strongest words of personal affection Paul uses in any of his letters. He does not so much preach or teach as simply pour out his heart in personal exhortation. He says, in effect, "I care about you more than I can say. I love you dearly just as you have loved me dearly. Please listen to what I'm saying, because it's so vitally essential."  
p. 114

MacArthur says:

In the course of his intimate outpouring to the Galatians in 4:12-20, Paul first appeals to them, then fondly remembers their loving acceptance of him, warns them about the ulterior motives of the Judaizers, and finally tells them of his desire to be with them again in person.  
p. 114

MacArthur says:

**4:12-20** Having sternly rebuked the Galatians, Paul changes his approach and makes an appeal based on his strong affection for them.  
p. 1670

Machen says:

In the fourth place, Paul turns away from argument to make a personal appeal. Vs. 12-20. What has become of your devotion to me? Surely I have not become your enemy just because I tell you the truth. The Judaizers are estranging you from me. Listen to me, my spiritual children, even though I can speak to you only through the cold medium of a letter!  
pp. 204-5

McGee says:

We have come now to a personal section (vv. 12-18). It is a polite word that Paul is injecting in this epistle.  
p. 179

Pinnock says:

Up until now we have seen chiefly the stern side of Paul's character. We have seen the strength of his convictions and his willingness to uphold gospel truth against any and all attempts to pervert it. He seems to prefer truth to peace, as on the occasion when he rebuked Peter publicly. The argument of the epistle has been somewhat impersonal up to this point, as Paul the theologian grapples with principles and concepts. But here the letter takes a personal direction. He calls the Galatians his brothers and his little children, the strongest terms of affection he has yet allowed himself to use.  
pp. 60-61

Ridderbos says:

This portion of the letter has a strongly personal quality about it. Paul is not merely contending and arguing. He makes an appeal to the old bond between him and the churches. He wrestles for their love and loyalty.  
p. 164

Simpson says:

Are the doctrines of evangelical religion so supremely important? Are we justified in contending so earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints? Have the spiritual leaders of our time cause to fear the downgrade movement which is carrying so large a part of the Church of today into ethical culture, rationalism, and Christian socialism, through the preaching of Christ without a cross? Have we reason to dread the subtle influence of such teaching, beautiful in its theories of an ideal Christ-like, but like cut flowers that have no root? Certainly Paul had no sentimental weakness about the matter. The language he uses is uncompromising and unmistakable.  
p. 15

Vos says:

*Appeal from Paul's relations with them, 4:12-20*  
p. 77

Wiersbe says:

### **3. HE SEEKS THEIR AFFECTION (4:12-18)**

Paul was a wonderful spiritual father; he knew just how to balance rebuke with love. Now he turns from “spanking” to “embracing” as he reminds the believers of their love for him and his love for them. At one point they were willing to sacrifice anything for Paul, so great was their love, but now he had become their enemy. The Judaizers had come in and stolen their affection.  
p. 98

Wuest says:

VII. *Paul appeals in a touching way to the Galatians to maintain their freedom from the law. He reminds them of their enthusiastic reception of him and the gospel which he preached, and tells them of his longing to be with them now in order that he might speak to them personally (4:12-20).*  
p. 123

Now, let's dig into the text of Galatians 4:12-20 and see what the Lord has for us in these verses.



v. 12 **Become as I am, Because I also became as you were brethren. I am begging you, you did me no wrong.**

The NET Bible translates verse 12:

I beg you, brothers and sisters, become like me, because I have become like you. You have done me no wrong!

Peterson paraphrases verse 12:

My dear friends, what I would really like you to do is try to put yourselves in my shoes to the same extent that I, when I was with you, put myself in yours. You were very sensitive and kind then.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles verses 12-16 and then says:

*An appeal to remember their relationship . . .*

**4:12.** Intensifying his appeal, Paul challenged the Galatians, **Become like me, for I became like you**, that is, “Become free from the Law as I am, for after my conversion I became like the Gentiles, no longer living under the Law.” The irony, however, was that the Galatian Gentiles were putting themselves under the Law *after* their conversions.

Paul opens our passage with a **COMMAND**:

**“BECOME AS I AM.”**

Then he gives a **REASON**:

**“BECAUSE I ALSO BECAME AS YOU WERE BRETHREN. I AM BEGGING YOU, YOU DID ME NO WRONG.”**

2 Corinthians 10:1 (NASB)

Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

“Keep on becoming as I am” is what Paul is saying.

“BECOME AS I AM . . . free from the law . . .

BECAUSE I ALSO BECAME AS YOU . . . saved through Christ, in Him alone.”

The term is a very intimate term meaning literally:

FROM THE SAME WOMB.

His plea is based on the fact that they “DID [HIM] NO WRONG”—even when they had occasion to do it, when he was with them in the flesh the last time.

The apostle begins with a COMMAND:

“BECOME AS I AM.”

The Apostle Paul makes the plea—a strong plea—begging them to become like he is, free in the grace of God because he became as they were, when they too were free in the grace of God.

And this plea is enforced by saying:

“I AM BEGGING YOU, YOU DID ME NO WRONG.”

You can sense that the Apostle Paul is really getting emotionally involved in this situation. He is now begging them and he reminds them:

“YOU DID ME NO WRONG.”

Romans 12:1-2 (NASB)

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

## Anders says:

Most commentators believe the phrase **you have done me no wrong** refers to what follows in verses 13-14. The Galatian believers received Paul very well during his first visit to them, doing him no wrong.  
p. 52

## Barker &amp; Kohlenberger say:

The opening words of this verse are somewhat puzzling, for there is not enough said to know precisely what Paul is referring to. Most likely he is asking the Galatians to enter into the Christian freedom he knows, with the reminder that he had identified himself with them in order to preach the Gospel to them (cf. 1 Co 9:20-22). That is, when Paul went to the Galatians, he did not stand on any special dignity or insist that the Galatians first come to him by becoming Jews. He became like them, in order to win them to Christ.

This is a principle of great importance for all who are trying to win other people for Christ. Our *goal* must be to make them like us, while the *means* to that end is to make ourselves like them. Witnessing involves doctrine, but it also involves the most personal involvement of the witness with those to whom he or she is witnessing.  
p. 731

Bartlett says:

Dr. Keen in his very helpful commentary on Galatians throws real light upon this exhortation of the apostle as follows: “He appeals to them: ‘Be as I am (free from the law); for I am as ye are (actually saved by grace).’ Or we might paraphrase it thus, ‘Be like me in ignoring the law; for I, though a Jew, have become like you Gentiles—without the law.’”  
p. 83

Bartlett says:

. . . the toils of legalism in which they are entangling themselves will work injury to themselves rather than to Paul.  
p. 83

Calvin says:

*Be as I am.* Having till now spoken roughly, he begins to adopt a milder strain. The former harshness had been more than justified by the heinousness of the offence; but as he wished to do good, he resolves to adopt a style of conciliation. It is the part of a wise pastor to consider, not what those who have wandered may justly deserve, but what may be the likeliest method of bringing them back to the right path. He must “be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” (2 Tim. iv. 2). Following the method which he had recommended to Timothy, he leaves off chiding, and begins to use entreaties. *I beseech you*, he says, and calls them *brethren*, to assure them that no bitterness had mingled with his reproofs.  
p. 126

Dunnam says:

The gospel must be seen in the person who seeks to communicate it. *“Brethren, I urge you to become like me”* (v. 12). What a bold plea. It could be seen as arrogance except that Paul had been willing to reveal his full humanity. His physical infirmity must have been serious. While we do not know what the affliction was, we know that it was chronic, very painful, repulsive, and humiliating. Paul rejoiced *that* the Galatians did not *“despise”* or *“reject”* him (v. 14).  
p. 85

Eadie says:

These brief and terse words can only be explained from the context. He has been speaking of their returning to Judaism—to the weak and beggarly elements, and of the anxiety which their dangerous state caused him. As a personal argument and illustration he refers now to himself and the position he sustained toward the same weak and beggarly elements. “Become ye as I am, for I too am become as you,”—become free from Judaism as I, for I also am free from it like you—as if I too were a Gentile. Or, become ye as I . . . being supplied—free from the law, in no sense recognising its obligation upon you,—for I have become as you; a Jew though I be, I am as regards the law quite like you Gentiles; or, Reciprocate my feeling and relation to Judaism . . .  
p. 318

### Fergusson says:

The apostle, knowing that these Galatians were alienated in their affections from him, and fearing lest, from his present severity and sharpness towards them, they should apprehend that he was alienated from them also, therefore he setteth himself to cure both the certain evil, and feared mistake; and this by requesting them, as brethren, that they would keep intimate affection towards him as to another self, or as if he had been themselves; for so much doth the expression “be as I” bear; and assureth them that he was so affected towards them, even the same which he formerly was, and that his present severity did not flow from hatred, or a spirit of private revenge against them, seeing they had never done any personal injury to him, to wit, but in so far as they had wronged Christ and truth; and therefore leaveth it unto them to look upon him, as a man who was pleading the cause of Christ, and not venting any private grudge of his own.

p. 73

### Gutzke says:

Paul made a plea for continuation of their good will. “I beseech you, let us remain close together. I haven’t taken any offense at what has happened. My heart is right with you; you keep your heart right with me.”

p. 96

### Hendriksen says:

Because Paul, by God’s marvelous grace, has learned that this shedding of all self-righteousness is the only way to please and glorify God, he beseeches the Galatians to follow this course. They should return to the point from which they started out when they had accepted the gospel of salvation . . .

p. 169

Henry says:

How affectionately he addresses himself to them. He styles them brethren, though he knew their hearts were in a great measure alienated from him. He would have them *to be as he was, for he was as they were, they had not injured him at all*. He had no quarrel with them upon his own account. Thus he endeavors to mollify their spirits towards him, that so they might receive the admonitions he was giving them. In reproving others we should take care to convince them that our reproofs do not proceed from any private pique but from a sincere regard to the honour of God and their truest welfare.  
p. 1842

Hogg & Vine say:

It is clear, however, that the relations between them had been of an unusually cordial character, and on this fact his appeal is based. He would have them think of him as one of themselves, so he calls them “brethren”.  
p. 204

Hogg & Vine say:

... ‘I was once zealous for the law, 1. 14, but I laid aside its supposed advantages, and my life-long prejudice in its favour, cp. Phil. 3. 7, in order to take my place beside you Gentiles: now I appeal to you who have put yourselves under the law, or who contemplate doing so, to take your place beside me—be ye free as I am free’ ...  
p. 204



Ironside says:

Now he turns directly to these converts of his, and in the most tender way he says, “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.” What does he mean? He is practically saying, “There was a time in my life when I observed all these things that you are going into now; when all my hope of heaven was based upon working out a righteousness of my own; and I was very punctilious about all these things that you now are taking up. I observed the Passover, I kept the feast of firstfruits, the ordinances of the great day of the atonement, and kept the feast of tabernacles. I did all these things that you are undertaking to do. I was careful about meats and drink, I looked upon certain foods as unclean and would have nothing to do with them, but I came to you as one of you. You did not know anything about the law, and I came to you as a man utterly delivered from the law of Moses, completely freed from it. I wish you would come over to where I am. Take your place now with me; I am not under law but under grace, and I want you to be under grace rather than under law.”  
p. 152

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

**12. be as I am**—“As I have in my life among you cast off Jewish habits, so do ye; for I am become as ye are,” viz., in the non-observance of legal ordinances. “The fact of my laying them aside among Gentiles, shows that I regard them as *not at all contributing to justification or sanctification*. Do you regard them in the same light, and act accordingly.”  
p. 1270

Lenski says:

The thought is striking, paradoxical, involving a chiasm. The Galatians were formerly Gentiles without the Jewish legal system. Paul was formerly a Jew under this Jewish legal system. Then he became a believer in Christ, dropped this legal system, and thus became like the Gentiles who never had it. But the Galatians, who were originally without the Jewish system (insofar as they were of Gentile descent) and, on becoming Christians, were still without this system, were at this late date beginning to adopt at least large parts of it (v. 10). Paul begs them not to do so but ever to be as he is who had dropped all of it. Once he became as they had been while they were pagan—without the Mosaic law. Now the Galatians are to reciprocate—after having taken up a part of that law under the influence of the Judaizers, they are to drop it entirely just as Paul had done.  
p. 216

Lenski says:

It was a revolutionary act for a bigoted Jew such as Paul once was to relinquish the Jewish regulations; it was a far slighter thing for the Gentile believers in Galatia to relinquish these regulations which had been only recently foisted upon them. Paul is begging them to do a thing that is far easier and much smaller than the one he had done.  
pp. 216-17

Lenski says:

From his present petition Paul turns to the past, to the time when he first came to the Galatians.  
p. 217

### Lightfoot says:

'By our common sympathies, as brethren I appeal to you. I laid aside the privileges, the prejudices of my race: I became a Gentile, even as ye were Gentiles. And now I ask you to make me some return. I ask you to throw off this Judaic bondage, and to be free, as I am free. Do not mistake me; I have no personal complaint; ye did me no wrong.  
p. 173

### Luther says:

Paul answers: "You Galatians have not injured me. You have injured yourselves. I chide you not because I wish you ill. I have no reason to wish you ill. God is my witness, you have done me no wrong. On the contrary, you have been very good to me. The reason I write to you is because I love you."  
p. 175

### MacArthur says:

Paul's appeal to his **brethren** in Christ was for them to recognize and live by the spiritual freedom all believers have in God's grace. This is the central truth of the epistle, a truth he had previously preached and taught to the Galatians but one the Judaizers had seduced them into doubting and forsaking.  
p. 114

