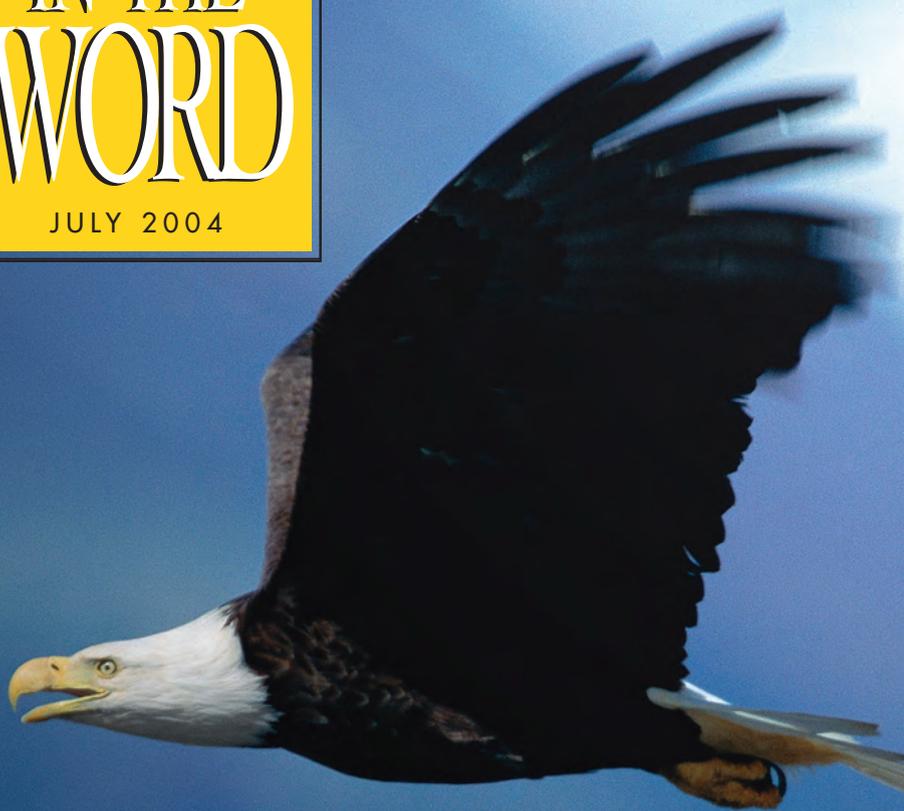


TODAY IN THE WORD

JULY 2004



You, my brothers,
were called to be free.

Galatians 5:13

GALATIANS: THE WISDOM OF FREEDOM IN CHRIST

THE LAND OF THE FREE

After the tragedy on September 11, the United States seemed like a new country. Suddenly, our hearts surged with an overwhelming sense of patriotism that hadn't been experienced for some time. In Chicago, flags flew high on Michigan Avenue, and flags were erected at the top of huge construction site cranes or pasted in the office windows of the

city's skyscrapers. American flags and yellow ribbons sold out of stores across the nation. People proudly wore red, white, and blue and held hands while singing our national anthem.

Freedom was recognized as a precious commodity.

This is not a new concept for our country, but perhaps it is one that has gone undervalued for too long. If you have the

chance to visit Boston, Massachusetts, you may want to plan a walk on the historic Freedom Trail. The three-mile long trail is one of Boston's most popular tourist attractions. Two million visitors each year walk the trail that contains, among other stops, a visit to the site of the Boston Massacre, the old North Church, Paul Revere's house, and the site of the Boston Tea Party. As you walk the trail you are reminded that many walked these steps before. They risked their lives, and many died, so that we could be free.

At each stop, we recognize anew that freedom comes at a price.

Spiritual freedom also came at an unimaginable price. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (5:1).

What does this mean to us as believers? Simply put, it means that Christ paid the

ultimate price, giving His life on the cross, so that we could know what it means to be free from the bondage of sin. In his opening words, Paul writes, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age" (1:3-4).

No longer are we weighed down by the heaviness of our sin, but we are truly and eternally FREE. Do we realize that? Do we appreciate the price that was paid for our freedom? Because of this freedom, purchased with the blood of our Savior, we are freed from the bonds of this "evil age." Being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are no longer slaves to sin.

Many people say that they are "good people," and surely hope that will guarantee their entrance into heaven. But can we ever be "good" enough? Can we ever perfectly fulfill the law? Paul writes, "Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed" (3:23). But, now through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, the requirements of that law were fulfilled.

We are FREE!

Paul celebrates this freedom: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28). What wonderful news!

As we enjoy the fireworks this Fourth of July, let each of us also say a prayer of thanks for the other freedom, our spiritual freedom, that has been so graciously and undeservedly given to us. When we truly realize the gift we have been given in Jesus Christ, it should radically change our lives. As Paul reminds us, "You, my brothers, were called to be free" (5:13).



Prayer: Stowell

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Unity

As different as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are, they do have one thing in common. Each affirms that there is only one God. Christians, however, believe that the one God exists in a unity of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the eyes of Judaism and Islam, this belief amounts to polytheism.

Christian theology does not teach that the members of the Trinity are three separate gods. Deuteronomy 6:4 affirms that “the LORD is one,” a statement repeatedly emphasized in the New Testament (Mark 12:29; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:6; James 2:19).

God is “one” in a numerical sense. There is only one true God, not many gods. God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit is the only Creator and sustainer of all that exists (Gen. 1:1, Col. 1:16). He has no superior and does not have any equal. God is also one in the sense that He is one in all that He is and does. He is integrated in terms of His nature, plan, and actions.

Although the world’s religions recognize many gods, “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:6). The triune God does not consist of three divine essences. Instead, the three Persons, although distinct, are one divine essence.

Why Theology Matters

The doctrine of divine unity is essential to the doctrine of the Trinity. Without it, Christianity would be a form of polytheism. It also underscores the uniqueness of the Christian faith. Many believe that since there is only one true God, all religions worship the same God. The biblical doctrine of unity reveals that the only true God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do not acknowledge Christ as the divine Son of the Father do not worship the true God.

For Further Reading
For a better understanding of the uniqueness of the one God of the Bible, read *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?* by Timothy George (Zondervan).



JERRY JENKINS

ALUMNI, AUTHOR, TRUSTEE

“In the Twinkling of an Eye”

By Lisa Ann Cockrel

Does the name Rayford mean anything to you? How about the names Hattie, Buck, Chloe, and Nicholae? According to the New York Times bestseller list, chances are good that you not only know Rayford and company, but that your bookshelf is, as we speak, buckling under the weight of the twelve volumes that chronicle the end-times escapades of this cast of characters.

If you're still not sure what I'm talking about I've got two words for you—*Left Behind*.

With a dramatic story line that spans the seven years between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ, the *Left Behind* novels have millions of readers hanging on every apocalyptic twist and turn author Jerry B. Jenkins can conjure up. The twelfth installment, *Glorious Appearing*, was released March 30th and pushed sales of the series

well over 57 million books to become what *Publishers Weekly* calls the most successful Christian fiction series ever.

A certifiable publishing phenomenon,

Left Behind has fanned the flame of interest in all things prophetic and spawned radio shows, study guides, spinoff novels for children and teenagers, devotional books, calendars, greeting cards, and, most importantly, new believers in Jesus Christ. Over 3,000 people have contacted Jenkins to let him know that the books he created with prophecy scholar Tim LaHaye have played a crucial role in their salvation.

“I loved hearing of an old man whose eyes were so weak he had to read *Left Behind* through a magnifying glass,” says Jenkins. “He asked his son to pray with him for salvation, saying, ‘Not



*Despite his broad success,
Jerry B. Jenkins retains one title he's
had for over 30 years—
friend of the Moody Bible Institute.*



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Galatians: The Wisdom of Freedom in Christ

On one hand, people don't tend to like rules. So you can imagine Paul's surprise when the believers in Galatia so readily embraced excessive rules concerning their faith.

On the other hand, people naturally associate faith with strict guidelines. So the Galatians must have been caught off guard by Paul's rebuke to stand firm in their freedom.

The truth of Galatians can be a surprise to us, especially if we get distracted from the core issue of our faith—simply believing in the saving power of Jesus. This month in *Today in the Word*, we'll reacquaint ourselves with the important truth that our faith sets us free!

And thank you once again for the gifts you give in support of *Today in the Word*.

Because of your generosity, we can direct thousands of people to explore the freedom they have in Christ, which the Word of God reveals in fresh ways every day.

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PRINTED ON 50% RECYCLED PAPER

*Jesus Christ
... gave him-
self for our
sins to rescue
us from
the present
evil age.*

GALATIANS 1:3B-4



TODAY AT MOODY

Student Development, Alumni Association, Admissions, Registrar's Office, and Career Development—these Moody ministries serve our students throughout college and beyond. Please pray for the staff and the leadership of Thomas Shaw, Vice President of Student Services.

