

## STUDYING GALATIANS

BIBLE STUDY OUTREACH @ 1984, 1993

LESSON 12  
Galatians 4: 12 - 20

### *A Case of Alienation Of Affection*

This is a moving passage of Scripture. It will become more so as we understand it more clearly. The language is not as plain as it could be in terms of bringing out the haunting sorrow that filled Paul's heart.

Paul had lost the Galatians, their loyalty, their deep devotion to him and enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus Christ. It was all gone. It was as if they had become his enemies; as though they were saying to him, "You Paul, have betrayed us. You didn't tell us all we should know." Paul was wounded to the depths of his heart.

So many of us have known this same experience. Some of you have lost your child "out there." Some of them prayed with you to receive Jesus Christ, so you know they are saved. Yet they have become strangers to you. They are seemingly alienated from you and from the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom they once confessed as Savior. Now you are suffering within yourself because of this. Others of you have friends or other family members with whom you once enjoyed a rich, close fellowship around the person of the Lord. Now, you have lost them. It is strange how it all happened. They seem to suddenly turn away and express suspicion, and doubt you and your belief, as well as of what they formerly believed. They simply do not have time or interest as before. This situation is increasingly common in our society. We have come almost full circle in our time. Our circumstances are much as they were when the New Testament was being written. These are signs that the end times are approaching, with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, Himself, predicted these things would happen and it is so important that we know this and not let our faith in Christ waver when we go through the hurting and difficult times being separate from ones we love so deeply.

New sects and cults are continually appearing, drawing followers, causing havoc with the faith of many Christians. Our Lord had said it would happen: Matt. 24:23,24 tells us that He said, "Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There He is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. This had begun to happen in Paul's experience with the Galatian Christians. Leaders with some kind of credentials from the mother church in Jerusalem had come to the district and had set about to discredit Paul by accusing him of doing all kinds of things. They said he had destroyed the essence of religion and that he did not believe the Bible. Their purpose was to win Paul's converts to their teaching. We do not know if these envoys were simply misled Christians or whether they were wolves in sheep's clothing, men who had never genuinely repented and trusted Christ for their personal salvation. However, we can assume they were of the latter, not Christians but men bent on mischief. Yet if they were Christians, another problem was presented. The leaders in Jerusalem must have severely compromised their faith in Jesus Christ. Somehow these men had come with the blessing of the church.

All of this made it very confusing for the people in Galatia, because people who came from Jerusalem to teach or preach were people with much credibility, usually.

The Galatian Christians assumed these false leaders were also Christians, and believed their teachings.

However, in accepting their doctrine they had turned from Paul. Thus, Paul admonished them to follow him, for he, though a Jew, was as free from the law as they, being Gentiles, were. They had loved and accepted Paul when he had come to them, sick and handicapped, yet preaching the life-giving gospel. They hadn't been turned off by him then. No, they had welcomed him as though he were an angel of God or even as though he were Jesus Christ Himself! How could it be that they were so fickle and unstable? What had happened to the wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in love to him and in growth in their lives? We can sense the anguish in Paul's words, "Have I now become an enemy because I continue to tell you the truth?" (Phillips).

Paul knew the Judaizers were anxious to win the Galatian Christians over to Judaism and he knew that it was not for the Christians' good, but for their own gain. The Judaizers hated Paul! They had followed him, causing him much trouble, wherever he'd been. Now these legalistic men from Jerusalem were diverting his converts back into the bondage of the law. It must have troubled Paul's heart beyond words. How could he bear it? Physical attack was not uncommon to Paul, but this was an attack that pierced his heart. Through all this, Paul asked a question we may all well ask when we get out of God's will, when our worship is weak, when we listen to someone who is not giving truth. Paul asked the misguided Galatian Christians, "Where did your blessing go?" v. 15. In taking back the legalistic life-style the converts had lost their zeal, their joy and their blessing of the Lord!