MacArthur says:

**I beg of you, . . . become as I am**, he pleaded, free from trying to earn salvation by keeping the law and free from having to live by its outward symbols, ceremonies, rituals, and restrictions. “I died to the Law, that I might live to God,” he had already written (2:19). Now he implored them to confess again that death to the law as a way of sanctification, which death they, too, had experienced when they trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. While all believers are called to live in obedience to God’s moral standards that never change (such living is the evidence of salvation, as indicated in Eph. 2:6-10), they can no more live by the law than they could have been saved by it. “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1).  
p. 114

MacArthur says:

**4:12 *become like me, I became like you.*** Paul had been a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, trusting in his own righteousness to save him (cf. Phil. 3:4-6). But when he came to Christ, he abandoned all efforts to save himself, trusting wholly in God’s grace (Phil. 3:7-9). He urged the Galatians to follow his example and avoid the legalism of the Judaizers. ***You have not injured me.*** Though the Jews persecuted him when he first went to Galatia, the Galatian believers had not harmed Paul, but had enthusiastically received him when he preached the gospel to them (cf. Acts 13:42-50; 14:19). How, he asked, could they reject him now?  
p. 1671

McGee says:

“Be as I am” is better translated *become as I am*. The Galatians had been listening to false teachers, and they were looking upon Paul as an enemy because he told them the truth. Paul is saying, “We are all on the same plane. We are all believers, all in the body of Christ. In view of this we ought to be very polite to one another.”  
p. 179

Pinnock says:

Paul is asking the Galatians to put themselves in his shoes, and to show him the kind of consideration he had shown them. We do not know the exact details of this, but the reference is probably to Paul's missionary style. He sought to be all things to all men, to identify wherever possible with those he wished to reach (I Cor. 9:19-23). When with the Galatians Paul had not stood on his dignity and kept his distance, refusing to mingle with the people. No, he identified with them in their difficulties and needs. Now he asks them to show him the same kind of loving empathy in this situation.

p. 61

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

**4:12 I urge you:** To get beyond the present dilemma, Paul appeals to the Galatians to follow his example (1 Cor. 11:1). He had abandoned the ceremonial rules and regulations connected with Judaism so that he could freely preach the gospel of Christ to Jews and Gentiles alike in the cities of Galatia. They too should not hinder the gospel of Christ with laws and regulations.

p. 1524

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NASB)

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Ridderbos says:

With a strong upsurge of love, the apostle beseeches that they become as he is. We cannot be sure just what is meant by this. Most probably we are to think of the freedom in which Paul stands over against the law. The Galatians – such is his prayer – must disentangle themselves from their bondage, and become such as he is. This is borne in upon them by the words: *for I also (am become) as ye (are)*. Presumably we are to take this as meaning that Paul also tore himself loose from the legalistic position and became as they. He too had wished to be saved in no other way than the Gentiles, who could not appeal before God to a single work of the law. And now that the Galatians have fallen into the hands of the Judaizers, the exact opposite must take place. They must bid farewell to their proud, legalistic pretensions, and become as he.  
pp. 164-5

Ridderbos says:

All of a sudden he returns to the past, and that, as the following verses indicate, to his former stay among the Galatians. At that time he had been treated so very well at their hands. And in the light of that treatment, their present changed attitude is all the more painful and inexplicable.  
p. 165

Vos says:

“Become as I, for I became as you, I earnestly beg of you.” As a Jew, Paul was very faithful in keeping the law, but after his conversion he became like the Gentiles—no longer living under law. But a curious thing happened. The Galatians, who were not under law as Gentiles, after their conversion put themselves under the law as a way of life. So Paul pleads: I beg of you, come back out from under the law and give as I; enjoy your Christian liberty. When I ministered among you, at which time I lived as a Gentile rather than a Jew, you did me no wrong (did not *injure me*), you did not oppose me for that reason.  
p. 77

Wuest says:

Become as I am, because I also became as you were, brethren; I am beseeching you. You had done me no wrong.  
p. 206

Wuest says:

*Verse twelve.* He exhorts them, “Be as I am, for I am as ye are.” The word “be” is from *ginomai* which means literally “to become.” His exhortation is therefore, “Become as I am, because I also became as you are.” That is, “become as I am, free from the bondage of the law. I became as you are, Gentile.”  
p. 123

(Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity by Drew Brees with Chris Fabry) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright—Brees Company, Inc., 2010.

Finally defensive end Warren “Ike” Moore came up to me. He was a senior, too, and a guy who really didn’t get a lot of playing time. But he was a well-respected, quiet leader on the team. He put his arm around me and said something I’ll never forget.

“You broke it. Now go out and fix it.”

For some reason that made sense. It had been my mistake, but I had time to make up for that mistake. Instead of kicking myself or replaying the interception, I focused on the task at hand. One thing you learn quickly is that great quarterbacks must have short-term memories when it comes to things like this. Good or bad, you have to be able to finish a play, push it aside, and move on to the next one. You can never let a play from the past affect the present. Your job is to play in the moment.  
p. 26



(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Walk in your path of integrity with steadfast steps, and show that you are invincibly strong in the strength which confidence in God alone can confer. Thus you will be delivered from carking care, you will not be troubled with evil tidings, your heart will be fixed, trusting in the Lord. How pleasant to float along the stream of providence! There is no more blessed way of living than a life of dependence upon a covenant-keeping God. We have no care, for He careth for us; we have no troubles, because we cast our burdens upon the Lord.

p. 491

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications Association, 1992.

The lasting value of our public service for God is measured by the depth of the intimacy of our private times of fellowship and oneness with Him.  
(January 6)

(Signs of Life: Back to the Basics of Authentic Christianity by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– David Jeremiah, 2007.

*Start each day by rededicating yourself to Him and asking Him to guide your thoughts, words, and actions during that day.* Bishop Taylor Smith (1860-1937), British commanding army chaplain, once wrote: “As soon as I awake each morning I rise from bed at once. I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave and comb my hair. Then fully attired, wide-awake and properly groomed, I go quietly to my study. There, before God Almighty and Christ my King, I humbly present myself as a loyal subject to my Sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to Him for the day.”<sup>6</sup>

6. Phillip W. Keller, *A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1976), 66-67.

p. 31

(Pure Pleasure: Why Do Christians Feel So Bad About Feeling Good? by Gary Thomas) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Gary Thomas, 2009.

*. . . as Christians, it is our invitation as well as our obligation to cultivate and live lives of true pleasure as a pathway to obedience and even worship.*  
p. 83

v. 13 But you know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you the former time.

The NET Bible divides this section up and calls these next verses:

Personal Appeal of Paul

The NET Bible translates verse 13:

But you know it was because of a physical illness that I first proclaimed the gospel to you,

Peterson paraphrases verse 13:

You did not come down on me personally. You were well aware that the reason I ended up preaching to you was that I was physically broken, and so, prevented from continuing my journey, I was forced to stop with you. That is how I came to preach to you.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**4:13-14.** The last clause of verse 12 belongs with these and the following verses in which Paul related how he was received by the Galatians on his first visit to them (cf. Acts 13-14). At that time he labored under the handicap of **an illness** but remained until he had **preached the gospel** to them.

Paul makes reference to an **“INFIRMITY”** which plagued him during his life and ministry.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (NASB)

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Evidently Paul was suffering from some sort of **EYE DISEASE**, from the references here in these verses and also in:

Galatians 6:11 (DAV)

You see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

When he spoke in Galatia before this, it was giving him trouble.

Paul’s eyesight must have never been the same after he met the Lord on the Damascus road.

The account of **JACOB WRESTLING GOD** in Genesis 32 also tells that he halted upon his thigh as he walked. I can imagine his children seeing him coming saying, “That sure looks like daddy but he does not walk like daddy.”

In one of the final pictures of Jacob he is seen worshipping God, leaning on the top of his staff.

Paul has victory over these physical circumstances and he expresses it in:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NASB)

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NASB)

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

. . . the only thing we can say with certainty is that some form of unpleasant sickness lay behind Paul's first visit to the Galatians and that, though they could have despised him because of it, they did not but, instead, received him favorably.  
p. 731

Calvin says:

*Ye know that, through infirmity of the flesh.* He recalls to their recollection the friendly and respectful manner in which they had received him, and he does so for two reasons. First, to let them know that he loved them, and thus to gain a ready ear to all that he says; and secondly, to encourage them, that, as they had begun well, they would go on in the same course.  
p. 127

Eadie says:

. . . “But ye know.” So far from doing me any injury, your treatment of me was the very opposite—ye wronged me in nothing . . .  
p. 320

Hogg & Vine say:

. . . **but ye know that**—on the contrary, so far from doing him any injury that he might resent, he reminds them that the circumstances under which they first met were such as rather to put him under obligation to them, because of the kindness with which they treated him when his sickness might very well have repelled them.  
p. 205

Lovett says:

**ILLNESS.** In appealing to the Galatians to abandon their passion for legalism, Paul reminds them he is now as free from the Law as if he had been born a Gentile. He begs them to give up this return to bondage, recalling their affection for him in the days when he first visited them. He had planned to go to Asia, but an attack of illness forced him to remain with the Galatians. The physical repugnance of his illness could have caused the Galatians to turn from him in disgust. We can’t identify it, but the best guesses include malaria (common to Tarsus, his birthplace), epilepsy and a severe eye disorder. Perhaps it was a combination of all three. Regardless of his hideous appearance, he was not an object of scorn, for they accepted both him and his Savior with boundless enthusiasm.  
p. 51

MacArthur says:

The fact that Paul's affliction was not a barrier to his credibility either to the Jews or Gentiles of Galatia was totally unexpected. The apostle was amazed that they even **received him as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself**. They did not question what he said or the way he looked. They had no doubt that he was God's messenger and the apostolic representative of the Lord Jesus and were grateful beyond measure for the blessing of spiritual life they had received because of his ministry.  
p. 116

(A Lifetime of Wisdom: Embracing the Way God Heals You by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— Joni Eareckson Tada, 2009.

I'm reminded of a little poem from one of my favorite books.

*Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
the falling of a tear;  
the upward glancing of an eye,  
when none but God is near*

My friend Margaret Clarkson, now with the Lord, penned those words. And that bit of verse summarizes so much of what I learned from this godly woman

Margaret was a missionary in Canada who wrote many wonderful poems—and virtually each one was born out of her life of severe and chronic physical pain. The last time I was with Margaret was at Ontario Bible College. We spent lunchtime together talking, me in my wheelchair, and she lying on her side on a cot. She was in so much pain she simply could not stand up for any length of time. As a result, Margaret taught me many lessons about praying through pain.  
p. 106

(Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout: how the timeless wisdom of one man can impact an entire generation by Rick Rigsby, Ph.D.) Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson, Inc. Copyright–Rick Rigsby, Ph.D., 2006.

Speaker and author James Ryle makes sense of how feeling secure can produce a correlation of kindness and humility: “Humility is the God-given self-assurance that eliminates the need to prove the worth of who you are and the rightness of what you do.”  
p. 26



v. 14 **And your trial in my flesh you did not despise nor loathe, but as a messenger of God you received me, as Christ Jesus.**

The NET Bible translates verse 14:

and though my physical condition put you to the test, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as though I were an angel of God, as though I were Christ Jesus himself!

Peterson paraphrases verse 14:

And don't you remember that even though taking in a sick guest was most troublesome for you, you chose to treat me as well as you would have treated an angel of God—as well as you would have treated Jesus himself if he had visited you?

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Whatever his infirmity, the Galatians **did not treat Paul with contempt or scorn** as a weak messenger but rather received him as one would receive **an angel** or even **Christ Jesus Himself**.

Paul is here saying that the trouble that he was having did not affect the Galatians' response in that they did not **"DESPISE"** his infirmity, nor did they **"LOATHE"** or spit at it.

They received him as a **"MESSENGER OF GOD"** even as they would have received Christ Jesus.

They had shown real love for Paul and had responded to the message which he preached in that they had received Christ as Savior as a result of his ministry.