Read: Galatians 1:1-5

TODAY IN THE WORD



A few years ago a popular series of posters initially looked like a jumble of patterns and colors. As one looked intently at them, the apparent chaos would suddenly resolve itself into a well-defined three-dimensional image. While it may not be immediately obvious, a long look at Galatians shows that this epistle fits nicely into the theme of wisdom that we have been studying throughout the year. Galatians represents the apostle Paul's teaching on living wisely in light of the gospel message.

Paul wrote this letter to a group of fledgling churches in the region of Galatia (located in present-day Turkey) in order to address some serious issues facing the early church. The primary problem concerned the status of Gentile Christians. Thousands of years after Christ, we can easily forget that the earliest followers of Jesus were, like Jesus himself, fully Jewish. They naturally continued to follow the practices of the Jewish Law while professing faith in Jesus. We see in the book of Acts that as the early church carried out Jesus' Great Commission, the question of the relationship of newly converted Gentile believers to the practices of the Law became an issue of serious disagreement (cf. Acts 10:9-16, 27-29; 15:1-35).

Those first Christian leaders had to work out the implications of the gospel. Some of them concluded that Gentiles

needed to observe the ritual of circumcision as prescribed by the Old Testament Law in order to participate fully in the salvation offered by the gospel.

Paul came to a different conclusion. He presents an extended argument for the full acceptance of Gentile believers apart from such practices as circumcision. The starting point for his argument is the simple affirmation of the gospel message—Jesus died for our sins (that is, for the sins of both Jews and Gentiles) in order to rescue us from this present evil age.

As we work through this letter we will see how this wonderful and apparently simple truth contains the depths and riches of God's grace. Wise living means that all who truly profess faith in Jesus are united together in Christ and share fully in the blessing of salvation.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



It's appropriate to begin this month's study in prayer.

Begin by praising the Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit for sending servants like Paul to help us all understand more clearly what it means to live wisely as gospel believers.

Continue by asking the Spirit to show you, through Paul's words, ways in which your own life needs to align more closely with the deep truths of the simple message that Jesus died for our sins in order to free us from the present evil age.

Read: Galatians 1:6–9

TODAY IN THE WORD



The neighborhood kids decided to organize themselves into a playgroup and little Danny was their leader. All the members had bicycles and decorated them the same way so that everyone in the neighborhood would know who they were. When Sarah's family moved in, she too wanted to be part of the group. "You can join," Danny told her, "but only if you have a bicycle and decorate it just like ours!"

This story reflects something of the situation in Galatia. Paul had proclaimed the gospel there and several people had believed. Yet some in the early church were troubled. For those early Jewish Christians, the problem was that many of the people to whom Paul preached were not Jews, and Paul's message suggested that they need not become Jewish. Paul was telling Gentiles that the salvation offered by Jesus, the Jewish Messiah (the word *Christ* means "Messiah"), was open to them if they believed that this Jesus died and rose again on account of their sins (cf. Gal. 1:1–4).

The crux of the matter was not that Paul preached to Gentiles. It was that he preached a message that offered salvation to Gentiles apart from their submitting to circumcision. Paul was preaching a message that offered salvation on terms that seemed to conflict with the commands of the Jewish Law.

Galatians is a complicated letter. As we study it this month

we will see that Paul's response to these concerns is clear and firm—to require Gentiles to submit to the Law contradicts the freedom of the gospel. Such an approach perverts the good news. The gospel message proclaims Jesus as victor over evil and Lord of all people.

More importantly, those who believe this message are forgiven of their sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit's presence. Since this is the case, Paul thinks it should be clear that God has accepted the Gentiles simply because they believed in Jesus. To suggest that their status is inferior or their salvation incomplete until they submit to the requirements of the Law as a means of salvation denies the reality of the Spirit's presence in their lives and perverts the message of Jesus' death "for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age."

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



The tendency to want to add requirements for salvation wasn't isolated to Jewish Christians in Paul's day. Although today the issue isn't usually circumcision, many of us find ourselves thinking that salvation must depend on eating or dressing or doing things a certain way.

If you have found yourself criticizing other Christians because they don't do things the way you do, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the wisdom to see the freedom that is in the salvation of Christ.

*Some people
are throwing
you into
confusion
and . . . trying
to pervert
the gospel.*

GALATIANS 1:7



TODAY AT MOODY

Residence Life employees—Kimiko Akina, Cyril Camacho, Abigail Dalach, and Carol Harding—will be encouraged by your prayers as they minister to the students by taking care of various aspects of their housing needs on campus.

*I received
[the gospel
I preached]
by revelation
from Jesus
Christ.*

GALATIANS 1:11–12



TODAY AT MOODY

Today we continue in prayer for the Residence Life staff: Jeffrey Lothamer, Keith Steiner, and Alice Tegtmeier. Ask the Lord to bless their service and hard work and to develop further communication between the staff and the students in His Spirit.

Read: Galatians 1:10–24

TODAY IN THE WORD



“You may not run in the hall!” shouted the teacher. “Says who?” the defiant ninth-grader retorted. “Says the principal, and if you don’t obey, you’ll spend time in detention!” Challenge authority, and you’ll face the consequences.

We don’t know exactly what was said by those to whom Paul is responding in this epistle, but it seems likely that they were challenging his authority. We can imagine them saying something like, “Who gave Paul the authority to spread a gospel that extends salvation to Gentiles apart from obedience to the Law?” They might have added, “Isn’t Paul’s gospel just a compromise intended to please people by making salvation available without requiring them to follow the practices prescribed in the Law?”

Paul’s pointed response appeals to the highest authority—he is doing what he is doing and saying what he is saying because of his direct encounter with Jesus. His radical transformation in attitude and action (he changed from one who persecuted, to one who propagated the churches of Jesus) showed beyond doubt that his appeal to the authority of Christ was genuine and not a human fabrication (1:11–12, 20–23). In the end, his encounter with Jesus resulted in praising God (1:24), a sure mark that God was at work.

Paul’s appeal to Jesus is important not only because it

helps him establish his authority, but also because it builds up the confidence of those who read his letter, both then and now. As Christians we are committed to the belief that God speaks in all of Scripture. We are committed to the authority and truth of what we now call the Old Testament. Yet a little reading in the Old Testament raises the issue of how Gentiles can be acceptable to God apart from obedience to the Law prescribed there.

Paul’s partial answer is (and we must remember that this is only one part of his answer) that Jesus Himself is the source and validation of the gospel he preaches, and the change wrought by Christ in Paul’s life proves that indeed he has not made up his teaching about the gospel.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



In our passage today, Paul gives his own testimony of a life transformed by Christ. If you were asked about your own background, could you give a testimony of how Christ has changed you?

Your own conversion may not have been as dramatic as Paul’s, but it was no less a work of the Spirit. Perhaps you can testify how your trust in Jesus has delivered you from worry, pride, or greed. The changes that Christ brings about in our lives are powerful proof that He is indeed the true Savior!

Read: Galatians 2:1–10

TODAY IN THE WORD



A predominantly white church and a historically African-American church in Durham, North Carolina, meet together for Easter services every year. Though the worship styles differ, those who attend the joint service always remark how blessed they are by sharing in praise with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Yesterday we saw Paul claiming that the gospel he preached was legitimated by Jesus and not in need of approval from any earthly authority. In our text for today he emphasizes the fact that the ministry he has undertaken is in full unity with the other apostles. It was important to Paul and to the other apostles that Paul's ministry stood in continuity with the ministry of the Jerusalem church.

We may rightly ask why this might be the case. Clearly Paul did not feel any need to have the authority of his ministry validated by other people. Jesus, the highest authority, had commissioned him. He needed no other confirmation. But Paul likely saw the need, perhaps through the revelation he received (v. 2), to meet with the other apostles in order to ensure that the Gentile churches he had planted remain in full unity with the Jewish churches.

There are some significant lessons for us from this passage regarding the nature of unity in the church. First, we see that unity does not mean lack of

diversity. The fact that Jew and Gentile were united by the gospel—without either one being forced to unite on the terms of the other—means that church can encompass all manner of diversity so long as the unifying factor is the gospel message. Second, the basis of the apostles' judgment points the way toward balancing unity and diversity in the church. The apostles recognized the presence of God's grace at work in Paul's ministry. That is, they confirmed that the gospel he preached was consistent with the message they proclaimed (vv. 2, 7); and, they saw that God was using Paul effectively among the Gentiles (v. 8).

As we today seek to maintain both unity and diversity in the church, we would do well to look for God's grace at work.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



When we praise God for an eternity in heaven, we will be surrounded by

believers from every tribe and nation. Yet too often when we worship we are surrounded by people who look just like us.

Try to find out more about how different cultures praise Jesus. You could talk to Christian friends you know who have a different ethnicity, talk to missionaries about the way people worship in their area, or read about other Christians around the world. Praise the Lord that one day we will all praise Him together forever!

