



Week 9: Galatians 4:12-20

GOSPEL IMITATION

Pressing on in his letter, Paul lays out two stark paths for the Galatians: follow his example or the false teachers'. He paints a vivid picture of his conduct during his visit, highlighting their enthusiastic response – a response that has seemingly and inexplicably turned cold. Instead, he reminds them of his love for them and urges them to stay the course and hold fast to what was taught them. Beware, he warns, those peddling a different message – they crave control, not your freedom.

THE SCRIPTURE: GALATIANS 4:12-20

¹² Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. ¹³ You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, ¹⁴ and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. ¹⁸ It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! ²⁰ I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

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LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 9

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Can you recall a teacher who made a lasting impression on you? What qualities did they possess that stood out?
2. What qualities would you look for in a role model? Is this something you still consider important?

DIVING DEEPER

3. In this portion of Galatians, what insights can we gain about Paul's personal challenges? Look back at the account of Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-19) and ahead to Galatians 6:11. What clues do you find there as to what specifically Paul may have suffered from?
4. Consider also 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 and 12:7-10 where the apostle describes more difficulties he has faced. Why do you think it was that Paul suffered so much and in so many ways?
5. Galatians 4:12 can be a puzzling verse on many levels. When Paul expresses his desire for the Galatian believers to "become as I am, for I also have become as you are," how are we to understand this? In what ways do you think Paul become like the Galatians? Remember to look at what we've already studied to help you build your answer.
6. How did the Galatians' initial reception of Paul differ from their current attitude towards him? What factors are contributing to this change?

7. Who does Paul likely mean by "they" in verse 17? Considering the overall message of Galatians, what is it these people are trying to exclude the Galatian believers from?

8. Consider this quote by Tim Keller, "False teachers need to have people who need them." Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

9. Do you find satisfaction in people relying on you? What might motivate this? Could your goals align with those of the false teachers?

10. Reading through to the end of this week's passage provides us with a fuller view of a contrast taking place between two kinds of teachers. Complete the chart to detail the motives for each.

Teacher	Motive(s) Behind Their Message
Paul	
"They" (v.17)	

11. Given the importance of discerning reliable Bible teachers, what qualities should we look for in those who would teach us God's Word? From today's study in Galatians, what would be some warning signs we would want to be on the lookout for.

^p Keller, 113.