Paul is using the **NEGATIVE** and the **POSITIVE** here in verse 14. **“AND YOUR TRIAL IN MY FLESH YOU DID NOT” NEGATIVELY:**

1. **“DESPISE NOR”**

2. **“LOATHE.”**

**“BUT”** in **CONTRAST, POSITIVELY:**

**“AS A MESSENGER OF GOD YOU RECEIVED ME, AS CHRIST JESUS.”**

Anders says:

While he was with them, he had gotten sick, and they had done him no wrong; rather, they treated him quite well. In fact, he says they **welcomed** him like **an angel of God** or **Christ Jesus himself**.

p. 52

Barclay says:

The word that is translated *you did not turn from me with loathing* literally means *you did not spit at me*.

p. 42

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

They actually received him as “an angel of God,” i.e., “as if I were Christ Jesus himself.” It is noteworthy that though Paul was well aware that he, like the Galatians, was a sinner, and though he had been careful when among them not to allow any conduct on their part that suggested worship of Paul (see Ac 14:8-18), nevertheless he does not suggest here that their respect for him as a messenger of God was in error. On the contrary, they were quite right to receive him in this manner. For he came among them as the approved messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ.

p. 731

**Eadie says:**

The vivid contrast in . . . is, that so far from in any sense contemning him, they honoured him with an eager and intense welcome—they received him as an angel of God. Of course, in both clauses the apostle speaks in accordance with their present knowledge of divine revelation, not according to any knowledge they had possessed before he preached to them, for that would imply that he found them in possession of the gospel on his first visit to them. He therefore speaks of angels and Christ, as they understood them now, since their conversion.

p. 324

**Henry says:**

They did not despise him on the account of it, but on the contrary, *received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*. He was a welcome messenger to them; yea, so great was their esteem of him, that *they could have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him*. How uncertain the respects of people are, how apt they are to change their minds, so that they are ready to pluck out the eyes of those for whom they would before have plucked out their own!

p. 1842

**MacArthur says:**

The Galatians welcomed Paul in spite of his illness, which was not a barrier to his credibility or acceptance. ***as Christ Jesus***.

p. 1671

**Ridderbos says:**

Illness, physical infirmity, and adversity were regarded even by the Jews, as representing the opposition and penalty of the deity, but more so by the Gentiles (cf. Acts 28:4). But instead of turning aside from him, they had received him as an angel from heaven, indeed, as Christ, the Son of God Himself. So great had their respect and confidence been at that time.

p. 167

Wiersbe says:

To them, he was an angel of God. It is a wonderful thing when people accept God's servants not because of their outward appearance but because they represent the Lord and bring His message.

p. 98

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

The night of affliction is as much under the arrangement and control of the Lord of Love as the bright summer days when all is bliss. Jesus is in the tempest. His love wraps the night about itself as a mantle, but to the eye of faith the sable robe is scarce a disguise. From the first watch of the night even unto the break of day the eternal Watcher observes His saints, and overrules the shades and dews of midnight for His people's highest good. We believe in no rival deities of good and evil contending for the mastery, but we hear the voice of Jehovah saying, "I create light and I create darkness; I, the Lord, do all these things."

Gloomy seasons of religious indifference and social sin are not exempted from the divine purpose. When the altars of truth are defiled, and the ways of God forsaken, the Lord's servants weep with bitter sorrow, but they may not despair, for the darkest eras are governed by the Lord, and shall come to their end at His bidding. What may seem defeat to us may be victory to Him.

"Though enwrapt in gloomy night,  
We perceive no ray of light;  
Since the Lord Himself is here,  
'Tis not meet that we should fear."

p. 717

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

Know you not that many of the promises are written with invisible ink, and must be held to the fire of affliction before the letters will show themselves? Tried spirits are grand instructors for ministers.

p. 214

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Whether it be a Noah who is to build a ship on dry land, an Abraham who is to offer up his only son, or a Moses who is to despise the treasures of Egypt, or a Joshua who is to besiege Jericho seven days, using no weapons but the blasts of rams' horns, they all act upon God's command, contrary to the dictates of carnal reason; and the Lord gives them a rich reward as the result of their obedient faith. Would to God we had in the religion of these modern times a more potent infusion of this heroic faith in God. If we would venture more upon the naked promise of God, we should enter a world of wonders to which as yet we are strangers. Let Jeremiah's place of confidence be ours—nothing is too hard for the God that created the heavens and the earth.  
p. 365

(Faith & Doubt by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright—John Ortberg, 2008.

When a subject comes before a king, he kneels down. He is acknowledging that he is the presence of his master. When a believer—in any religion—prays to his god, he kneels down. He is acknowledging that he is in the presence of his master. When a young man asks a woman to marry him, he gets down on one knee. He is acknowledging that he is in the presence of his master.  
p. 68

v. 15 Where is therefore your declaration of blessedness. For I am bearing witness to you that if possible you would have dug out your own eyes and given them to me.

The NET Bible translates verse 15:

Where then is your sense of happiness now? For I testify about you that if it were possible, you would have pulled out your eyes and given them to me!

Peterson paraphrases verse 15:

What has happened to the satisfaction you felt at that time? There were some of you then who, if possible, would have given your very eyes to me—that is how deeply you cared!

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**4:15-16.** They had received Paul with **joy**, congratulating themselves that the apostle had preached in their midst. Their appreciation knew no limits; they would even have made the sacrifice of their **eyes** for Paul. While some think this is an indication that Paul had a disease of the eyes (his “thorn” in his “flesh,” 2 Cor. 12:7), the evidence is not conclusive. This may simply be a bold figure of speech to convey the high esteem the Galatians had had for the apostle—they would have **given** him their most precious possession.

Paul is going to ask **TWO QUESTIONS** here in this passage:

1. **verse 15**—has to do with **“WHERE”** and
2. **verse 16**—has to do with **“WHAT”** and **“WHY.”**

**QUESTION #1:**

**“WHERE IS THEREFORE YOUR DECLARATION OF BLESSEDNESS?”**

Paul’s question here is:

What has made you change your mind?

What has made you forget our love in the relationship we once had together?

Sometimes attitudes toward the Lord’s servants are only a reflection of one’s attitude toward their Lord and His Word.

Maybe they had become **DULL OF HEARING,**

maybe they were guilty of a **CALLOUSED HEART,**

**A CARNAL MIND,**

**STIFLED AFFECTIONS,**

**LUKEWARM EMOTIONS.**

I think the real reason is obvious. They have found another center of affection. They have a new love. They are turning away from Christ and His grace to another gospel, and that is the legalistic message.

Paul is saying, I can remember the day when, because of your love for me:

**“YOU WOULD HAVE DUG OUT YOUR OWN EYES AND GIVEN THEM TO ME.”**

The love of the Galatians for Paul was great at one time, but now they have forgotten about it and they are drifting from the truth. Their attitude toward the apostle has changed because they have drifted from their relationship to the Lord Jesus.

1 John 3:14 (NASB)

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

How is it that we maintain that declaration of blessedness?

Hebrews 2:1 (NASB)

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

We must live each day, one at a time. What is true today is not for tomorrow.

**PHYSICALLY**, we must exercise.

**EMOTIONALLY**, love.

**SPIRITUALLY**, be daily in the Word.

Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB)

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.



(From Here to Retirement: Planning Now for the Rest of Your Life by Paul Fremont Brown)

In his book *Strengthening Your Grip*, Chuck Swindoll grips the significance of attitudes in this powerful statement:

. . . I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a day-to-day basis is my choice of attitude. It is more important than my past, my education, my bankroll, my successes or failures, fame or pain, what other people think of me or say about me, my circumstances, or my position. Attitude . . . keeps me going or cripples my progress. It alone fuels my fire or assaults my hope. When my attitudes are right, there's no barrier too high, no valley too deep, no dream too extreme, no challenge too great for me.

p. 101

The subtleties of happiness continue to baffle the statisticians. In my opinion, the conclusion that came closest to the truth was that of Harry Hepner, emeritus professor of psychology at Syracuse University. After his research, he stated that:

Many different interpretations of happiness and patterns of adjustment to retirement were found, but one especially successful retirement group consisted of those whose occupational status, position in the community, education, health, or recreational activity followed no special pattern. They were, however, enjoying a kind of happiness favorable to peace and wisdom; they were living in terms of a sustaining framework of thinking that gave purpose to their lives. They had facial expressions of outward calm and, more importantly, their whole manner portrayed an inner serenity, a serenity which indicated that they had learned to enjoy the gift of living. They were happy, and yet they had not sought happiness as such. Happiness came to them, as it must to all men, not as an end in itself but as a by-product or side effect. It came to them because they had somehow learned to live in terms of a continuing interest, a theme, a code of ethics, or a goal that gave a lasting feeling of self-fulfillment. They lived for something more important than the attainment of personal happiness.

p. 93

(Making Things Right When Things Go Wrong: Ten Proven Ways to Put Your Life in Order by Dr. Paul Faulkner)

Joseph had gotten rid of his slop bucket. And so must you. You simply must learn, like Joseph, to reframe life's rejections and abuses into stepping stones to power.

In his book, *Love Within Limits*, Lewis B. Smedes writes this beautiful and inspiring summary:

Love lets the past die. It moves people to a new beginning without settling the past. Love does not have to clear up all past misunderstandings. The details of the past become irrelevant; only its new beginning matters. Accounts may go unsettled; differences remain unsolved; ledgers stay unbalanced. Conflicts between people's memories of how things happened are not cleared up; the past stays muddled. Only the future matters. Love's power does not make fussy historians. Love prefers to tuck the loose ends of past rights and wrongs in the bosom of forgiveness—and pushes us into a new start.

p. 127

Arthur says:

**YOU'RE AN HEIR OF GRACE . . .  
LIVE LIKE IT!**

p. 33

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

**15-16** In spite of their initial attitude toward Paul, their opinion of him had changed. The joy (lit., "blessedness," GK 3422) they experienced as a result of his preaching had vanished, and they were now apparently regarding him as their enemy. If one thinks that Paul possibly suffered from bad eyesight (cf. 6:11), then the expression "you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me" refers to actual conversations they had at the time.

p. 731

Bickel & Jantz say:

### What Kind of Illness Did Paul Have?

Paul commends the Galatians for receiving him on his first visit, especially since he was sick at the time. In fact, Paul reminds them, his sickness was “revolting” to them (4:14 TLB). So what was wrong with Paul? And is this the same as the “thorn in the flesh” Paul later refers to in 2 Corinthians 12:7? Bible scholars have offered various theories about Paul’s illness. Some have suggested malaria, a common disease of that time, while others have speculated that Paul had epilepsy. Martin Luther thought Paul was referring to the injuries he had received because of constant physical persecution. The most common conclusion is that Paul had poor eyesight, perhaps an eye disease of some kind. This seems to fit Paul’s statement about the Galatians’ depth of commitment to him: “In those days, I know you would gladly have taken out your own eyes and given them to replace mine if that would have helped me” (4:15).

p. 97

De Haan says:

Where is that first love and joy you had at the first, and your love for me so great you would have given me your eyes in exchange for my weak ones (Gal. 4:15)? How comes it that I am now become your enemy? What a tragedy that these people who had been won to Christ by Paul, should so soon turn upon him and lose their love for him.

pp. 143-4

Dunnam says:

Paul was risking everything—laying on the line the relationship which had been so supportive and gratifying to him. He had to tell the truth *at* the risk of turning his friends into enemies. “*What then was the blessing you enjoyed?*” (v. 15)? *Blessing* is a beautiful, encompassing word. It describes the sense of total well-being Paul’s presence and preaching had brought to the Galatians. Yet they were about to sacrifice that limitless joy of well-being and wholeness for transient satisfaction. Paul couldn’t let them do it without boldly making his case and risking their friendship.

p. 88

Hendriksen says:

The Galatians had experienced a season of thrilling discovery, of joy unspeakable and full of glory. What had become of it? How completely different was their present condition.

p. 172

Henry says:

He expostulates with them hereupon: *Where is then, the blessedness you spoke of?* “You once thought yourselves happy in receiving the gospel; have you now any reason to think otherwise?” Those who have left their first love would do well to consider, Where is now the blessedness they once spoke of?

p. 1842

Hogg & Vine say:

They had counted themselves happy when they heard the gospel from his lips. What had become of that spirit which animated them not so long ago?

p. 206

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

CONYBEARE and HOWSON think that this particular form of proverb was used with reference to a weakness in Paul’s eyes, connected with a nervous frame, perhaps affected by the brightness of the vision described, Acts 22:11; II Corinthians 12:1-7. “You would have torn out your own eyes to supply the lack of mine.” The divine power of Paul’s words and works, contrasting with the feebleness of his person (II Cor. 10:10), powerfully at first impressed the Galatians, who had all the impulsiveness of the Keltic race from which they sprang. Subsequently they soon changed with the fickleness which is equally characteristic of Kelts.

p. 1271

Lenski says:

What has become of this counting yourselves blessed for having received the gospel from my lips?  
p. 221

Luther says:

“How much happier you used to be. And how you Galatians used to tell me that you were blessed. And how much did I not praise and commend you formerly.” Paul reminds them of former and better times in an effort to mitigate his sharp reproaches, lest the false apostles should slander him and misconstrue his letter to his disadvantage and to their own advantage.  
p. 177

MacArthur says:

*Makarismos* ( **blessing**) can also be translated “happiness” or “satisfaction” and implies a feeling of joy, fulfillment, and contentedness.

“From the beginning you were satisfied and happy with me and with the message of grace I preached,” Paul was saying. “What made you lose that satisfaction? Why have you turned against me and against the gospel of grace?” He refreshed their memories that once they loved him so much that **you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.**  
pp. 116-17

MacArthur says:

**blessing you enjoyed.** *Blessing* can also be translated “happiness,” or “satisfaction.” Paul points out that the Galatians had been happy and content with his gospel preaching (cf. Acts 13:48) and wonders why they had turned against him.  
p. 1671

McGee says:

Probably Paul's thorn in the flesh was some sort of eye trouble, and it evidently made him very unattractive. I cannot conceive of them wanting to pluck out their eyes and give them to Paul if what he really needed was another leg. Apparently Paul had an eye disease which is common in that land and is characterized by excessive pus that runs out of the eyes. You can well understand how unattractive that would be to look at while he was ministering to them. Paul says, "You just ignored it, and received me so wonderfully when I preached the gospel to you."

p. 179

Patrick & Lowth say:

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of (*in having me for your apostle, who taught you no such thing as this, that you were to be justified by the observance of the law*) for I bear you record, (*you had once such a great affection to me,*) that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

p. 737

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Paul describes the closeness and understanding that had existed between him and the Galatians when he had **preached the gospel** to them initially. He recalls how the Galatians had cared for him in his illness, treating him as they would **an angel**, or even **Christ Himself**. Paul's **physical infirmity** could have been an illness contracted en route to Galatia, a consequence of having been blinded on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3, 8) or a consequence of being stoned (Acts 14:19). Some have suggested that Paul was practically blind. This would explain the reference to **your own eyes**, as well as the size of Paul's handwriting, referred to in 6:11. This might have been the infirmity about which Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians. Paul had repeatedly asked God for healing, but God refused to heal him because his weakness demonstrated God's strength (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

p. 1524

Vos says:

“What has become of your congratulation of yourselves?” (v. 15) is a better translation. They patted themselves on the back at having received Paul as an angel or as Jesus Christ; what has happened to that feeling now? The apostle freely bears witness to the Galatians of their love.  
p. 78

Wiersbe says:

Now Paul asked them, “What has happened to that love? What has happened to the blessedness—the happiness—you experienced when you heard the gospel and trusted Christ?” Of course, Paul knew what had happened: The Judaizers had come in and stolen their hearts.  
p. 98

Wuest says:

Where is therefore your spiritually prosperous state? For I bear witness to you that if it had been possible, you would have dug out your own eyes and given them to me. So then I have become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?  
p. 207

Wuest says:

The word *blessedness* is from *makarios* which in secular Greek means *prosperous*, and which indicated that the *makarios* person is in a state of prosperity. Paul reminds the Galatians of the prosperity of their spiritual lives which consisted of such a state of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation that they were willing to dig out their own eyes and give them to Paul. He asks, Where is that prosperous condition now?  
p. 126

Psalm 89:33-34 (NIV)

but I will not take my love from him,  
       nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.  
 I will not violate my covenant  
       or alter what my lips have uttered.