*James, Peter
and John . . .
recognized the
grace given
to me.*

GALATIANS 2:9



TODAY AT MOODY

As we celebrate Independence Day today, let's pray that through this month's study, the Lord would deepen our understanding of the believer's freedom in Christ and how it relates to our freedoms as citizens of the United States.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

GALATIANS 2:20



TODAY AT MOODY

As you come to God today, please pray for MBI's Provost, Dr. Charles Dyer, for his leadership position in taking Moody education to new levels of global presence, relationships, and practical application of classroom knowledge.

Read: Galatians 2:11–21

TODAY IN THE WORD



Many of us don't seem to learn a lesson the first time.

This seems to be the case with the apostle Peter, who still had trouble accepting differences in Gentile eating customs even after the Lord had given him a vision saying, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15).

When Peter separated himself from Gentile Christians, Paul recognized that he was failing to live wisely in light of the gospel (v. 14). Peter's refusal to eat with them made an implicit statement—Gentile believers are not equals. Paul understood that Peter was, in effect, denying the heart and power of the gospel message. By refusing to eat with the Gentile converts Peter was essentially saying that the justification God had granted to Gentiles as a result of their faith in the gospel was of no effect, for until they adopted the practices of the Jewish Law, they were not fully equal members of Jesus' church. To Paul's dismay, even Peter, one of the original disciples, failed to grasp the meaning of the gospel.

One of the benefits of this unfortunate conflict is that we get to see what Paul says about wise gospel living. In response to Peter, Paul argues that the Law has reached its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ. Peter, as a believer in Jesus, agrees with Paul that justification (that is, being declared righteous) comes only through faith in Christ, not through the

Law (vv. 15–16, 21). Yet the implication of this is that one also dies to the Law (v. 19).

Paul's point is this: everyone who believes in Jesus has in effect been crucified with Jesus. Such a one has vicariously died with Christ to the Law. This vicarious inclusion in the death of Jesus implies that one is also included in His resurrection to new life. As a result of Jesus' death and resurrection, justification is available, by faith, for those who belong to Christ.

All who belong to Christ are fully equal before God. All who believe have Christ living in them. If the Law still signaled a fundamental difference between Jew and Gentile, it would deny the new life of Jesus within the believer, and actually set aside God's work of grace in Christ (v. 21).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Many of us can relate to Peter and his reluctance to let go of his old notions of what it meant to serve God. Although God may not send us a dramatic vision as He did to Peter, He still speaks through His Word to us to align our ideas with His.

As we study what it means to be free in Christ, ask the Lord to correct any misperceptions you may have about the Christian life. Praise God that He doesn't give up on fashioning us to be His servants—He continually calls us to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Read: Galatians 3:1–5

TODAY IN THE WORD



When arguing a case in the American legal system, great stress lies on the proof that both sides can present to back up their arguments. In criminal cases, the burden of proof lies with the prosecution, who must demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the accused person actually committed the crime.

The next move in Paul's argument is a critical one. He first draws the Galatians' attention back to the crucifixion of Jesus (v. 1). In keeping with the point we saw him arguing yesterday, Paul reminds his readers that Jesus did die. Implicitly he is pushing them to reflect on the point he has just made in 2:11–21. Their own profession of faith in the gospel involves this confession about Jesus. Once they recall that they do accept the fact that Jesus died on a cross, they ought then to accept the rest of Paul's argument—that those in Christ have died to the Law.

However, in a series of rhetorical questions, he bolsters his case by urging the Galatians to consider how it was that they came to enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The answer he expects is clear—the Galatians, as Gentiles, received the gift of the Spirit simply by believing the gospel message.

Paul's real point is implicit in his list of questions. He wants his converts to consider the fact that as Gentiles they received the Spirit by believing in Jesus.

Well before it ever occurred to them that they had not adopted the practices of the Jewish Law, they had been blessed with the full benefits of life in Christ. If they possess the Spirit, and Paul is hinting that they do, they are thus justified and have received the fullness of God's promised salvation. Their sins have been taken care of and they have been freed from the present evil age. What then could they possibly gain by adopting the practices of the Law?

Indeed, those who urged the Galatians to be circumcised were telling them in effect that they were not in fact fully members of God's new kingdom. If the Galatians gave in on this point, they would be denying that they really had been fully blessed with salvation in the first place.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Those who believe in the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection have the Holy Spirit. His presence with us is one of the irrefutable proofs of our salvation. He is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise in John 14:16–17.

This is an excellent time to learn more about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Ask your pastor for recommended books, or use a concordance to look up New Testament passages that discuss the Holy Spirit. This is more than an "academic" exercise—you will learn more about this rich blessing and proof that we belong to Christ!

Did you receive the Spirit by observing the Law, or by believing what you heard?

GALATIANS 3:2



TODAY AT MOODY

In continuation of our prayer for the Moody Education Group this month, please lift up to the Lord the ministry of Dean of Students, Timothy Arens, and his Administrative Assistant, Diannalee Hart.

Question & Answer

Q *I'm eleven years old and I want to know why God made us if He knew that we would be sinners.*

A I'm 80 years old, and I often ponder the question. Many Bible students believe the answer follows three lines: first, God is love. Second, He seems to have wanted a bigger or better object of His love than angels. Third, He saw past Adam's sin and ruin to a new heavens and earth populated by redeemed people. The world to come would more than compensate for the sorrows of the first earth and its inhabitants.

"For God so loved the world," John 3:16 says, "that he gave his one and only son." For reasons we do not fully fathom, God loved the work of His hands. Maybe that is why He created: He loved the world even before His act of creation.

Isaiah 43:6-7 gives an additional hint: "Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory." And in Isaiah 43:21 God says that He created His people for Himself, for a specific purpose: "The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."

It seems that God created us as an expression of His love and to receive our praise. Despite our sin, He has made a way for us to spend eternity with Him when the

sin and sorrow of the past will be forgotten.

Q *Genesis 4:26 says that in the days of Enosh people first began to worship the Lord. If they only began to worship Him at this point, what did they do before this time (i.e. whom did they worship)?*

A The text does not say that they began to worship the Lord. That would be puzzling indeed, because Abel—and doubtless, others—worshiped the Lord before the birth of Enosh. Bullinger translates this text, "began to call upon [their gods] by the name of Jehovah," or "Then was there profanation of the name of Jehovah." They began to profane, not worship, the name of the Lord.

In the opinion of ancient Jewish commentators, the activity in Genesis 4:26 was linking something evil with the name of the Lord: men began to make idols and "surname their idols by the Name of the Word of the Lord." Their idols may have been the sun, moon, and stars. It was the beginning of idolatry, made more sinister by its association with the name of Jehovah. Enoch, who came after Enosh, was raised up to prophesy against idolaters. See also Jude 14-16.

Q *Why did God tell the Israelites to kill the Gentiles before entering the Promised Land? In the Ten Commandments, He had already told them not to kill.*

A In translations other than the KJV, the Sixth Commandment is rendered, "You shall not murder." The text (Ex. 20:13) is not a flat prohibition against killing, as is clear from the next two chapters. Exodus 21 and 22 list crimes for which the death penalty is prescribed. There are other lists; see Leviticus 20.

The command to kill the inhabitants of Canaan was inspired by the same considerations that called for capital punishment in Israel itself. The death penalty was intended to be a judgment against heinous crime, and an attempt to protect society from lawbreakers whose corrupt conduct was capable of corrupting others. The pagan societies of Canaan were monstrously corrupt, in spite of a 400-year period of grace to repent (see Gen. 15:12-16). Their customs were incompatible with a society ruled by the Word of God. So they had to go. But Joshua failed to destroy all of them, and what Moses feared came to pass: the Israelites imitated their pagan neighbors, and

even became worse than they (2 Chron. 33:9).

Q *When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus (John 3:13-14), he called himself the Son of Man. What does that mean? A note in my Bible says it is a messianic title, but I don't know what that means? Wasn't Jesus God?*

A Yes, Jesus is the Son of God, and He is also the Son of Man. The designation "Son of Man" is found almost exclusively in the four Gospels. For exceptions, see Acts 7:56 and Revelation 1:13 and 14:14. The title affirms His humanity. Jesus uses it more than 80 times, never casually, but always in the context of His sufferings and death or the glory of His Second Coming, and always to make a point. A study of every passage in which the title occurs is worth the effort; it is deeply rewarding to Bible students.

Jesus' claim to the title drew thoughtful listeners' attention to Daniel 7:13-14, and affirms that He—by virtue of His manhood and obedience, in contrast to Adam's disobedience—is the rightful heir to the dominions of the earth that Adam forfeited by sin. This is also what commentators mean when they refer to this title as messianic.