In v. 17 Paul says something that is marvelously descriptive of what happens today when cult leaders use their tactics on weak Christians. He said, "They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out in order that you will seek them" Paul says they have a great zeal to persuade and their enthusiasm and self-confidence are such that you would feel these people are right. They really believe themselves that what they say is true. People who really believe help others believe. These teachers' enthusiasm was convincing. We learn from this, and it's true, that error can be packaged very convincingly and most attractively. We can see the necessity of knowing the Bible, to keep us from being led off into some kind of trap. It is particularly dangerous when the one being led is in a vulnerable place in life. Cult members move in friendship and gradually endear themselves to the one who is lonely or in trouble, who is going through a hard place, who feels alone and abandoned. Even a Christian can come to such a state within that he actually will believe what has been told. Then his spirit goes through great torment and struggle. It is a very vulnerable time in such a person's life. It is almost impossible for the weak not to accept some untruths. One way the leader gets a person to this point is by keeping the person away from other believers. This is done by constant companionship and attention. It is a form of isolationism. When this takes place the "victim" often begins to fear and be suspicious about other persons or other groups he comes in contact with, even including his own family. When this point is reached the sect will bring that person into complete bondage to their belief. Paul was so distraught by these tactics he hardly knew what to say to his people. He had worked over them, as a mother giving birth to her child, until Christ had been formed in them. Now he was at a complete loss, for he knew that their being in bondage to the law would stop their spiritual growth. This was heart-breaking for Paul. Oh! That he could make them understand that Christ was all they needed, nothing added! Christ had done it ALL at Calvary. Christ's life was sufficient! Now, if they would only open their ears and hear the truth of the freedom they had in Christ they'd be FREE!

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### SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE UPON:

“And eternal life means to know You, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom You sent” (John 17:3 GNB)

PRAISE God for the wonder and awe of knowing Jesus Christ and that in knowing Him you can know God, for God and Jesus are one (John 10:30).

PRAY to be free of any superstition or fears that open your mind to the power of darkness or to confusion, for God is not the author of confusion (Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 14:33).

THANK God for Jesus' life within you. His indwelling life is greater than any power of opposition (1 John 4:4).

WORSHIP God for His provision for your salvation which is for all eternity, (John 10:28).

Suggestion: Look up and mark in your Bible the above Scripture. Claim each verse as an instrument of defense against the enemy. Put the date in.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Read Rom 8:1 - 11. After reading this passage of Scripture, tell what you think the Galatians' response to the Judaizers would have been had they also been able to read the passage and taken it to heart.
2. Do you think the Galatians had forgotten the fact that Christ lives in every true believer? Tell Why.
3.
  - a. What did Paul write to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 2:5 that relates to Gal. 4:12?
  - b. What kind of an attitude do you have when someone does something unkind or vindictive to you?
  - c. What affect does your attitude have upon those around you? Why?
4.
  - a. How had the Galatians been affected by Paul's ailment?
  - b. Does being around sick or crippled people upset you? If so, is it because of their plight, or because you can't stand what it does to you inside?
5. What had Paul done that was of great importance while he was ill?
6. What comparison did Paul make in describing the Galatians' welcome to him in the past?

7.
  - a. What question did Paul ask in v. 15?
  - b. Have you ever asked yourself that question? \_\_\_\_ How did you change it?
8.
  - a. What was the expression Paul used to show the Galatians' gratitude in the past?
  - b. Give a more in-depth comment on the use of such an expression.
9.
  - a. Why did Paul say what he did about becoming their enemy?
  - b. Have you ever done this? What happened?
10. Question: Is it a sin to depart from the truth? What do the following say?  
1 Tim. 4:1 - 3  
2 Tim. 3:5  
2 Tim. 2:12  
Conclusion:
11. Give some ways one can be alienate from Christ. See notes.
12. Tell what Paul said about being zealous and the motives for it. vv. \_\_\_\_
13.
  - a. Compare zeal to good and bad spiritual fruit.
  - b. What does "evaluate the fruit" mean to you?
14.
  - a. What does Paul mean in v. 19?
  - b. Have you experienced this with someone you have led to Christ? Please, share if you have, someone in class may need to hear and be encouraged.
15.
  - a. Give outstanding characteristics seen in Paul in v. 19.
  - b. Tell how these characteristics show Paul's Christ-like character.
16. What was Paul's attitude that reminds you of a parent correcting a child?
17. What do you like best about Paul?
18. In what way has Paul's example helped you?