Ruth 1:16-17 (NIV)

But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.”



**v. 16 So then have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**

The NET Bible translates verse 16:

So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Peterson paraphrases verse 16:

And now have I suddenly become your enemy simply by telling you the truth? I can't believe it.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

But that had all changed. They no longer contemplated his presence among them with "joy." Rather, they now acted as though he had **become** their **enemy**, for the simple reason that he had been **telling** them **the truth**. How fickle were these Galatians! They were turning against the Lord, the gospel of grace, and the messenger who brought them the news of justification by faith.

Paul is **PROBING** here in these verses. In verse 15 we had:

**QUESTION #1:**

**"Where is therefore your declaration of blessedness?"**

Now in verse 16, **"SO THEN"**:

**QUESTION #2:**

**"HAVE I BECOME YOUR ENEMY BY TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?"**

Now the apostle begins verse 16 with the words “SO THEN” which would be the result of his thinking.

This verse contains **QUESTION #2**.

**QUESTION #1:** was in verse 15 asking the question “WHERE?”:

“Where is therefore your declaration of blessedness?”

Now here in verse 16, we are talking about the “WHAT?” and the “WHY?”

**QUESTION #2:**

“HAVE I BECOME YOUR ENEMY BY TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?”

What is it that has affected our relationship?

Why are you all of a sudden treating me as an enemy?

Paul just raises a very simple and direction **QUESTION** here:

Have I, because I have told you the truth, now become an enemy instead of a friend?

Speaking the truth is always a dangerous business because in the process you are probably going to:

**HIT** and

**HURT**.

Ephesians 4:15 (NASB)

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

I have chosen this as my **KEY VERSE** for this particular study:

You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Got the P.B.A. Disease (Pretty Bad Attitude)

They had a change of attitude because they could not receive the truth.

They are different from Peter back in Galatians 2. He received it and acted accordingly.

Paul with this question is hitting pretty close to home with this reason for their change of heart.

**Pinnock points out:**

The change came about because he told them some unpalatable truth. "Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (v. 16). Speaking the truth in love is a Christian virtue but is not always welcomed. When Paul told the Galatians some painful truths, they completely changed their attitude toward him. Like so many of us, their enthusiasm for a Bible teacher dried up as soon as he got onto some unwelcome subjects which convicted them. They wished to be selective in their obedience to Christian truths, accepting those they liked and ignoring the rest. They needed to learn a lesson. The authority of God's Word does not disappear when an unpleasant teaching is encountered. God's Word has authority in whatever it teaches, whether we happen to like it or not.

p. 62

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

(Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian by Bill Hybels) Grand Rapids:MI: Zondervan Books. Copyright – Bill Hybels, 1990.

One person in a relationship may decide to leave the counterfeit peace of pseudocommunity by revealing a long-concealed wound that hampers the relationship. Timidly he enters the tunnel. It's scary, but he cares about the relationship and wants to improve it. So he takes the risk.

What happens? All heck breaks loose! The counterfeit peace shatters in an explosion of hostility that feels terrible.

I know.

Early in our marriage I realized that Lynne and I were in pseudocommunity. I didn't know the term back then, but I knew I felt detached from Lynne because of grievances I had stored up against her. I'm a fairly confrontive person, and I decided to air these issues so I could relate to Lynne more authentically.

During a vacation at a beautiful lake in Wisconsin, I asked her to join me on the dock. It was a lovely evening; the water shimmered in the golden glow of the sinking sun. It was the perfect time for a little "heart to heart." I carefully articulated the truth as I saw it. My communication skills left a bit to be desired, but I spoke as lovingly and sensitively as I knew how to at that time. I fully expected a comfortable conversation and a heartfelt apology.

Instead I watched as my beautiful, spiritual, well-mannered, five-foot-four, one-hundred-and-five-pound French poodle turned into a Doberman pinscher. With both ears laid back, her eyes on fire, and her teeth bared, she let me have it! I couldn't believe it.

pp. 54-55

(Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian by Bill Hybels) Grand Rapids:MI: Zondervan Books. Copyright – Bill Hybels, 1990.

“Bill, I’d like to talk to you about something.” The second I sense that harsh words might be coming, I activate my denial weapons. “He’s got the wrong guy. Whatever he thinks I did, I didn’t do. I couldn’t possibly do anything to offend him.”

Then I fire up the retaliation machine. “If he points the finger at me, he’ll be in big trouble. He hasn’t lived a perfect life, either, you know. If he starts dragging out my dirty laundry, I’ll dump his clothes basket all over the neighborhood. He’ll be sorry he tangled with me!”

Finally, my deluxe rationalizer kicks in. I don’t even know what the issue is yet, but my rationalizer says, “There are two-hundred-fifty ax murderers loose on the street, and you’re coming after me for some petty misdemeanor?” It’s so easy for the issue to become overshadowed by our reflexive, immature need to protect ourselves from the hard truth.

Too often truth-telling sessions degenerate into shouting matches, pouting contests, and power plays. Why? Because we can’t stand to say these words: “You’re right. I’m sorry.” We would rather have people lie and make us feel good than tell us truths that make us uncomfortable.

p. 62

(Hope Has Its Reasons: From the Search for Self to the Surprise of Faith by Rebecca Manley Pippert) San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, Publishers. Copyright – Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1989.

Perhaps best of all, in the light of what we have looked at earlier, repentance reverses denial. We no longer hide from the truth, or need to. And it isn’t just that the truth is inescapable, it’s liberating. But it is at the point of repentance that we see that denial is not an invention of psychology. At its deepest, it is the diabolical face of sin. Long before psychology, the Bible said that sin means that we “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

p. 138

(You Don't Have to Quit. by Ray and Anne Ortlund) Nashville, TN: Oliver-Nelson. Copyright – Anne and Ray Ortlund, 1988.

She reminds us of a little poem:

Then here's to you,  
           And here's to me,  
 And may we never  
           Disagree.  
 But if we do—  
 Then nuts to you,  
           And here's to me!

p. 162

(If Those Who Reach Could Touch by Gail & Gordon MacDonald)

The oldest son of singer Bing Crosby, Gary, writes of the breakdown of his relationship with his father and pins it all on their inability to communicate. The father was the idol of millions of Americans for whom he crooned songs for several decades. Professionally, he was a remarkable communicator. But in his home, his son writes, he was unable to express love or joy for his children in a way that they could understand what he was saying. As a result, everyone in the family suffered terribly.

p. 59

(The Trauma of Transparency by J. Grant Howard)

At this stage in God's program the Holy Spirit is the resident teacher. Resident, because He resides in every believer. He gives us truth, for He is the Spirit of truth. We have what we need—a relationship with a person who will always tell us the truth.

How does He go about this? Not as a cold, impersonal commentator, but as a warm, friendly companion, who comes alongside as our helper. He teaches and reminds us; He bears witness to us; He guides, speaks and discloses all the truth to us. His ultimate purpose in communicating truth is simple and singular—to glorify Christ.

p. 89

This is our **KEY VERSE** for Study #8:

**You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Got the P.B.A. Disease (Pretty Bad Attitude)**

Paul really senses a change, not only in orientation in these people being influenced by these false teachers, but he can also tell that there has been a dramatic change in their relationship with him personally.

This is the **REASON** he asks the questions. The **BIG QUESTION** is in verse 16:

**“SO THEN HAVE I BECOME YOUR ENEMY BY TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?”**

**Barker & Kohlenberger says:**

Why had Paul become their enemy? The only possible explanation is that he had become an offense to them through telling them the truth. Unfortunately, this is often the case for those who are faithful to Christ's teaching.  
p. 731

**Bartlett says:**

How typical is this reaction to wholesome admonition of the attitude of men and women today! Regardless of how much he may need it, the average person resents correction. But the religious leader must not take counsel of his fears when faced with the duty of administering a much needed reproof. Danger does not dissolve duty. The servant of Christ dare not change his course with every shift in the wind of popular favor. Some pulpits, it is to be feared, are too much like the drugstore that specializes in candy, soda and almost everything else, to the neglect of its medical supplies.

They who resent being rebuked for sin and error by their leaders need to learn that scorn for storm warning is powerless to ward off the impending tempest.  
p. 87

Eadie says:

Their feeling toward him had been that of extreme kindness and indulgence, and he might ask, Have I, who once was the object of your intense affection, become the object of your hatred?

p. 327

Fergusson says:

1. For Christians to entertain malice, or a spirit of private revenge one against another, as it is in any case sinful, so when there hath been no personal injury offered, it is abominable; and hardly can it be conceived that a man of conscience will be guilty of it: for Paul, having declared that they had done him no injury, but shown much love and reverence unto him, denieth that there was any just reason why they could so much as conceive that he was turned an enemy unto them; “Am I therefore become your enemy?”

p. 75

Hendriksen says:

Are the Galatians unable to tolerate the truth? Are they like a foolish woman who breaks her mirror because it reveals the wrinkles on her face? Do they not realize that were the apostles, in this important matter, concealing the truth, he would be committing a crime? Do they resemble those fickle church-members who are always demanding that their minister says nothing but “nice things” to them?

p. 173

Henry says:

He again asks (v. 16), “*Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* How is it that I, who was heretofore your favourite, am now accounted your enemy? It is no uncommon thing for men to account those their enemies who are really their best friends; for so, undoubtedly, those are who tell them the truth.

p. 1842



Hogg & Vine says:

. . . ‘Can this be the consequence of my plain dealing with you, that you look upon me no longer as a friend but actually as an enemy, as one hostile to you’?

“Tell the truth” is in the present continuous sense; it is possible that the reference is to something he had said to them on his second visit, but more probably he speaks of the contents of this letter.  
p. 207

Lange says:

. . . Since you were so minded towards me, can I be afterwards regarded as your enemy only **because I tell you the truth** (instead of speaking according to your fancy). The sentence is introduced somewhat abruptly, or the inference implied in . . . is not so very obvious. It may be explained, however, from the emotional character of the language. The emphasis lies on “tell the truth;” but in the first instance “enemy” . . . as constituting a contrast, must be made prominent; it therefore stands first, and by placing . . . *at the end*, this also is emphasized.  
p. 107

Lange says:

Ver. 16. HEUBNER:—Him who tells us the truth, we ought to count for our true and best friend.  
p. 110

Lenski says:

Paul’s emotion betrays itself in the ellipsis of his thought. At one time the Galatians counted themselves blessed for having Paul in their midst, but this is passed. Is the opposite now the case? **And so have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**  
p. 222

Lightfoot says:

. . . ‘Can it be that I have become your enemy?’  
p. 176

Luther says:

The Apostle wants his Galatians to know that just because he had told them the truth they are not to think that he dislikes them. “I told you the truth because I love you.”  
p. 178

MacArthur says:

The Galatians had become so confused that, in spite of their previous affection for Paul, some had come to regard him as their enemy. The apostle reminds them that he had not harmed them, but merely told them the truth—a truth that had once brought them great joy . . .  
p. 1671

McGee says:

I had always wanted to place on the pulpit, facing the preacher, the words, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” A very fine officer of the church I served in downtown Los Angeles did this for me after he heard me express this desire. There is another verse I wanted to place on the audience side of the pulpit, but I never had the nerve to do it. It is these words of Paul: “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” As you know, many folk today really don’t want the preacher to tell the truth from the pulpit. They would much rather he would say something complimentary that would smooth their feathers and make them feel good. We all like to have our backs rubbed, and there is a lot of back-rubbing from the contemporary pulpit rather than the declaration of the truth.  
p. 179

Pinnock says:

The change came about because he told them some unpalatable truth. “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?” (v. 16). Speaking the truth in love is a Christian virtue but is not always welcomed. When Paul told the Galatians some painful truths, they completely changed their attitude toward him. Like so many of us, their enthusiasm for a Bible teacher dried up as soon as he got onto some unwelcome subjects which convicted them. They wished to be selective in their obedience to Christian truths, accepting those they liked and ignoring the rest. They needed to learn a lesson. The authority of God’s Word does not disappear when an unpleasant teaching is encountered. God’s Word has authority in whatever it teaches, whether we happen to like it or not.  
p. 62

Ridderbos says:

However, this intimate relationship has now given place to another. Paul can find no other explanation than that they apparently do not want to hear the truth from him anymore. Just what Paul has in mind cannot be definitely made out.  
p. 168

Vos says:

“So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?” the apostle inquires. “So then” (Gk, *hōste*) is often used to introduce a conclusion: in view of your change of feelings toward me. “Have I become hostile” is a better translation; the meaning is not “held in enmity by you.” In essence Paul asks, “Do you think I have become hostile to you just because I have told you the truth?” Obviously the Gentiles were well disposed toward him on his first visit to minister to them; so apparently on the second journey he was forced to speak plainly to them about the Judaizing error and a barrier arose between them. It is not our enemy but our best friend who makes the effort to tell us the truth about ourselves.  
p. 79

v. 17 They are eagerly desiring you but not rightly, desiring to shut you out in order that you might be seeking them.