*God created
us as an
expression of
His love and
to receive
our praise.*

*Those who
have faith
are blessed
along with
Abraham.*

GALATIANS 3:9



TODAY AT MOODY

Richard Campbell, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, requests your prayers as the fiscal year starts: for wisdom and good stewardship in managing the gifts of our generous supporters, for “everything [to] be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 15:40).

Read: Galatians 3:6–9

TODAY IN THE WORD



We can hardly imagine God asking more of us than He asked of Abraham.

First, He instructed Abraham to leave his family home and strike out for an unknown destination. Then God asked Abraham to believe that although his wife was barren, his descendants would be numerous. And then when he finally did have a son, God told him to sacrifice Isaac. Yet Abraham steadfastly believed God’s promises.

Paul is at pains to show that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit those first Gentile believers experienced when they professed faith in Jesus was, in fact legitimate. To make his case, he turns to the story of Abraham. He wants to establish two key points. First, he wants his readers to see that God’s act of justifying sinners is not something brand new. Abraham, one of the most important figures in Jewish history, was “justified” by God in the very same way as those who believe in Jesus. He had faith in God’s promises and so God declared him righteous (3:6). Those today who also believe God’s promises follow in the footsteps of Abraham and are even included in his family (3:7).

The second point concerns the inclusion of Gentiles into Abraham’s family. Scripture had foretold that God would one day bring Gentiles into Abraham’s line (3:8). The words that the NIV translates as “Gentiles” and “nations” are identical in the

Greek language in which Paul originally wrote. For Paul it was very clear that God did not limit his promises to Abraham only to the Jews. Rather, through Abraham’s descendants blessing would go out to all the peoples of the earth.

As with the other issues Paul has addressed in Galatians, we may wonder why these points were so controversial in those early days of the church. In fairness to those believers who came before us, we need to understand that those first Christians were Jewish. Gentiles were not accepted as converts to Judaism unless they were willing to undergo circumcision and obey the Law. This conflicts with the gospel. Living wisely as gospel believers means grasping that our identity as a new creation in Christ is not defined by the Jewish Law but by faith in the gospel.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



If someone were recording our life story as a journey of faith, how would

it read? Have we ever been in a position of absolutely trusting God when the situation seemed crazy or hopeless? Have we experienced God’s faithfulness when we obey Him regardless of the cost?

We can all testify to God’s faithfulness, so take some time to write down your own story. Even if no one else ever reads it, you will be encouraged by this tangible reminder that although our God may ask much of us, He gives us so much more.

Read: Galatians 3:10–14

TODAY IN THE WORD



If you've ever spent time around toddlers, you can understand the emphasis of Paul's argument in our passage today. As soon as you warn a two-year-old not to put his fingers in the fan, nothing seems more enticing to him. If you instruct her that carrots are good for her, she wants nothing to do with them.

Everything Paul has said since Galatians 2:15 regarding Jews, Gentiles, Law, faith, righteousness, justification, the Spirit, and Abraham comes into focus in this passage. His main point is simple: observing the Law never produced righteousness. He knows this because Scripture says very clearly that those whom God deems righteous live by faith (Hab. 2:4), while those who live by observing the Law are not living by faith (Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:11–12). The problem with this latter way of life is that it places one under the Law's curse since no one can actually do all that the Law commands (v. 10).

Paul is probably thinking about the blessings and curses pronounced when the Law was given again in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 28:1–14 promised blessing to Israel so long as they did all the Law said. Deuteronomy 28:15–68 recounts all the curses that would come for failure to obey. Paul knew Israel's history. Israel had been forced into exile in the past and, even after they had returned to the

Promised Land, they had lived for most of that time under the rule of foreign overlords (see Deut. 28:32–66). Israel continually found itself under the curse of exile and foreign domination predicted by the Law. For Paul this could only mean one thing—those who had tried to live by the Law had inherited curse rather than blessing. The promised blessing had to come from some other source.

Jesus is that other source. By dying under the Law's curse, Jesus brought redemption to his people, the long-awaited blessing promised to Abraham. Now, all the nations, both Jew and Gentile, have access to that blessing. By faith, the long-promised Holy Spirit has come to dwell among human beings. We (both Jew and Gentile) have, Paul says, received the promised Spirit.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



If we are tempted to think of Christianity as a set of rules or a list of do's and don'ts, we've missed the point of Galatians! Following a set of rules can never produce the righteousness that enables us to enter God's presence. Only belief in Christ, which results in the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, allows us access to God. And it is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can live in such a way that brings glory to God and testifies to His work in our lives.

He redeemed us ... so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

GALATIANS 3:14



TODAY AT MOODY

While keeping in prayer the Moody finances, please uphold the Investment Accounting staff: Eric Anderson, Linda Bynum, Andrea Palmer-Reed, Gloria Parker, and Tonya Reed. We ask for the Lord's love and peace to be with them always and for His Spirit to guide them through life.

*What, then,
was the
purpose of
the Law?*

GALATIANS 3:19



TODAY AT MOODY

This is the second day of Maranatha Bible Conference in Muskegon, Michigan, featuring MBI President, Dr. Joseph Stowell, as one of the speakers. Would you pray for Dr. Stowell's teaching ministry as he travels extensively this summer?

Read: Galatians 3:15–22

TODAY IN THE WORD



If we think back to our illustration yesterday on the willfulness of toddlers, someone might ask, “Why go through all the trouble of giving them instructions if they are just going to do what they want?” This question misses the true point of the instruction. We want to protect children from things that will harm them, but we also want to train them so that they can make wise, healthy choices when they are mature enough to choose for themselves.

Paul entertains two questions that his preceding argument might raise: first, why was the Law given if the promised blessing comes by faith; and second, does the Law oppose the promises? The response begins with the observation that the promise of an inheritance for Abraham’s seed was ultimately directed toward Christ (v. 16). That is, the “many people” who follow the Law and call Abraham “father” are not in the first instance the object of the promises. He points out next that the promises were given before the Law (vv. 17–18). The Law does not trump or set aside the prior promises.

Having laid this groundwork, he turns to the first question—why the Law? The Law served the purpose of cleansing sin, but only in a provisional and temporary way. The commands and sacrificial system were limited, not full and perfect, in dealing with sin. The Law was always only intended to be in

effect until Christ “the Seed to whom the promise referred had come” (v. 19).

His answer to the second question—does the Law oppose the promises?—is closely linked with his answer to the first. The Law was provisional and temporary, so it could not bring about the righteousness that comes by faith (v. 21).

Sin held the entire world under its dominion (v. 22). The Law was never able to bring the blessing promised to Abraham because that blessing of the promise was for all the nations, not just the Jewish nation. Since the Law could not do what the promise does do (impart life and righteousness by faith), it in no way opposes or competes with the promise.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



The blessing of the promise was for all nations, but many people are still waiting to hear this good news.

Pray today for missionaries that your church supports or that you may know personally. And remember that they do not work alone—they depend on your prayers and support and encouragement. Your financial contributions to missions are important, but your notes and e-mails to missionaries can be just as valuable. Let them know that you appreciate their service in taking the gospel to those waiting to hear.

Read: Galatians 3:23–29

TODAY IN THE WORD



A young first-year Latin teacher was preparing his fourth-graders for their drills that morning. “Now once we learn these conjugations, we can move on to the fun stuff!” he promised. But the children responded, “We love to conjugate! This is fun!” Indeed, as the class went on, the teacher discovered that the power of repetition with the drills prepared his students to enjoy and understand the language.

As we recall, Paul has been arguing that the Law is not opposed to the promised blessing. The Law served as an instructor for the Jewish people that provided protection and training in preparation for the coming of Christ and of faith (v. 24). That is, the Law was the guardian of those people through whom God intended to bring salvation to all the nations.

Prior to the coming of that salvation, the Law performed the necessary function of distinguishing between God’s children, His chosen people Israel, and the Gentile nations. With the first advent of Jesus, the Law reached its fulfillment and the time for the promised blessing to go to the nations had come (v. 25).

So that we do not miss the significance of this last point, Paul spells it out—the coming of Christ marks the coming of the promised blessing to all the nations. As we have already seen, Paul is repeating himself

when he makes this statement. Yet this repetition includes an important elaboration. Now we see why the Law is no longer that focal point of God’s activity in the world. In Christ the Law has been fulfilled. Now that the promise has come, the sons of God are distinguished by being clothed with Christ.

This is what Paul means when he says that in the church there is neither Jew nor Greek. Wise judgment under the guidance of the gospel message recognizes that the heirs of the promise are Abraham’s seed. In the church Jews and Gentiles are fully equal before God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Educators have long understood the power of repetition. We can use this power in our spiritual lives through memorizing Scripture. The process of repeating God’s Word as we memorize sears His truth into the fabric of our being.

As we go through our study of Galatians, choose a verse or passage to commit to memory. Memorizing Scripture prepares us to understand more deeply what God has to say to us, and this understanding will transform our lives to be pleasing to Him.