The NET Bible translates verse 17:

They court you eagerly, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you would seek them eagerly.

Peterson paraphrases verse 17:

Those heretical teachers go to great lengths to flatter you, but their motives are rotten. They want to shut you out of the free world of God's grace so that you will always depend on them for approval and direction, making them feel important.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles these remaining verses and then says:

*An appeal to consider Paul's attitude toward them (4:17-20).*

**4:17-18.** While Paul's attitude toward the Galatians was guileless, the legalists had improper motives. The apostle spoke the truth (cf. v. 16); the Judaizers used flattery. They wanted **to alienate** (*ekkleisai*, lit., "to lock out") the Galatians from Paul and his teaching so that they would be shut up instead to the false teachers and their influence. In an interesting double use of the verb "be zealous" Paul said that the Judaizers were **zealous to win . . . over** the Galatians so that the latter would **be zealous for** the Judaizers!

The first word **“THEY”** in verse 17 lets us know that now Paul is speaking about the Judaizers or the legalists who have stirred up the Galatians and what their *modus operandi* is.

The word **“THEY”** points to the **FALSE TEACHERS** who are actively involved in this Galatian ministry.

**“THEY ARE EAGERLY DESIRING YOU** [zealously courting your favor] **BUT [NEGATIVELY] NOT RIGHTLY”**—they have hidden desires—**DESIRING TO SHUT YOU OUT** [their **PURPOSE** is] **IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT BE SEEKING THEM.”**

These false teachers really want you but the only reason they have for it is so that they can add another scalp to their belt. They are shutting you out by requiring that you be circumcised and keep parts of the law which they have prescribed. Their **PURPOSE** in doing this is:

**“IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT BE SEEKING THEM.”**

Have you ever known a girl who really likes a guy but he is just passively interested, and she sort of puts up this big front and acts like she does not care and really is not interested? And then have you ever watched the guy get really interested in a hurry? Hey, this is a real challenge.

The Judaizers were doing the same thing. They were shutting out the Galatians so that they should be seeking them.

**Martin Luther said:**

Satan’s satellites often soft-soap the people.  
(unknown)

“The Curse of the Black Lords” by Peter Elkind. Texas Monthly, 18 May 1990 94.

Terri’s five-page official biography, distributed to purchasers of Conscious Development correspondence courses, says she “has always felt that the Masters were her real family.” Similarly, the members of Terri’s inner circle—including David Goodman—would soon come to regard one another as their real family.

Terri encouraged her followers to limit their involvement with anyone else—even relatives. “Attachments”—including wives and children—are “the most insidious and deceitful of the destructive passions,” she wrote in one of her lessons, for they could leave no time “for spiritual devotions . . . the liberation of your own soul is the one thing for which you are in this world.” p. 169

But why? To outsiders, the Goodmans had everything. David, a brilliant Yale Ph.D., had quit a tenured professorship to fulfill his dream of being his own boss. Glenda, the daughter of a North Dallas physician, typed letters and kept the books for his flourishing business as an investment adviser. After several failed marriages (three for David, one for Glenda), they seemed inseparable, ecstatic with each other’s company.

What outsiders didn’t know—what even their closest relatives didn’t know—was that the Goodmans had embarked on a bizarre and agonizing spiritual journey. Like millions of New Age travelers, David and Glenda had set out in search of enlightenment. Some of what they found seemed marvelous. They had visions of “the purple realm,” a place of high temples and shimmering pools. They learned that they had originally been incarnated as Adam and Eve, that they had lived 800,000 lifetimes, and that they were now no longer David and Glenda, but Jupiter and Venus, the Roman god and goddess.

But ultimately the Goodmans had found themselves on a dark and lonely path: waging deadly battle with evil “Black Lords,” erecting metaphysical “shields” to protect themselves from danger, enduring karmic poison to prove their faith, cutting off contact with their parents and children for fear of being infected with “negative energies.”

Glenda had written of her agony in an aborted letter to her son. The police retrieved the crumpled sheet of paper from a trash can beneath her desk. “I am extremely depressed right now—and would love to have the nerve to kill myself,” Glenda wrote. “But so far I can’t get up the gumption.” pp. 96-97

Matthew 7:15 (NASB)

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Romans 16:17-18 (NASB)

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

2 Peter 2:1-2 (NASB)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

1 John 4:1 (NASB)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Anders says:

**Appeal to their motives (vv. 17-20)**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *Zealous opponents should not be able to woo you away from the truth of God’s salvation in Christ, but you should trust the motives and actions of the one who first led you to Christ.*

p. 52

**Baxter says:**

Paul is amazed that the Galatians could listen to a “different” Gospel which would *cheat* them of these privileges; and he would have them realise sharply that their bewitching new teachers were playing that very trick on them: “They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out” (verse 17).

p. 147

**Henry says:**

There may appear to be a great deal of zeal where yet there is but little truth and sincerity.

p. 1843

**MacArthur says:**

The Judaizers appeared to have a genuine interest in the Galatians, but their true motive was to exclude the Galatians from God’s gracious salvation and win recognition for themselves.

p. 1671

**Wiersbe says:**

A true servant of God does not “use people” to build up himself or his work: he ministers in love to help people know Christ better and glorify Him. Beware of that religious worker who wants your exclusive allegiance because he is the only one who is right. He will use you as long as he can and then drop you for somebody else . . .

p. 99



Wiersbe says:

They had not lost the *experience* of salvation—they were all Christians, but they were losing the *enjoyment* of their salvation and finding satisfaction in their works instead. Sad to say, *they did not realize their losses*. They actually thought they were becoming better Christians by substituting law for grace, and the religious deeds of the flesh for the fruit of the Spirit.

Is *your* Christian life moving forward into liberty or backward into bondage? Think carefully before you answer.

p. 99

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

### **Temptation: How Not to Get Hooked**

Recently my wife and I went fly-fishing for the first time. Our guides told us that “to catch a fish you have to think like a fish.” They said that to a fish life is about the maximum gratification of appetite at the minimum expenditure of energy. To a fish, life is “see a fly, want to fly, eat a fly.” A rainbow trout never really reflects on where his life is headed. A girl carp rarely says to a boy carp, *I don't feel you're as committed to our relationship as I am. I wonder, do you love me for me or just for my body?* The fish are just a collection of appetites. A fish is a stomach, a mouth, and a pair of eyes.

While we were on the water, I was struck by how dumb fish are. *Hey, fish, swallow this. It's not the real thing; it's just a lure. You'll think it will feed you, but it won't. It'll trap you. If you were to look closely, fish, you would see the hook. You'd know once you're hooked that it's just a matter of time before your enemy reels you in.*

You'd think fish would wise up and notice the hook or see the line. You'd think fish would look around at all their fish friends who go for a lure and fly off into space and never return. But they don't. It is ironic. We say fish swim together in a school, but they never learn.

Aren't you glad we are smarter?

pp. 137-8

Paul acknowledges that these **FALSE TEACHERS** are **“EAGERLY DESIRING”** them. Then he contrasts that with: **“BUT NOT RIGHTLY.”**

They have a **PURPOSE** in mind:

**“THEY ARE . . . DESIRING TO SHUT YOU OUT”**

**“IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT BE SEEKING THEM.”**

v. 18 But it is good to be desired eagerly in a good thing always and not only when I am present with you.

The NET Bible translates verse 18:

However, it is good to be sought eagerly for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you.

Peterson paraphrases verse 18:

It is a good thing to be ardent in doing good, but not just when I am in your presence. Can't you continue the same concern for both my person and my message when I am away from you that you had when I was with you?

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Acknowledging that it was good for anyone to be sought after, Paul nonetheless insisted that the intention must be honorable, but in the case of the Judaizers it was not.

Whereas they are desiring you wrongly:

**"IT IS GOOD TO BE DESIRED EAGERLY IN A GOOD THING."**

**"AND NOT ONLY WHEN I AM PRESENT WITH YOU,"** for I desire you for the truth which resides in our Lord Jesus Christ, and I am desiring this even while I am absent from you.

Paul is saying:

"I have your best interest at stake; I desire you for the good things and not for those things which are evil. I am making a plea to you which is for your own benefit and for your own good."

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

18 Though there are several possible meanings of this verse depending on who is exercising such zeal, it is best to refer the zeal to the Galatians, which Paul wishes was as intense now in pursuit of the right thing as it was when he was with them. This verse, then, makes a transition that, though somewhat abrupt, leads on to the thought of Paul's having been with them in the past and of his wish to be with them once again if possible (v.20).  
p. 732

Ridderbos says:

The sense of the whole passage is this, then, that Paul, thinking of the efforts of the heretical teachers, admits it to be a good and desirable thing to desire the favor and love of the churches. Paul wants these himself also, but only *in a good matter*. Nor does he want to have it when he is with them, only to be forgotten and rejected by them when he has gone away.  
pp. 169-70

Wuest says:

But it is good to be zealously courted in a good thing at all times, and not only when I am present with you . . .  
p. 207

v. 19 My little children of whom again I am experiencing the pains of birth until which time Christ should be formed in you.

The NET Bible translates verse 19:

My children—I am again undergoing birth pains until Christ is formed in you!

Peterson paraphrases verse 19:

Do you know how I feel right now, and will feel until Christ's life becomes visible in your lives? Like a mother in the pain of childbirth.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**4:19-20.** The apostle, on the other hand, had always had good motives regarding the Galatians. Addressing them tenderly as **my dear children** (*tekna mou*, an expression found only here in Paul's epistles), Paul compared himself to a mother in the throes of birth pangs. He had experienced this once for their salvation; he was in travail **again** for their deliverance from false teachers.

But a sudden change in metaphors occurred with the expression **until Christ is formed in you**. Paul longed for these believers to be transformed into (*morphōthē*, lit., "take on the form of"; cf. *morphē* in Phil. 2:6-7) the image of Christ. This expression describes the Christian life as a kind of reincarnation of Christ in a believer's life. This is in fact God's ideal and purpose—for Christ to live His life in and then through each believer (cf. Gal. 2:20).

Galatians 2:20 (DAV)

With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

He calls them “brethren” back in verse 12.

Now he calls them “MY LITTLE CHILDREN” here in verse 19.

A Christian life is virtually a reincarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 (NASB)

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 4:15 (NASB)

For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

### Calvin points out:

That Christ should be formed in us is the same thing with our being formed in Christ; for we are born so as to become new creatures in him; and he, on the other hand, is born in us, so that we live his life. . . . If ministers wish to do anything, let them labour to form Christ, not to form themselves, in their hearers.

pp. 132-3

### Ian Thomas quite ably illustrates this truth in a couple of ways:

Our lives are like an empty glove and when Christ comes in, He forms Himself within us and activates our total being. The only thing that limits Him is our availability. He wants to give us His strength for our weakness, His wisdom for our folly, His drive for our drift, His love for our list, His grace for our greed, His joy for our jealousy, His peace for our problems, His courage for our fears.

(source unknown)

### Dr. Barnhouse points out:

Carlisle Castle has slits in its walls that used to serve as windows. An iron bar stretched from top to bottom. In the sill you could see and feel grooves worn into the stone by the fingers of men who were imprisoned at the castle. When the Scotch border was the place of feud and skirmish, the prisoners looked out towards the hills of Scotland. They so longed to get back to their homes that they literally pulled at the stones with their fingers. Perhaps in their spirits this made them feel that they were escaping from prison and away to Scotland.

I wonder if Christ in your heart is straining to get out in love and mercy to those around you. Perhaps He cannot get out to live His life through you. Christ lives in me to indwell and to possess to the full in order to shine out, to live out, to flow out. That is the normal experience of the Christian when he is right with God.

(source unknown)

(The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives by Dallas Willard) San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row. Copyright - Dallas Willard, 1988.

But the one lesson we learn from all available sources is that there is no “quick fix” for the human condition. The approach to wholeness is for humankind a process of great length and difficulty that engages all our own powers to their fullest extent over a long course of experience. But we don’t like to hear this. We are somewhat misled by the reports of experiences by many great spiritual leaders, and we assign their greatness to these great moments they were given, neglecting the years of slow progress they endured before them. Francis de Sales wisely counsels us not to expect transformation in a moment, though it is possible for God to give it.

The ordinary purification and healing, whether of the body or of the mind, takes place only little by little, by passing from one degree to another with labor and patience. The angels upon Jacob’s ladder had wings; yet they flew not, but ascended and descended in order from one step to another. The soul that rises from sin to devotion may be compared to the dawning of the day, which at its approach does not expel the darkness instantaneously but only little by little.

Thus it is necessary to say that conversion, as understood in Christian circles, is not the same thing as the required transformation of the self. The fact that a long course of experience is needed for the transformation is not set aside when we are touched by the new life from above.

p. 70



Lovett points out:

**FORMED.** When Paul came to the Galatians the first time, God used him to DELIVER them from heathenism. Now all his good work is being threatened by Judaism. He complains of having to go through ANOTHER delivery process, this time to deliver them from the Judaizers. He is NOT speaking of deliverance for salvation, for the Galatians have already received the Spirit and the gifts were in operation to confirm (Gal. 3:5). It was a deliverance from legal bondage, for the Judaizers were trying to shape (form) the Galatians into slaves of the Law instead of the free sons of God. Paul knew that Christians cannot mature under the bondage of legalism, so now he must deliver them from the false teachers that they may continue in Christian liberty and mature after the likeness of Christ. Spiritual freedom is essential for Christian growth.  
p. 53

Vos agrees with this when he says:

. . . Paul calls them “little children” and speaks of their need of a second spiritual birth. When he was with them the first time he had suffered birth pangs, as it were, until they were born unto newness of spiritual life from the bondage of heathenism. Now he is suffering birth pangs a second time (“again”) until they are born unto newness of spiritual life from the bondage of Jewish legalism. “Until Christ be formed in you,” until you become the sort of believers in whom Christ alone lives, must be linked with Galatians 2:20. The idea is that Christ shall take up His residence in the believer and so dominate every phase of his life as to mold that life. Such an experience would, of course, contrast dramatically with that of a believer whose religion consisted in externals governed by the law.  
p. 81

**MARY** serves as a good illustration of the truth here in that she was available for this ministry of the Holy Spirit within her:

Luke 1:38 (NASB)

And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary could have said:

"Lord, I'm engaged. I don't want God to interfere with my plans. This is going to spoil everything. After all, who is going to believe my story? Nope, I'm sorry, Lord, You are going to have to get someone else. This is not the job for me."

Her total availability to God left the responsibility up to God to do what He had said that He would do in her and through her.

How many are the deterrents in our daily lives that keep us from allowing Christ to be formed within us? These Galatians had a **PRETTY BAD ATTITUDE** simply because they failed to recognize the fact that the apostle was speaking the truth in love with the thought in mind of clearing the decks so that Christ could be formed within them.

How much we miss in our Christian lives because we get resentful and bitter and irritated when there are those people that God puts in our lives to assist us and to help us grow towards maturity. And we resist them by our resentment and fail to hear what they are trying to say.

As a result, the further formation of Jesus Christ within the life is limited. How many have turned in selfish directions to materialistic goals, to things which are temporary rather than those things which are eternal? And as a result, Christ is unable to continue His program of reconstruction in their lives. It is not only that we would turn to legalism, and by the law endeavor to be Christlike, that keeps the living Lord from being all that He wants to be within our lives, but many of these other things likewise serve as effective deterrents from this process which the Spirit desires to go on within our lives in changing us more into the image of the Lord Jesus.

**James 4:4** (NASB)

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

**1 John 2:15-17** (NASB)

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

How beautiful is the work of the Spirit of God in the heart of one who follows the prescription given in:

**James 4:6-10** (NASB)

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Anders says:

**4:19-20.** The apostle, on the other hand, had always had proper motives toward the Galatians. Now he reveals his tender love for them. Addressing them tenderly as **my dear children**, Paul compared himself to a mother in the midst of birth pangs. Paul agonized over them initially as he implored them to become Christians. Now he is agonizing over their spiritual growth. Paul longs for **Christ** to be **formed** in them. His passion is for them to be conformed to the character of Christ. This transformation is God's purpose for each believer as Christ lives in us and through us (Gal. 2:20). Paul is **perplexed** by their spiritual waywardness. He wants to be with them and correct them firmly but gently.  
pp. 52-53

Barclay says:

Paul repeatedly speaks of the Christian as being sealed by the Holy Spirit, or with the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1.22; Eph. 1.13; 4.30). In the ancient world of trade a seal was commonly used much as a trade-mark is used today. It was the sign of ownership, or the proof that an article was the product of a certain man or firm. So, for instance, jars of wine were sealed with the seal of the owner of the vineyard from which they came. This, then, means that the possession of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that a man belongs to God. The possession of the Spirit is God's trade-mark upon a man. If a man has the Spirit, that man's life is the product of the workmanship of God.

In the thought of Paul the spirit of a man is that part of a man which is implanted in him by God; it is the presence and the power of God in him; it is the coming of the risen Christ into residence within the man. And the result of that is a link between the man and God which gives him a new fellowship with God and a new power to express that fellowship in strength and beauty of life.

p. 15

Barclay says:

In the end Paul uses a vivid metaphor. His bringing the Galatians to Christ cost him a pain like a mother's travail; and now he has to go through it all again. Christ is in them, as it were in embryo. He has to bring them to birth in Christ.

p. 43

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul now comes to his main point about the actions and motives of the legalizers: his own attitude to the Galatians was quite different. He had not come to them in order to build up his own personal following, as the false teachers had. He had come to help them—to see that they were born again and to labor for them until Christ himself should be formed in them. In calling the Galatians his “dear children” and in speaking of his labor “pains” on their behalf, Paul pictures himself as a mother who went through the pains of childbirth when they converted to Christ; he is now in labor again as the result of their apparent defection. He wants them to know that his present pastoral concern matches his evangelistic fervor; indeed, neither has diminished because of the Galatians; listening to the legalizers.  
p. 732

Bartlett says:

This is a bold figure that Paul uses here, one that is wrung from his heart under great stress of emotion. The apostle represents himself as the mother suffering birth pangs over them. The metaphor is that of the embryo developing into the child. The Galatian believers were Paul’s spiritual children. As he had travailed to bring them from idolatry into a new life in Christ, so now he is laboring to deliver them from the Judaizers so that the Christ-life may be fully formed in them. In passing it might be observed that Christ would be born and grow in more hearts today were there more of this Pauline passion for souls on the part of the rank and file of Christians in our modern churches. Any legalism rolling in like a fog into the soul of the believer hampers the work of the Holy Spirit in manifesting Christ through him in His beauty and attractiveness.  
p. 89

Bickel & Jantz say:

Until this section of his letter, Paul has been tough. Now Paul gets tender. He addresses the Galatians as “my dear children” (4:19) and openly agonizes over their lack of spiritual growth. Paul longs for Christ to be “developed” (NLT) and “formed” (NIV) in them. He wants so much for these spiritual children to grow into mature Christians, whose very lives are conformed to the character of Christ. The idea that Paul wants the Galatians to imitate him ties directly to this concept of spiritual formation, which takes place when we incorporate the character of Christ into our lives. This theme runs throughout Paul’s letters:

*Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2).*

*Clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires (Romans 13:14).*

*Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy (Ephesians 4:23-24).*

*Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).*

Becoming like Christ doesn’t happen automatically. As these verses advise, we must take responsibility for our spiritual formation by . . .

- letting God transform us;
- clothing ourselves with Jesus;
- putting on the new nature God has given us; and
- inviting the Holy Spirit to fill and control us.

pp. 99-100

Calvin says:

*Of whom I travail in birth again.* This phrase is added, to convey still more fully his vehement affection, which endured, on their account, the throes and pangs of a mother. It denotes likewise his anxiety; for “a woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.” (John xvi. 25) The Galatians had already been conceived and brought forth; but, after their revolt, they must now be begotten a second time.

*Until Christ be formed in you.* By these words he soothes their anger; for he does not set aside the former birth, but says that they must be again nourished in the womb, as if they had not yet been fully formed. That Christ should be formed in us is the same thing with our being formed in Christ; for we are born so as to become new creatures in him; and he, on the other hand, is born in us, so that we live his life.

p. 132

Dunnam says:

Personal Christian maturity comes as Christ is formed in us.

Paul's address in verse 19 is one of the tenderest he ever spoke: “*My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.*” With sharpness and clarity Paul states the passion of his life and his vision for a new humanity. This is not only a vibrant expression of concern for a people Paul anguished in love over, it is the epitome of his longing for all people. Phillips' translation of this verse has an even more poignant feeling about it: “Oh, my dear children, I feel the pangs of childbirth all over again till Christ be formed with you.”

This is the same longing Paul had for the Christians of Ephesus: that they arrive at real maturity, “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). In Colossians the aim of the apostle's preaching and teaching was to “present every man mature in Christ” (1:28). This was no shallow goal, nothing taken lightly, no hit or miss proposition of a casual sermon. “For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me” (Col. 1:29 RSV).

p. 89



Eadie says:

At the first he had travailed in birth with them; and now the process, with all its pain and sorrow, was being repeated. The sense of the verb in such a context is not mere sorrow, but also enduring anxiety and toil. No wonder that those who had cost him so much were so dear to him . . . whom he had begotten in the gospel.

p. 353

Fergusson says:

He doth yet further pursue the intended scope, which is to persuade them of his affection to them, by making it yet more appear that his zeal for them was of the right stamp, and not like that of the false apostles; in that, first, he was at great trouble and pains for their good, such as are the pains of a woman in travail. Secondly, his design in all his labour and pains was, not so much to make them affect him, (which was all that his adversaries sought after,) as to get the image of Christ (which being once wrought in them by the means of his ministry, was now marred by their defection) again repaired in them . . .

p. 77

Gutzke says:

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (4:19). This would indicate that when they at first were becoming Christians, when Paul was preaching as an evangelist, he actually experienced (as we would say) birth pangs in trying to bring these people to faith. He was actually struggling in his own spirit, agonizing that they might come to faith. Now he finds himself doing the same thing, just as if he was having labor pains all over again, because they seemed to be off on the wrong track. “Until Christ be formed in you”: until you get the real truth and understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ.

p. 97



Harrison says:

To the Apostle Paul this lapse into legalism is exceedingly serious. With great depth of feeling and agitation of spirit he pleads with his readers to recover themselves to the Lord's Side and to the freedom of life there is in Him. For such recovery He has this one plea, this one remedy as all-sufficient:

*"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19, R.V.).*

The Christian life is, virtually, the re-incarnation of Christ. Nothing short of this will meet the case. The Son of God, formed in one body by the Spirit, now formed in the believer's body by the power of the same Spirit.

How bold! The Creator come to live in the creature, to be his life and to Himself control that life. God knows no other way. Nothing short of this is really Christian.

Now we see the affront these elementary religious rites offer Him. They not only bring *us* under their bondage; they put the inliving Christ under bondage. To think of the indwelling Christ having to go through this rigmarole of law-performances with us!

To give this in-formed, inliving Christ His full freedom the practical effectiveness of the cross must also be considered.  
pp. 76-77

Hendriksen says:

Paul compares himself to a mother who is giving birth to a child. Thus also in I Thess. 2:7 he says, employing a figure only slightly different: “But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherishes her own children,” meaning: as when a mother-nurse warms, fondles, cherishes the children that are her very own because she gave them birth. Here in Gal. 4:19 note the word *again*: “for whom I am again suffering birth-pangs.” Once before he had endured these labor pains for them, as Luke so vividly portrays in Acts 13 and 14. At that time he, as God’s instrument, had brought these children to the point where they loved him and trusted him; even better: where they loved and trusted *Christ*, placing their hope for salvation in him alone. And now, having been displaced in their affections by others, Paul’s birth-pangs have returned. He hopes with all the ardor of his soul that, for the sake of their own salvation, the Galatians will renew their former attachment to him. O that they might be his children once more, as children imitating him! O that they might become as he is (verse 12), trusting solely in Christ for their salvation! O that they would cast aside all reliance on self, on law-works, as he, by the grace of God, had learned to do!

p. 175

Henry says:

He here expresses his great affection to them. He was not like them—one thing when among them and another when absent from them. Nor was he like their false teachers, who pretended a great deal of affection to them, when at the same time they were only consulting their own interest. He calls them *his children* as he justly might, yea, he styles them his *little children*, which may possibly have a respect to their present behaviour, whereby they showed themselves too much like little children. He expresses his concern for them. *He travailed in birth for them that Christ might be formed in them*, that they might become Christians indeed.

p. 1843

Hogg & Vine say:

**v. 19. My little children**—*teknion* (a diminutive of *teknon*, for which see *Thessalonians*, p. 159, and at 3. 26, above) is found here only in the letters of the Apostle Paul. In N.T. it occurs only in the plural, and in each place is a term of affection used by a teacher to his disciples under circumstances calling for tender appeal:  
p. 210

Hogg & Vine say:

**of whom I am—in travail**—*ōdinō*, as in v. 27 and Rev. 12. 2. Cp. the corresponding noun, *ōdin*, in 1 Thess. 5. 3 and the somewhat similar metaphor in Col. 2. 1.

**again**—as once before he had laboured for their souls when he preached the gospel to them at the first. Then his travail was for their deliverance from bondage to idols, v. 8, now it was for their deliverance from the formal and external religion of the Jews, v. 9.  
pp. 210-11

Hogg & Vine say:

When the Apostle brought the gospel to the Galatian cities, his aim was not merely to induce men to change their religion, to forsake polytheism, the worship of many gods, for monotheism, the worship of one God; it was that they might receive life in Christ. So now his anxiety on their account was not merely that they should be intellectually persuaded of, and confirmed in, the true nature of the gospel and its conditions, but that the new life therein imparted might grow in them.  
p. 211

### Ironside says:

And now in his deep affliction he exclaims, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” In other words, I remember when you were saved, I went through the very pangs of birth in my soul, and now I am going through it all again because I am in such anxiety about you. “I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.” In other words, “I am writing some strong things to you, but I would like to talk tenderly, lovingly, to you if I were only there.

p. 156

### Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

My relation to you is not merely that of one *zealously courting* you (vss. 17, 18), but that of a *father* to his *children* (I Cor. 4:15). **I travail in birth**—i.e., like a mother in pain till the birth of her child. **again**—a second time. The former time was when I was “present with you” (vs. 18; cf. *Note*, vs. 13).