*If you belong
to Christ, then
you are
Abraham’s
seed.*

GALATIANS 3:29



TODAY AT MOODY

For the next several days, join us in supporting our Bible faculty. Today, say a prayer for John Hart, Hyochan Michael Kim, William Marty, and Gerald Peterman. Praise God for their faithfulness in building the strong foundation of the Word of God in our students’ lives!

*When the
time had fully
come, God
sent
his son.*

GALATIANS 4:4



TODAY AT MOODY

Please add Bible professors David Rim, Ronald Sauer, and Andrew Schmutzer to your prayer list. As they minister the truth of the Bible to our students, our prayer is that their lives also will be renewed and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read: Galatians 4:1–7

TODAY IN THE WORD



Every year young Shane looked forward to his birthday—not just for the presents, but because his dad would grant him new privileges. When he turned six, his dad gave him a bicycle without training wheels that he could ride in the driveway. When he turned seven, he was allowed to ride in front of his house. By the time he was twelve, he could ride his bike around town with his friends. Shane learned that proving he could handle his current level of privilege meant that his dad would grant him additional privileges as he grew older.

In an attempt to clarify the point he made in the previous passage, Paul compares the time of being under the supervision of the Law to the life of a firstborn child living under the care of a guardian. The child stands to inherit the estate of his parents, but he must wait until the date set by the father. The father will not allow the child to inherit the estate until he has matured into an adult. He is the son, but he is little better than the household slaves, subject to the commands of the authority set over him until he reaches the age of maturity.

During the age of the Law, God's people were like that child—heirs, but not yet in possession of the promised inheritance. Then, at the date set by the Father, Jesus was sent into the world. With the coming of Christ, the fullness of time had come. The guardian was no lon-

ger needed and the children were no longer subject to its commands. The heirs of the promise now had the full rights of sons (v. 5). They had now obtained possession of the promised inheritance—the presence of the Spirit.

However, since the fullness of time has come, since the Law's guardianship has ended, the blessing of the Spirit could not be confined only to Jews. The blessings of faith and the indwelling Spirit were promised for all the nations, not just the Jews (3:8–9). Since the Spirit has now come to Gentiles, they too can now call God their “Father” (4:6), they too are now counted as sons of God, as heirs of the promises (v. 7).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Galatians 4:6 says, “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’” On our own we could never approach God in this intimate way. But through faith in Christ and the resulting presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we are able to have a relationship with God that is supremely personal and powerful.

God has promised that He Himself will be a Father to the fatherless, and His perfect love and tender compassion for you is unceasing.

Read: Galatians 4:8–11

TODAY IN THE WORD



One of the great concerns in the American criminal justice system is the amount of recidivism, the rate at which prisoners who have been released from prison commit another crime and end up back in jail.

Many factors influence the likelihood of repeat offense, but a common reason seems to be that many former prisoners find it difficult to function outside the order and structure of prison. Faced with making choices on their own, they end up committing crimes that will lead them back behind bars.

As we think back to the beginning of this letter, we recall that Paul contends that wise living in light of the gospel message means discerning that Gentiles do not need to submit to the Law—the very practices that separated and distinguished them from the Jewish nation—in order to be full participants in the people of Jesus Christ.

Having explained and elaborated on the ways in which the logic of the gospel message leads to this conclusion, Paul now applies his argument to the debate going on in the Galatians' churches: whether adopting the specific practices of the Law is tantamount to returning to the position of the child under the guardian. Such a move makes one no better than a slave, subject again to the authority of the supervisor.

More importantly, acceptance of the Law puts Gentile converts back in the position of being distanced from God. In Christ they know God, or, even better, are known by God. Prior to the coming of Jesus and of faith, they were estranged from God, subject to the evil powers and principalities of the world (3:8). Only the Jews had the right to call God "Father." Now that Jesus has come, those who were distanced from God, who had no way of dealing with their sin, have been brought near to him. Gentiles now know and are known by God.

To submit to the Law would, in effect, be throwing the privileges of the mature son away in favor of the authority and commandments of the guardian. Rather than bringing them closer to God, submitting to the Law will drive Gentile converts away.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



We can all relate at some level to the temptation facing these Gentile

Christians in Galatia. We may not feel pressured to follow the rites of Judaism, but we may feel pulled back into our old ways of life before we were converted.

Thankfully, there is forgiveness when we do stumble and sin (1 John 1:9). An even greater cause for rejoicing is that the Holy Spirit will enable us to walk confidently in the life of faith as we continue to rely on Him (Jude 24–25).

Now that you know God . . . how is it that you are turning back?

GALATIANS 4:9



TODAY AT MOODY

In conclusion of our prayers for the Bible department, thank the Lord for leading these professors to Moody: Timothy Sigler, Garland Singleton, Michael Vanlaningham, and Michael Wechsler. They make a difference in the lives of our students!

*It is fine to
be zealous,
provided the
purpose
is good.*

GALATIANS 4:18



TODAY AT MOODY

Over the years, Moody Publishers have enriched the lives of many Christians and spread the gospel through print all over the world. Please remember in your prayers this vital ministry under the leadership of Greg Thornton, Vice President of Publications.

Read: Galatians 4:12–20

TODAY IN THE WORD



During the campaign before the Iowa caucus in January, Democratic candidate John Kerry was surprised by an unexpected speaker at one of his campaign stops. The man took the microphone to describe how Kerry had saved his life 35 years earlier when they both served in Vietnam. He had not seen Kerry since, and was, in fact, a registered Republican. But as he talked about his gratitude and admiration for Kerry, he revealed a bond forged in combat that crossed the lines of political parties. That loyalty led him to endorse Kerry, and some political analysts credited his statements with Kerry's eventual win in the Iowa caucus.

As we saw yesterday, submitting to the Law would result in Paul's Gentile converts being pushed away from God rather than being brought nearer to Him. There were additional implications. Not only would the Galatian Christians be driven from God, they would also be alienated from the very people, such as Paul, who first pointed them to Christ (vv. 16–17). Given this alienation both from God and from others, Paul hints at the obvious conclusion—zeal for the Law is the antithesis of zeal for Christ (vv. 17–18).

Before Paul leads his readers to consider this, he sets about reminding them of the joy and love they once shared with one another (vv. 12–16). He recounts how he first came to

Galatia and preached the gospel there. Apparently he stayed in that region on account of illness. Those to whom he first gave the good news of Jesus lovingly cared for him during this time of sickness. Paul is convinced that the bond they shared with one another was so close that the Galatians would have plucked out their own eyes if it could have helped him.

By reminding his readers of the close bond they share together in Christ, Paul is asking them to count the cost of turning away from the gospel they received from him. If they submit themselves to the Jewish Law based on teaching that is inconsistent with the gospel message, not only would they turn from God, they would throw away the relationship they shared with their spiritual parent (vv. 19–20).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Paul describes a bond with these Galatian Christians that is remarkable; clearly, they had a deep love and concern for him.

Do the people in your church sense that same love and concern from you? Do they sense that you are willing to give sacrificially to meet any needs? It's one thing to talk about loving each other, but serving and sacrificing is where our true test of Christian love plays out. As the body of Christ, the church should be the example to the world of love and compassion.

Read: Galatians 4:21–31

TODAY IN THE WORD



In the classic movie, *An Affair to Remember*, Cary Grant plays a character

trying to support himself through selling his paintings. He has lost touch with the woman he loves, played by Deborah Kerr. One day, she sees a portrait in a store window and is taken aback—it is a portrait of herself that he has painted. And it is clear through the loving way he has portrayed her image that he still loves her very much.

Paul appeals to one final image to help his readers understand why they ought not, as Gentiles, accept the teaching of those urging them to embrace the practices of the Jewish Law. Drawing on his earlier conclusion that those who have faith are “in Christ” and therefore the seed of Abraham (3:26–29), he goes back to the story of Abraham to illustrate his case (see Gen. 15–16, 18:1–15, 21:1–21).

To get his point we need to remember that Abraham’s wife Sarah was barren. God promised Abraham that he would have an heir, but given that Sarah could not have children, the promise seemed futile. Sarah suggested to Abraham that he try to have children by her slave girl Hagar. Abraham took her advice, and as a result Ishmael was born. Hagar was not a barren woman. Thus the birth of Ishmael was completely natural and ordinary (v. 23). God, however, still intended to fulfill His promise to Abraham

and, against all odds, Sarah did eventually give birth to Isaac. Since Sarah was barren, Isaac’s birth was an act of God, not an ordinary event.

Paul uses this story as an illustration of the gift of the Spirit. Those who believe in Christ are members of the new covenant community, but not because of their natural birth; rather, they are included because they have received the blessings of the promise. Those who believe in Christ are akin to Isaac, children of the promise and of the free woman. For this reason, Gentile converts ought not to submit themselves to the slavery of the Law.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Some Christians in history have thought that the Old Testament was irrelevant for believers. They couldn’t be more wrong! The New Testament itself draws on the Old, as we see in our passage.