**Christ be formed in you**—that you may live nothing but Christ, and think nothing but Christ (ch. 2:20), and glory in nothing but Him, and His death, resurrection, and righteousness . . .

p. 1271

### Lenski says:

The figure of the mother in travail advances the thought of zeal for the Galatians; by making this a second travailing Paul illustrates his unchanged heart: he would do over again all that he had once done for the Galatians. Yet the figure does not remain with the thought that has already been expressed, it extends to the new thought of pain, for the verb means to undergo birth pains. This also is included, that the Galatians are making the maternal heart of Paul suffer all the birth pains a second time, something which no offspring ever does in nature. When a babe is born, it does not know what pain its birth causes, but these Galatians have already been born, and they should, indeed, know that unnecessarily, unnaturally they are causing Paul to suffer all these pains over again in even a more severe way. But he is ready to suffer so if only Christ be formed in the Galatians by this new ordeal he is undergoing.

pp. 228-29

Lightfoot says:

. . . '*my little children*,' a mode of address common in St John, but not found elsewhere in St Paul. This however is no argument for the reading . . . in preference to . . . for St Paul does not elsewhere use the vocatives . . .  
p. 178

Lightfoot says:

. . . 'I travailed with you once in bringing you to Christ. By your relapse you have renewed a mother's pangs in me.'  
p. 178

Lovett says:

**FORMED.** When Paul came to the Galatians the first time, God used him to DELIVER them from heathenism. Now all his good work is being threatened by Judaism. He complains of having to go through ANOTHER delivery process, this time to deliver them from the Judaizers. He is NOT speaking of deliverance for salvation, for the Galatians have already received the Spirit and the gifts were in operation to confirm (Gal. 3:5). It was a deliverance from legal bondage, for the Judaizers were trying to shape (form) the Galatians into slaves of the Law instead of the free sons of God. Paul knew that Christians cannot mature under the bondage of legalism, so now he must deliver them from the false teachers that they may continue in Christian liberty and mature after the likeness of Christ. Spiritual freedom is essential for Christian growth.  
p. 53

Lucado says:

When my daughter Jenna was a toddler, I used to take her to a park not far from our apartment. One day as she was playing in a sandbox, an ice-cream salesman approached us. I purchased her a treat, and when I turned to give it to her, I saw her mouth was full of sand. Where I intended to put a delicacy, she had put dirt.

Did I love her with dirt in her mouth? Absolutely. Was she any less my daughter with dirt in her mouth? Of course not. Was I going to allow her to keep the dirt in her mouth? No way. I loved her right where she was, but I refused to leave her there. I carried her over to the water fountain and washed out her mouth. Why? Because I love her.

God does the same for us. He holds us over the fountain. “Spit out the dirt, honey,” our Father urges. “I’ve got something better for you.” And so he cleanses us of filth; immorality, dishonesty, prejudice, bitterness, greed. We don’t enjoy the cleansing; sometimes we even opt for the dirt over the ice cream. “I can eat dirt if I want to!” we pout and proclaim. Which is true—we can. But if we do, the loss is ours. God has a better offer. He wants us to be just like Jesus.

Isn’t that good news? You aren’t stuck with today’s personality. You aren’t condemned to “grumpydom.” You are tweakable. Even if you’ve worried each day of your life, you needn’t worry the rest of your life. So what if you were born a bigot? You don’t have to die one.

Where did we get the idea we can’t change? From whence come statements such as “It’s just my nature to worry.” Or, “I’ll always be pessimistic. I’m just that way,” or “I have a bad temper. I can’t help the way I react”? Who says? Would we make similar statements about our bodies? “It’s just my nature to have a broken leg. I can’t do anything about it.” Of course not. If our bodies malfunction, we seek help. Shouldn’t we do the same with our hearts? Shouldn’t we seek aid for our sour attitudes? Can’t we request treatment for our selfish tirades? Of course we can. Jesus can change our hearts. He wants us to have a heart like his. (From *Just Like Jesus* by Max Lucado)

pp. 75-76

### Luther says:

With every single word the Apostle seeks to regain the confidence of the Galatians. He now calls them lovingly his little children. He adds the simile: "Of whom I travail in birth again." As parents reproduce their physical characteristics in their children, so the apostles reproduced their faith in the hearts of the hearers, until Christ was formed in them. A person has the form of Christ when he believes in Christ to the exclusion of everything else. This faith in Christ is engendered by the Gospel as the Apostle declares in I Corinthians 4:15: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel"; and in II Corinthians 3:3, "Ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." The Word of God falling from the lips of the apostle or minister enters into the heart of the hearer. The Holy Ghost impregnates the Word so that it brings forth the fruit of faith. In this manner every Christian pastor is a spiritual father who forms Christ in the hearts of his hearers.

pp. 180-81

### MacArthur says:

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 (*morphoō*) 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, as 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.

p. 120



MacArthur says:

***My little children.*** Paul's only use of this affectionate phrase, which John uses frequently (1 John 2:1, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). ***until Christ is formed in you.*** In contrast to the evil motives of the Judaizers (*see note on 3:1*), Paul sought to bring the Galatians to Christlikeness. This is the goal of salvation . . .  
p. 1671

McGee says:

Paul addresses his allegory to the Galatian believers by using this tender expression, "My little children"—*children* is the Greek word *teknia*, meaning "born ones." Paul has a very tender heart, and he likens himself to a mother.  
p. 180

Patrick & Lowth say:

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again (*to renew you in the faith from whence ye are fallen*) until Christ be (*fully*) formed in you (*as the child is in the womb*),  
p. 737

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

**4:19** In a most tender way, Paul calls the Galatian Christians his **little children** because of their lack of spiritual growth and depth. The apostle also portrays himself as the Galatians' "spiritual mother." He was feeling the **labor** pains of their **birth** all over **again** because they had fallen into serious error.  
p. 1525



Ridderbos says:

In an affecting way, the passionate love surging in the apostle as he struggles for the preservation of the church breaks through. This is evident from the vocative *my little children* as well as from the expression that he is again *in travail* for them. In this Paul's passionate endeavor for the Galatians reaches out for the language of the tenderest mother's concern. If our view of the meaning of verse 18 be right, the transition from verse 18 to 19 follows easily. The longing to be again fully desired and trusted by the Galatians brings him to this new turn of the argument, in which as the climax of this whole passage all that moves Paul in his concern for the erring churches converges on one point. The expression *to be in travail* tells of the new pain and exertion which it is costing him to give birth to the Galatians as his spiritual children. The words *until Christ be formed in you* sustain that basic figure of speech. The spiritual struggle of the apostle is determined by this end, and the struggle will not cease until the end has been reached.

p. 170

Vos says:

. . . Paul calls them "little children" and speaks of their need of a second spiritual birth. When he was with them the first time he had suffered birth pangs, as it were, until they were born unto newness of spiritual life from the bondage of heathenism. Now he is suffering birth pangs a second time ("again") until they are born unto newness of spiritual life from the bondage of Jewish legalism. "Until Christ be formed in you," until you become the sort of believers in whom Christ alone lives, must be linked with Galatians 2:20. The idea is that Christ shall take up His residence in the believer and so dominate every phase of his life as to mold that life. Such an experience would, of course, contrast dramatically with that of a believer whose religion consisted in externals governed by the law.

p. 81

Wiersbe says:

We parents seem to outgrow our children. “When they’re little, they’re a handful; but when they’re grown, they’re a heartful!” I remember hearing my mother say, “When they’re little, they step on your toes; but when they’re grown, they step on your heart.”

This is what Paul was experiencing as he tried to help the Galatian believers with their confused spiritual lives.

p. 103

Wuest says:

An instance where a standard translation cannot bring out the full force of a Greek word is found in 4:19 where Paul writes: “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (A.V.). What did Paul mean by saying “until Christ be formed in you?” The English verb “form” means “to give form or shape to, to frame, construct, to fashion, to mold.” The verb here is in the passive voice. To translate according to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary from which this definition is taken would result in the following: “until Christ be given shape or form, constructed, fashions, molded.” But in what sense this is to be done the English reader is at a loss to know. The Greek word is *morphoomai*, a philosophical term referring to the act of giving outward expression of one’s inner nature, that expression coming from and being truly representative of that nature. The expanded translation reads, “until Christ be outwardly expressed in you.” Paul was speaking of the outward expression of the indwelling Christ which the Galatian Christians had lost because they had put themselves under the Mosaic law where there was no provision of an indwelling Holy Spirit for purposes of sanctification, one of whose ministries was to express the Lord Jesus outwardly through the believer. These Galatian saints had fallen out of sanctifying grace, and Paul prays that this outward expression of the indwelling Lord Jesus might be restored by their act of discarding law as a method of living their Christian lives and again coming under the sweet exhortations and powerful enablements of grace. This tremendous truth the expositor will not find in the standard English translation no matter how long he searches. The expanded translation gives it to him at first glance. This casts a flood of light upon the entire section (chapters 4 and 5) dealing with sanctification.

pp. 198-9

(Not I, But Christ by Stephen F. Olford) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.  
Copyright - Stephen F. Olford, 1995.

*Crucified with Christ, my Savior,  
I am dead to sin and shame;  
Now HIS LIFE rules my behavior—  
To the glory of His Name! Amen.*

Stephen F. Olford

p. 41

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Discovery House. Copyright—Oswald Chambers Publications  
Association, 1992.

## SANCTIFICATION

**“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us . . . sanctification . . .” (1 Corinthians 1:30).**

**The Life Side.** The mystery of sanctification is that the perfect qualities of Jesus Christ are imparted as a gift to me, not gradually, but instantly once I enter by faith into the realization that He “became for [me] . . . sanctification . . .” Sanctification means nothing less than the holiness of Jesus becoming mine and being exhibited in my life.

The most wonderful secret of living a holy life does not lie in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfect qualities of Jesus exhibit themselves in my human flesh. Sanctification is “Christ in you . . .” (Colossians 1:27). It is *His* wonderful life that is imparted to me in sanctification—imparted by faith as a sovereign gift of God’s grace. Am I willing for God to make sanctification as real in me as it is in His Word?

Sanctification means the impartation of the holy qualities of Jesus Christ to me. It is the gift of His patience, love, holiness, faith, purity, and godliness that is exhibited in and through every sanctified soul. Sanctification is not drawing from Jesus the power to be holy—it is drawing from Jesus the very holiness that was exhibited in Him, and that He now exhibits in me. Sanctification is an impartation, not an imitation. Imitation is something altogether different. The perfection of everything is in Jesus Christ, and the mystery of sanctification is that all the perfect qualities of Jesus are at my disposal. Consequently, I slowly but surely begin to live a life of inexpressible order, soundness, and holiness—“. . . kept by the power of God . . .” (1 Peter 1:5).  
(July 23)

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

I find Christ the most steadable friend and companion in the world to me now: the need and usefulness of Christ is seen best in trials. O, if he be not well worthy of his room! Lodge him in house and heart.  
p. 60

I know no sweeter way to heaven, than through free grace and hard trials together, and none of these cannot well want another.

Christ should be our night song and our morning song.  
p. 75

(365 Days of Hope: Encouragement for Those Facing Loss, Pain, and Disappointment by Joni Eareckson Tada and Dave & Jan Dravecky) Federal Way, WA: World Vision. Copyright– Joni Eareckson Tada, Dave Dravecky, and Jan Dravecky, 2005.

In the early days of my injury my father would come to the hospital every day and whisper to me with wet eyes, “In every day and in every way, you’re getting better and better and better.” He’d say it every time he came.

But my body never did shake off the paralysis. The pragmatist would say, “See, your father’s words were wishful thinking. You didn’t get better, Joni; instead you got stuck with a wheelchair.”

That’s not the way I choose to look at it. Daddy was right. Every day I did get better. Maybe not on the outside but on the inside. My soul became settled. My hope became clear. This is the sort of healing described here: “Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.” God is interested in healing the inside of a person. For me, a healed and happy heart is the best “better.” By a long shot.

*Joni Eareckson Tada*

(June 20)

### George Whitefield on True Conversion

George Whitefield, the great 18th century evangelist, spoke these words at a funeral service:

Do you think any farmer would have a crop of corn next year unless he plowed now? You may as well expect a crop of corn on unplowed ground as a crop of grace until the soul is convinced of its being undone without a Savior. That is the reason we have so many mushroom converts, so many persons that are always happy, happy, happy, and never were miserable. Why? Because their stony ground is not plowed up; they have not got a conviction of the law. They fall away. That makes me so cautious now, which I was not 30 years ago, of dubbing converts too soon. Now I wait a little, and see if people bring forth fruit; for there are so many blossoms which March winds blow away that I cannot believe they are converts till I see fruit brought forth.

*Citation: George Whitefield, "The Gospel Is a Dying Saint's Triumph"*

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(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)  
San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

We want to follow Jesus, but like Peter we also want to tell Jesus where to go. Jesus doesn't need our advice; he needs our faithful obedience. Discipleship means learning how to listen to Christ, not getting him to listen to us.

What are the supreme conditions of discipleship?

*"Jesus calls us: by Thy mercies, Saviour, may we hear Thy call, give our hearts to Thine obedience, serve and love Thee best of all." Amen.*  
p. 150

I find myself singing the third verse of:

**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
 I behold Thee as Thou art,  
 And Thy love, so pure, so changeless,  
 Satisfies my heart;  
 Satisfies its deepest longings,  
 Meets, supplies its every need,  
 Compasseth me round with blessings:  
 Thine is love indeed!  
 Jesus, I am resting, resting  
 In the joy of what Thou art.  
 I am finding out the greatness  
 of Thy loving heart.

v. 20 Moreover, I was longing to be present with you at this moment and could change my tone (voice), because I am perplexed (at a loss) about you.

The NET Bible translates verse 20:

I wish I could be with you now and change my tone of voice, because I am perplexed about you.

Peterson paraphrases verse 20:

Oh, I keep wishing that I was with you. Then I wouldn't be reduced to this blunt, letter-writing language out of sheer frustration.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Yet the apostle was **perplexed about** the Galatians because he felt their spiritual development was being arrested. He had a deep desire to be **with** them so that he could speak gently, though firmly, concerning his grave concerns.

Paul knew that he could put his heart into his voice, but that his pen stood between them, and Paul knew the power of his voice upon their hearts.

2 John 12 (NASB)

Having many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that your joy may be made full.

We read back in Galatians 4:11 that he is “afraid” about them.

Here he is “AT A LOSS” about them.

### Galatians 4:11 (DAV)

I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have laboured to the point of exhaustion for you.

We have the words:

“I,”

“ME,” and

“MY”

occurring **SIXTEEN TIMES** in these verses we have studied together in this passage.

Paul is very personal and intimate in his appeal to these Galatian believers. He confesses here in the final phrase of verse 20:

**“I AM PERPLEXED (AT A LOSS) ABOUT YOU.”**

**“I’m at my wit’s end about you and your condition.”**

Barclay says:

*My little children*—diminutives in Latin and Greek always express deep affection. John often uses this expression, but Paul uses it nowhere else; his heart is running over. We do well to note that Paul did not scold with bitter words. He yearned over his straying children. It was said of Florence Allshorn, the famous missionary and teacher, that if she had cause to rebuke any of her students she did so, as it were, with her arm around them. The accent of love will penetrate where the tones of anger will never find a way.  
p. 43



Fergusson says:

4. Though a minister may sometimes have reason to doubt what way to take with a people in order to their gaining, and be not a little perplexed lest there be not success answerable to his pains; yet he is not to give over, but must go on doing what is likeliest, and depending upon God for success: so doth Paul here; for, though “he stood in doubt of them,” or was “perplexed for them, yet he sendeth this epistle to them.  
p. 78

Gaebelein says:

He needed, so to speak, to travail in birth afresh with them till Christ should be formed in them. Nevertheless, he calls them his children: his love inspired him with confidence, and yet filled his heart with uneasiness. He would have desired to be with them that he might change his voice, suiting it to their state; not only teaching them the truth, but doing whatever their need required. Mark here the deep love of the apostle. Moses, faithful as he was, grew weary of the burden of the people and said: Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? (Num. xi:12); but the apostle is willing to travail in birth with them as his children a second time, in order that their souls might be saved.  
p. 222

Hogg & Vine say:

**for I am perplexed about you**—*aporeomai*, lit., ‘to be without a way in which to go’, and so=to be puzzled, to be at a loss what to think or what to do, as Jacob was about his brother Esau, Gen. 32. 7; as Herod was about the Baptist, Mark 6. 20; as the disciples were about the words of the Lord, John 13. 22, and about the absence of His Body from the tomb, Luke 24. 4; as Festus was about the trial of Paul, Acts 25. 20. That this perplexity about the best way to succour the Galatians was not an exceptional experience . . .  
p. 215

Lange says:

He knows not with what arguments he can find access to them and dispose them to a return. Therefore he thinks now he could more easily accomplish something by oral discourse with them.

p. 113

Luther says:

“I do not know how to take you. I do not know how to approach you by letter.” In order to make sure that he leaves no stone unturned in his effort to recall them to the Gospel of Christ, he chides, entreats, praises, and blames the Galatians, trying every way to hit the right note and tone of voice.

p. 182

Ridderbos says:

*For I am perplexed about you:* the force of that is that Paul no longer knows what he must do about them and think about them in view of their baffling conduct.

p. 171

Vos says:

“For I stand in doubt of you” indicates distress of mind or perplexity or something similar in knowing how to deal with the Galatians, whether firmly or gently, to bring them back to the standards of faith and grace.

pp. 81-82

(The Gospel for Real Life: Turn to the Liberating Power of the Cross . . . Every Day by Jerry Bridges) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Jerry Bridges, 2002.

Have you ever thought about what it means to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind? I don't think any of us can fully plumb the depths of that commandment, but here are some obvious aspects:

- Your love for God transcends all other desires (see Exodus 20:3).
- Like David, you long to gaze upon His beauty and seek fellowship with Him (see Psalm 27:4).
- You rejoice in meditating on His Word, and, like Jesus, you rise early to pray (see Psalm 119:97, Mark 1:35).
- You always delight to do His will, regardless of how difficult it may be (see Psalm 40:8, NASB).
- A regard for His glory governs and motivates *everything* you do—your eating and drinking, your working and playing, your buying and selling, your reading and speaking—and, dare I mention it, even your driving (see 1 Corinthians 10:31).
- You are never discouraged or frustrated by adverse circumstances because you are confident God is working all things together for your good (see Romans 8:28).
- You recognize His sovereignty in every event of your life and consequently receive both success and failure from His hand (see 1 Samuel 2:7; Psalm 75:6-7).
- You are always content because you know He will never leave you or forsake you (see Hebrews 13:5).
- The first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be your name," is the most important prayer you pray (see Matthew 6:9).

This description of the Great Commandment is obviously incomplete, but it is sufficient to show us all how woefully short we come in obeying it.  
pp. 26-27

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford  
selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust.  
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Be not afraid for little grace. Christ soweth his living seed, and he will not lose his seed; if he have the guiding of my stock and state it shall not miscarry. Our spoilt works, losses, deadness, coldness, wretchedness, are the ground which the good Husbandman laboureth.  
pp. 46-47

(Finishing Well: Learning to Live Through Terminal Illness by John Eaves)  
Nashville, TN.: Kingsley Book, Inc. Copyright – Kay Eaves, 2007.

We all want to ask it, and none of us gets the answer we are looking for. I am thankful that I never asked that question, because of a simple sermon I read more than twenty-five years ago by a German pastor named Helmut Thielecke. While pastoring a church in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1944, an allied bombing wiped out almost half of his congregation and heavily damaged the sanctuary in which the church members gathered each week. The next day, a remnant of the congregation met in the bombed out sanctuary. Pushing back the rubble to make a place to sit, the congregation listened to Pastor Thielecke deliver one of the most significant sermons in their entire lives. I am paraphrasing here, but I think you will get the message he was trying to convey:

*I know the question many of you want to ask this morning. But I want to remind you that if you ask the wrong question, you will inevitably receive the wrong answer. Today “why” is the wrong question to ask. The reason is that at the core of this simple three letter word is an attitude of self-centeredness. The focus is on ourselves, not on God. Life did not go as we anticipated, and we insist on knowing why it did not. The better question to ask in such a situation is “to what end?” That is a question God can answer and can work with, because we are focusing on God rather than ourselves. This is a question He longs to answer for us this morning.*

Some of you this morning are still stuck on the “why” question. You have become embittered, angry, and refuse God’s repeated attempts to lead you through the valley of trial to a place of rest and provision. You have created your own hell of self-pity, and you insist on keeping yourself in this self-imposed state of mind. Come out! Come out, now! Simply ask the right question and see what God will do by shifting your focus from yourself to Him.  
pp. 92–93

(Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 2007.

*Jesus, you are my confidence! I invite your Spirit to kick the props out from under me if I lean on my appearance, abilities, or achievements.*  
(September 5)

(When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back In The Box by John Ortberg)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– John Ortberg, 2007.

The first thing in all progress  
is to leave something behind.

**GEORGE MACDONALD**

111: *MacDonald: George MacDonald, Knowing the Heart of God.* Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1990, 116.

p. 111

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

Nearness to God brings likeness to God. The more you see God the more of God will be seen in you. 1725.334

We do not desire that our pattern should be lowered, but that our imitation should be raised. 1778.245

He has taken off some of the coarsest surface, but he will polish you yet to an exceeding beauty. I verily believe, if we could see ourselves as we shall be, it would make us laugh for very joy. 2036.427

p. 66

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications  
Association, 1992.

If you are going through a time of discouragement, there is a time of great  
personal growth ahead.  
(October 13)

**CONCLUSION:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: It is always good for us to be sensitive and to listen to the exhortations of our Christian brothers and sisters.

LESSON #2: Paul describes his witness in 1 Corinthians 9:20: “And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law” (NASB).

LESSON #3: Paul says his strategy is described in 1 Corinthians 9:22: “To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (NASB).

LESSON #4: Paul did not let his infirmity in the flesh stand in the way of his effective ministry to others.

LESSON #5: Paul knew that an effective, fruitful witness is that because of who he is and what he does more than what he has to say.

LESSON #6: Time and circumstances often change attitudes.

LESSON #7: The Lord often uses our weaknesses to display His glory.

LESSON #8: You run the risk of rejection when you speak the truth in relationships.

LESSON #9: Beware of false teachers who are trying to get you under their spell.

LESSON #10: Is Christ daily being formed in you?

**Harrison says:**

The Christian life is a set-free life, lived on a higher plane, above the do-this and don't-do-that considerations. Its one aim is to please a Person in a life conformed to His controlling presence.

When we come to understand the true nature of the Christian life, that it is Christ-centered and Christ-controlled, we discover a freedom and joy we have never known before, and the heart sings for very gladness:

“Now none but Christ can satisfy,  
None other name for me;  
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,  
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.”

p. 78

**Hendriksen says:**

The passage is one of the finest practical applications of I Cor. 13, written by Paul himself. Though the Galatians have failed Paul, his love toward them never fails, for love is longsuffering and kind, and even now hopes all things.

p. 175

**Lucado says:**

The goal of the Christian life is not knowledge, comprehending a bunch of theology, or memorizing large chunks of the Bible. Following Christ is also not about activity, signing up to serve ceaselessly at church, or tackling a daily “to do” list for God. Christ's ultimate desire for each of us is to make us like himself. Once we become God's children by faith in Christ—once we receive a brand new nature (see 2 Corinthians 5:17)—he wants to utterly transform, from the inside out, the way we think and talk and act. He does this primarily by the truth of his Word, by the power of his Spirit, and with the encouragement of his people. Life is his laboratory for remaking us into the people he originally envisioned, before sin plunged the world into darkness and ruin. Take heart, Christian. Christ is being formed in you!

p. 79



Lucado says:

Father, thank you for the astounding promise that we will be changed. I pray that I might cooperate fully with the nudgings and promptings of your Spirit today. Give me eyes that see, and a will that yields to your sometimes painful transforming work.  
p. 79

We have learned from this study that there is a real danger in the change of one's attitude towards spiritual things. Because of a drifting away from the truth, this change of attitude can bring about the haunting statement:

**"YOU WERE RUNNING WELL."**

May God grant that if there is:

some bitterness in your heart,

some feeling of resentment,

some drift from the truth, and

you have guilty feelings today,

may the Spirit of God convict and speak in a mature manner that these things might be dealt with, in order that you can be back in the race again, making progress on the track of life to the ultimate formation of Jesus Christ within you.

Hebrews 12:14-15 (NASB)

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications  
Association, 1992.

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).**

If you cannot express yourself well on each of your beliefs, work and study until you can. If you don't, other people may miss out on the blessings that come from knowing the truth. Strive to re-express a truth of God to yourself clearly and understandably, and God will use that same explanation when you share it with someone else. But you must be willing to go through God's winepress where the grapes are crushed. You must struggle, experiment, and rehearse your words to express God's truth clearly. Then the time will come when that very expression will become God's wine of strength to someone else. But if you are not diligent and say, "I'm not going to study and struggle to express this truth in my own words; I'll just borrow my words from someone else," then the words will be of no value to you or to others. Try to state to yourself what you believe to be the absolute truth of God, and you will be allowing God the opportunity to pass it on through you to someone else.

Always make it a practice to stir your own mind thoroughly to think through what you have easily believed. Your position is not really yours until you make it yours through suffering and study. The author or speaker from whom you learn the most is not the one who teaches you something you didn't know before, but the one who helps you take a truth with which you have quietly struggled, give it expression, and speak it clearly and boldly. (December 15)

I want to conclude this study with some very special prayers.

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)  
San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,  
2006.

*Dear God, I know you didn't choose me without having, also, some purpose for me. Show me what you have in mind—the tasks, the blessings, the acts of love that you have for me, in Jesus's name. Amen.*

p. 349

*God, I don't want to go through my life always looking for easy, painless paths. I want to find the true way, and the straight path. I know you will give me strength to accept whatever difficulties I meet and bring me to a full life of jealous fellowship with you. Amen.*

p. 359

*Root, O God, my life deeply in your redeeming work so that the words that casually and accidentally come from my mouth will be words of praise and exclamations of trust. Amen.*

p. 122

(Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings by Joni Eareckson  
Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson  
Tada, 2007.

*Father God, I thank you for the unique way you have provided for me, showing me your tender love through the years. Help me to keep my eyes focused on Jesus, rather than comparing myself to others.*

(September 6)