If you’re a bit rusty on key stories in the Old Testament, reviewing them can greatly aid your understanding of Scripture. *Ten Keys for Unlocking the Bible*, by Colin Smith provides an interesting, accessible overview of major biblical stories and themes. This series of books is available at Christian bookstores and from Moody Publishers.

*Now you,
brothers, like
Isaac, are
children of
promise.*

GALATIANS 4:28



TODAY AT MOODY

Please include in your prayers the staff of the Moody Publishers Fulfillment department: Michael Alcazar, Junico Arroz, Lee Denton, and Arthur Eastern. Due to their dedicated efforts, thousands of Moody publications reach their destinations on time.

*It is for
freedom that
Christ has
set us free.*

GALATIANS 5:1



TODAY AT MOODY

Today and tomorrow, please continue in prayer for the Moody Publishers Fulfillment employees who help distribute Christian literature and videos across the world. Mattia Sabbara, James Tran, and Matthew Le Tran are in our prayers today.

Read: Galatians 5:1–6

TODAY IN THE WORD



During the struggle by African Americans for civil rights, many leaders drew an analogy between the experience of Israelite slavery and escape from Egypt and the experience of African-American slavery in the United States. Although the institution of slavery had been abolished after the Civil War, some cities and states had instituted laws that treated blacks as second-class citizens. As they advocated for full rights as American citizens, the cry went out: “We won’t return to slavery!”

Paul wanted the Galatians to take up this cry in a spiritual sense. The gospel message, Paul says, does not allow one to return to slavery. Yet as we have seen, anyone who thinks they will be justified by observing the Law are, in effect, enslaved by the Law.

Living out the implications of the message that Jesus died and rose again to rescue sinners from this evil age means that those very people who have been rescued are no longer enslaved by the powers of this age. For Gentiles to turn to the Law, as if that added something to their salvation, was to deny that they really had been rescued and set free by Jesus’ death and resurrection. In fact, Paul goes so far as to say quite explicitly what he only hinted at earlier (cf. 4:17–18)—submitting oneself to the Law alienates one from Christ.

Having spent so much time laying out and expanding

on his argument for this conclusion, Paul now begins to explain other constructive implications within the gospel message.

Those who possess the Spirit look forward in hope and by faith to the time when they will be fully righteous (5:5). Gentiles, simply by believing the message about Jesus, already begin to participate in the promise of forgiveness of sin and can look toward the day of judgment with the confidence that they will be declared right.

It is not, Paul argues, those who are merely circumcised (or for that matter merely uncircumcised) who stand to receive these blessings, but those who live in such a way that their faith is evident through their love (5:6). Living in the freedom of Christ means living a life of faith manifest by one’s love.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



As you examine your life, could you describe your Christian journey as walking in freedom? Or do you feel oppressed by a list of restrictions?

Our freedom is demonstrated through our faith that God will be true to His promises. We don’t have to be characterized by worry and fear. This faith manifests itself through our delight to show love toward others. Our Lord isn’t a tyrannical taskmaster. Instead, He gives us the freedom to trust Him and love each other. Thank Him today for this gift!

Read: Galatians 5:7–12

TODAY IN THE WORD



Anne was out working in her garden when she heard her neighbor Marie screaming at her daughter Madison. Thinking that perhaps she should help calm Marie, she went to see what the fuss was about. Instead of finding Marie angry and distraught, however, she saw her hugging Madison tightly. When Anne asked what was going on, Marie explained that Madison had run into the street, ignoring her command to stay in the yard. Marie had screamed when she heard a car approaching and ran to get Madison. She explained, “My voice and actions have to make it clear to her that it’s dangerous to go in the street, and because I love her I won’t let her do it.”

Paul would understand. He was in the middle of spelling out the relationship between living in freedom and living in love. In our passage for today he deviates from this main issue to exhort his readers again not to fall prey to the dangerous teaching they have heard about submitting to the Law. The issue for Paul is clear: following this teaching equals failing to obey the truth of the gospel message (v. 7). He adds that the notion that Gentiles need both the gospel and the Law in order to be fully rescued from this evil age is to abolish the offense of the cross (v. 11).

Paul uses some very harsh language in reference to those telling the Galatians that they must be circumcised to garner

God’s favor. He calls them “agitators” and wishes that they would go so far as to “emasculate themselves” (5:12). This strong, even violent, tone is interesting given that Paul is in the middle of a discussion about love (see vv. 6, 13). Ought not Paul to be more loving toward these unnamed teachers?

In fact, Paul’s statements strongly express love for the Galatians. Paul is reacting as loving parents would who fear that their children are in danger. He bristles to think of the consequences if these believers accept the teaching they are getting. To submit to the Law is to deny the gospel, to return to slavery, and to be alienated from Christ and from Paul as well. With so much at stake, his love for the Galatians expresses itself in righteous anger.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



While we should act in love, especially toward other believers, this does not mean that we should tolerate or excuse sin—particularly not our own.

Are there beliefs or habits that you cling to, even though you know they’re wrong? The power of our sin can seem overwhelming, but the power of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of God is greater. Spend time in prayer today, asking the Lord to forgive you and give you the courage and strength to embrace His truth and freedom.

You were running a good race.

GALATIANS 5:7



TODAY AT MOODY

In conclusion, join us in lifting up to God in prayer these Moody Publishers Fulfillment employees: Chieu Nguyen, Ernesto Laya, Edward Kapambwe, and Peter Gangl, who recently celebrated his 5th anniversary of service at Moody.

Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

GALATIANS 5:13



TODAY AT MOODY

Heidy Hartley, Vice President of Public Relations, will appreciate your prayers for her department's ministry to the public at large. Ask the Lord to bless their work as a team in serving the Chicago community.

Read: Galatians 5:13–15

TODAY IN THE WORD



Many people, even Christians, are confused about what it means to be free.

For instance, some believers think they can be more lax on the job if they have a Christian boss, because their employer should not judge them. This notion of freedom is really an excuse to justify sloppy habits. Is this what Galatians means by our freedom in Christ?

By freedom, Paul means release from this evil age (see 1:4), from the power of obsolete authorities, and from the specific practices and principles associated with them, especially as represented in the Jewish Law (see 4:4–5, 8–10). Freedom does not validate a lawless life bent on satisfying sinful desires (5:13). Rather, it entails a new form of service—love for one another. Far from being opposed to the Law, this new service, which is the expression of faith (see 5:6), sums up and fulfills the essential thrust of the Law (5:14). Wise living in light of the gospel brings the freedom to demonstrate faith by serving others in love.

We might be better able to grasp Paul's point if we imaginatively expand on his illustration of the child growing into an adult (see 4:1–6). Prior to the age of maturity the child must submit to the authorities the father has placed over him. These guardians have a job: to train the child to live well. The rules and regulations of the

guardians are intended to instill the right values in the child.

Their goal is to prepare the child for the day when he will become an adult. At that point, the child is free, no longer subject to their commands and rules. Yet, if they have done their job, he will know how to make wise decisions based on their training. The rules of the guardians will have been superseded by the values the young man possesses.

This is what Paul is driving at. Those who have faith in Christ, who possess the Spirit, should live as adult heirs who know what it means to fulfill the whole Law, to “love their neighbor as themselves” (5:14).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Our focus during this study has been on the wisdom of our freedom in

Christ. Do you equate that freedom with the ability to “misbehave” and get away with it?

Clearly, that is not the freedom celebrated in Galatians. Our freedom means that we now have the Holy Spirit, who gives us the ability to love God and others in a way we could never do on our own. This freedom is seen in our willingness to love our neighbor as ourselves, which goes beyond just being nice to sacrificial actions done for the glory of God.

Read: Galatians 5:16–18

TODAY IN THE WORD



Five-year-old Jason announced that he wanted to grow carrots in a corner of the garden. He dutifully watered his carrot patch, and his mom bought fertilizer. But no carrots emerged. As they puzzled over the absent carrots, his mom asked, “Jason, when did you put the seeds in?” “I forgot about seeds!” he exclaimed. “But—I thought if I watered and fed it right, the carrots could still grow!”

Just as the ground doesn’t spontaneously produce carrots, our hearts cannot spontaneously produce obedience without fundamental change.

Yesterday we saw that faith in Christ as expressed by love does not stand in opposition to the Law. We explored Paul’s image of the child placed under a guardian. Yet Paul would find a fault in our illustration. The fundamental problem we overlooked concerns the child. While the guardian’s job was to train the child for maturity, it could not actually create the inner change necessary to achieve this goal. This failure was not due to a flaw in the guardian, but to one in the child—the sinful nature.

To see this, we need to understand Paul’s claim that the sinful nature opposes the Spirit (v. 17). “Sinful nature” refers to that inward tendency to rebel against God. This universal problem plagued Jews and Gentiles alike (see 4:22). The Law was given as the standard for the Jews to obey. With obedi-

ence came blessing; with disobedience came a curse (see Deut. 30:15–20).

Paul notes that because of sin, the Law could not be obeyed and always brought a curse (see Gal. 5:10). The Law was good. The child was bad. No amount of correcting by the Law could change the fundamental problem. The situation seemed hopeless. How would the child ever become the adult heir?

Hope is found in the gospel. What the Law was powerless to do, God did by sending His Son to redeem those enslaved to sin (see also Rom. 8:3–9). Now, through the power of the Spirit, the child can obtain the status of mature heir. This is what Paul means by saying those who live by the guidance of the Spirit are not under the Law. They no longer need a guardian, for the Spirit has dealt decisively with the problem of the sinful nature.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Though we are well into the season of the church calendar called Pentecost, today is a good day to think back to Easter and our celebration of what Christ did for us through His death and resurrection. He redeemed us! He made it possible for us to be free from sin! He brought hope to hearts that could never become children of God on their own.

The hymn, “Hallelujah! What a Savior” has five verses that celebrate this. Try to find a copy and sing or read through this wonderful hymn of praise.

*If you are led
by the Spirit,
you are not
under law.*

GALATIANS 5:18



TODAY AT MOODY

As we continue to uphold in prayer the Public Relations department at Moody, please mention Colleen Currat, Timothy Hein, Jennifer Stocks, and Shannon Whisler during your time with God. Ask for the encouragement from the Holy Spirit in their daily responsibilities.

*Those who
live like
this will
not inherit the
kingdom of
God.*

GALATIANS 5:21



TODAY AT MOODY

Edward Cannon, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, appreciates your prayers today. Pray that he would always seek God's will and follow His counsel as he helps Dr. Stowell in leading Moody's Operations division.

Read: Galatians 5:19–21

TODAY IN THE WORD



A young couple bought their first home last winter. As spring came, they discovered that they had half a dozen beautiful flowering trees on their property. Guessing that they were fruit trees, they began to plan what they might do with all the fruit they could gather that summer. There was one problem: they couldn't tell what kind of fruit trees they had. Were they cherry, crabapple, or pear? Until the fruit actually arrived, they weren't sure.

Scripture uses this principle from nature to describe the difference between believers and unbelievers. Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the Law (5:18). Paul makes the same point in v. 23—Law can pronounce no judgment against nor levy any curse upon those whose lives are characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. However, those living under the power of the sinful nature show by their deeds that they have not believed the gospel message. They remain enslaved to the authorities of this evil age and will not receive a share in the inheritance of God's kingdom.

Is it possible to distinguish between the heirs of the kingdom and the slaves of this evil age? Paul answers, "Yes." He says, in effect, exactly what Jesus said—"By their fruit you will recognize them" (see Matt. 7:15–23). He lays out a pattern by which we might discern the reign of the sinful nature. Paul's litany of sins shows us what this

rule looks like. It can be seen in sexual immorality, idolatry, witchcraft, jealousy, rage, and selfishness. We see it wherever people delight in stirring up trouble and causing factions. Envy, drunkenness, and orgies signify the presence of this power of this sinful rule.

Paul could go on and on, but he concludes with a somewhat disconcerting "and the like" (v. 21). He wants to get to his main point—there can be no compromise between the sinful nature and the Spirit. Those whose lives are characterized by sin show that they remain enslaved to sin. Such people do not have the Spirit and will not inherit God's kingdom.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



As you examine your own life today, how would you describe your fruit?

If anger, selfishness, and envy are high on the list, this indicates that you need the work of the Holy Spirit.

If you have never received the freedom possible through the saving work of Christ, take the time to read through the verses known as the "Romans Road": Romans 3:23, 5:8, 6:23, and 8:38–39. By trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection as the payment for your sin, you can have eternal life and freedom from slavery to sin.

Read: Galatians 5:22–23; John 15:1–17

TODAY IN THE WORD



To see just how much popular culture talks about love, take this quick test: see how many popular songs you can name in the next ten seconds that have “love” in the title. Even if popular music has never been your favorite genre, you can still probably name at least half a dozen songs with this theme.

Over the next few days we are going to focus on the qualities known as the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–23 is frequently memorized and quoted, and we want to go through each of these attributes to discover what this fruit really looks like. We want to be able to know what this fruit is so that we can recognize it in our own lives and in the lives of others.

We begin today with love. This quality so celebrated in popular culture is also frequently misunderstood. Love is not just warm feelings, or sexual attraction, or even selfless motives. In our passage today, Jesus is speaking to His disciples about love, and we are able to see how He describes this fruit of the Spirit.

First, we see that this love has a divine origin (v. 9). This isn’t something we manufacture ourselves. Second, love has an inseparable connection to obedience (v. 10). Jesus demonstrated divine love by His obedience to the Father; we demonstrate love the same way. Third,

love sacrifices for the good of others (v. 13). Again, Jesus is the ultimate example of this, as He gave His own life so that we might be saved. We are to love each other in the same way—without thought to our own gain, pleasure, or advancement.

Finally, note that Jesus stresses our need to rely on God in order to bear spiritual fruit (vv. 4, 16). We bear fruit that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives when we follow the example of Jesus Christ, and this will bring glory to God the Father (v. 8). Bearing this fruit of love isn’t an optional exercise in the Christian life—it’s an indispensable part of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



In John 15:7 Jesus says, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you.”

In order to help you remain firmly planted in Christ, able to bear the spiritual fruit of love, we recommend that you memorize Scripture as a way of allowing the Word to remain in you. Choose some verses from today’s passage (or even the entire reading!) to memorize. This isn’t an academic exercise; it’s remaining in the vine (v. 4) so that you have access to the power of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

GALATIANS 5:22



TODAY AT MOODY

Please support in prayer the Moody Trustees whose names are listed at the beginning of this issue. Praise the Lord today for bringing these godly men to leadership positions at the Institute.

*Rejoice in the
Lord always.
I will say it
again:
Rejoice!*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4



TODAY AT MOODY

Moody's Educational Resources department, headed by Dr. Michael Kane, helps bring the latest technology to the classrooms at Moody.

We'd like to express gratitude in prayer for their contribution to the excellence of MBI's education.

Read: *Philippians 1:1–26*

TODAY IN THE WORD



For almost four decades, Joni Eareckson Tada has been confined to a wheelchair. Despite the pain and challenges that come from paralysis, Joni has become known around the world as an incredibly joyful and inspirational woman. In an interview in the January 2004, issue of *Christianity Today* Joni reveals that she still struggles with loneliness, pain, and understanding the affliction of disability. The source of her joy is not a naive happiness, but belief that God remains in control of His creation and that heaven awaits believers. This keeps her pressing on in her ministry.

That's the point of *Philippians*. We often think of *Philippians* as the "joy" book, but sometimes we aren't as eager to see that this joy is the result of suffering. In verses 18–19 Paul notes that he continues to rejoice because of God's work as a result of his imprisonment. And Paul's frequent exhortations to the *Philippians* to rejoice are given in the context of the persecution and poverty facing this church (3:1; 4:4).

It's difficult to make sense of the pain and suffering in our lives. On the one hand we know that it is the result of sin and the fall; on the other hand we know that God is sovereign over all events (Rom. 8:28). How do we reconcile these two? *Philippians*

gives us a peek at the answer. God allows the effects of sin and the curse to play out on earth. But He can redeem the resulting pain and suffering. He can transform it into something beautiful—and most beautiful of all is providing opportunities for the gospel to be heard (v. 14).

When the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, He is able to transform pain into joy. Jesus prayed in our passage yesterday that His followers would bring glory to God the Father, and our joy in the face of suffering speaks to this power and work of God (v. 11). This can only be the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, for only a supernatural work could transform sorrow into something beautiful and redemptive like this joy.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



None of us seek out pain and suffering in our lives. But almost all of us have experienced heartache of some sort, and some of us may endure extremely difficult trials.

The Holy Spirit can transform your sorrow into joy; one tool He may use is the support of others who have similarly suffered. If you have already experienced this fruit, share your story with others as a testimony to God's power. Joy doesn't mean you feel giddy happiness, but rather a comforting trust in the loving purposes of your heavenly Father.

Read: Ephesians 2:11–22

TODAY IN THE WORD



In 1962, Don and Carol Richardson risked their lives to go as missionaries to the Sawi people of New Guinea. This tribe still lived as if they were in the Stone Age; they were headhunting cannibals known for using their victims' skulls as pillows. Don and Carol struggled to find a way to communicate the truth of Jesus to this tribe known for their treachery, vengeance, and brutality.

They learned of a New Guinea tradition called the Peace Child. When warring tribes of headhunters made peace, they exchanged a child who would grow up in the other tribe. If conflict threatened the tribes again, these children would be sent to negotiate. The Richardsons used this tradition to point the Sawi to the true "Peace Child," Jesus Christ.

Peace is not some warm fuzzy feeling of goodwill towards others. It is also not simply an absence of war. According to our passage today, true spiritual peace is found through the work of Jesus Christ to unite people who were once enemies (v. 14). Jesus has made a way for people who could not coexist to be united together. Where there used to be disunity and antagonism, there are now people living together in harmony.

We see echoes of Paul's letter to the Galatians in this passage as well. Paul repeats that the Law used to create a

wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles (vv. 11–12, 14). But the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus have destroyed that barrier. Neither group can impose a claim of special privileges, for both needed the work of the cross to bring peace (v. 17).

In the church, there is now no room for language like "foreigners," "aliens," "second-class citizens." When the Holy Spirit works the fruit of peace in our lives, we realize that Christ has brought us together as "fellow citizens" and "members of God's household" (v. 19). This spiritual peace can only come from a divine work that overcomes our natural prejudice and animosity.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Is there someone in your church that you have difficulty getting along with?

Perhaps she has a personality that grates on your nerves, or maybe you have a conflict with him over how things should be managed.

The fruit of the Spirit known as peace addresses the tensions we have with other believers. We may not see how we could ever resolve our conflict, but the Holy Spirit can work just such a miracle. Commit yourself to seek peace with this person, and invite the Holy Spirit to work through you to make that happen.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way.

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16



TODAY AT MOODY

Electronic communication has become an indispensable part of any workplace, but it takes a lot of effort to keep it running faultlessly. That's the task of our Campus Network staff—James Hickman, Jeffrey Poling, and Johnny Wu. Would you pray for them today?

After waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

HEBREWS 6:15



TODAY AT MOODY

Please bring to the Lord in prayer the service of Robert Gunter, General Counsel at Moody. Ask for continued guidance from God in overseeing various legal matters of the Institute, which Mr. Gunter handles with great skill, godliness, and dedication.

Read: Hebrews 6:9–15

TODAY IN THE WORD



The old saying goes, “Good things come to those who wait.” But this waiting is more than a matter of sitting around on our hands, expecting blessings to fall from the sky. One such example is Walt Disney, who was turned down 302 times before he got financing for his dream of creating Disneyland. Rather than sit passively and assume someone would call him offering money, he persisted in seeking the funds he needed.

Today we turn our attention to the fruit of the Spirit called patience. For many of us, patience has a passive connotation, a “wait and see” attitude. But Hebrews clarifies for us just what it means to exercise this fruit of patience.

Our key example is Abraham, who waited patiently for God to fulfill His promises (v. 15). He is set forth as an illustration of someone we should imitate, because through his faith and patience he did see the faithfulness of God (v. 12). This link between faith and patience is critical, because the primary motivation behind our willingness to wait on God is our faith that He will do what He has promised to do.

We see both positive and negative examples of patience in Abraham’s life. God had promised him a son, but as the years passed and no son materialized, Abraham decided to take matters into his own hands. He had a son with Hagar, the maid

of his wife Sarah. Abraham’s lack of patience here is tied to his doubt that God would indeed do what He said: give him a son with his wife Sarah, who was barren.

God did fulfill His promise, and Abraham and Sarah had their son, Isaac. Then God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham obeyed, and we see an example of active patience. Even though he thought he would lose his son Isaac, he patiently believed that God would make a way to fulfill His word (see Gen. 22).

As the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of patience in our lives, we will persevere and endure, because we know that God will be faithful to His promises.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



To encourage you to persevere, to practice active patience, we recommend that you keep a spiritual journal.

If you haven’t tried this before, you can begin by recording prayer requests, and then going back to note how God answers them. You might also want to include things you’ve learned from Bible study, a page of blessings from God, or a list of ways that you’ve stepped out in faith and God has provided. The purpose of your journal is to see that indeed, God does keep His promises and we can wait on His timing in our lives.

Read: Luke 6:27–36

TODAY IN THE WORD



Justice appeared to be served, and Nathan “Boo”

Herring got what he deserved. The 19-year-old man from Steubenville, Ohio, received a sentence of two life terms without parole for his role in the murders of two college students, Aaron Land and Brian Muha. At the sentencing, Brian’s mother Rachel spoke. “If you hadn’t done this, I would have my Brian and you would have your freedom,” she said calmly. “But losing your freedom is not as bad as losing your soul.” She then asked Herring to devote the rest of his years on earth to good before blessing him and assuring him she would pray for him.

When Jesus spoke of loving your enemies, could He possibly have meant forgiving and praying for the murderer of your child? This sounds impossible—and it is, without the power of the Holy Spirit. But because the Spirit bears fruit in us, Jesus could indeed expect such a supernatural response of kindness and goodness. This is the fruit of the Spirit we are considering today.

Our society associates kindness and goodness with sweet little old ladies and children who play nicely with others. While good behavior and graciousness are certainly admirable traits, the fruit of the Spirit goes well beyond courtesy. Jesus is talking about exercising kindness and goodness to people who hate you, curse you,

mistreat you (vv. 27–28). As anyone who has experienced a slight from someone else knows, we naturally want to respond to others in the same way that they’ve treated us. What gives Jesus the right to ask us to behave differently?

The answer is in verses 35–36. The fruit of kindness and goodness demonstrates that we are the children of God, because *He* is kind to the “ungrateful and wicked.” In fact, we are all the recipients of kindness when we really deserved wrath. When we were enemies of God, He still loved us enough to send His Son to die in our place (Rom. 5:8–10). When we do remember this, we can then allow the Holy Spirit to control our response to those who mistreat us.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Responding with kindness and goodness isn’t easy—if it were, it wouldn’t be a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Think specifically about abuses or mistreatment you have suffered. As you meditate on what this fruit of the Spirit means, ask the Lord to show you how you can respond to these enemies with kindness and goodness. If you feel this is impossible, review Romans 5 and the way that God responded to us in love despite our opposition to Him. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can have this same response.

*Praise be to
the God and
Father of our
Lord Jesus
Christ, the
Father of
compassion
and the God
of all comfort.*

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3



TODAY AT MOODY

Please add to your prayer list the staff of Moody’s Controller’s Office, for whom we’ll pray for the next three days. Today, as you pray, mention the names of Rachel Carr, Albert Chelladurai, Charles Connon, Michael Duong, and Robert Jones.

Read: Hebrews 11:1–16; 39–12:3

TODAY IN THE WORD



Faith and spirituality seem to be on the rise in the United States. In fact, a March 19, 2004 survey by the Barna Group found that nearly nine out of ten adults (87%) claim that their religious faith is very important in their daily life. Given the accompanying statistics on divorce rates, pornography addiction, and materialism, we might well ask about the nature of that faith, and whether it does in fact have any power to affect our lives.

Hebrews 11 is known as the “Hall of Faith” in Scripture. Yet interestingly, we don’t see a list of items to believe in. Instead, we see a list of people who demonstrated their faith through their obedience to God. This passage reveals that faith is not just a matter of mentally agreeing to certain propositions. Faith is the willingness to stake our entire lives on God’s promises. Faith means living a certain way—as if what God has said is true.

Note that these Old Testament saints lived in faith, and yet still didn’t receive the fullness of the promise in their lifetimes (v. 39). What was this promise that we have but they didn’t? We now have the Holy Spirit. We have His work in us to produce the fruit of faithfulness, so that our lives can reflect what we say that we believe.

After giving us a dramatic presentation of biblical heroes who exhibited faith, the author of Hebrews urges us to continue

to press forward in our Christian lives. We are called to “run with perseverance,” and are encouraged not “to grow weary and lose heart” (12:1, 3). This implies that our Christian race will not always be easy. Living in faith will require us to make sacrifices and face challenges. To further encourage us, though, the author presents the greatest model of faith: Jesus Himself. He has endured more than we will ever face, and He accomplished His work (v. 2).

In order to persevere in faith, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus. Faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives that provides us the ability to keep our eyes on this goal, even when we face opposition.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



We are called as Christians to share our faith with others. This includes both being able to describe our belief in Jesus and living in a way that demonstrates that what we believe is true.

Most Christian bookstores carry a variety of resources to help you in these areas. Authors like Ravi Zacharias provide arguments supporting the truth of Christianity, and evangelism programs like Lifestyle Evangelism offer practical pointers on how to live so that you have opportunities to share the gospel with others.

*These were all
commended
for their faith.*

HEBREWS 11:39



TODAY AT MOODY

Again, we lift up in prayer the Controller’s Office staff asking God to give them wisdom in managing the MBI budget and payroll.

Please include Neng Khang, Alice Kwamie, Charles Lynde, Cyrus McDaniel, and Rohan McLachlan in your prayers today.

Read: Matthew 11:25–30

TODAY IN THE WORD



In the beloved Charles Dickens' story, *A Christmas Carol*, the miser

Ebenezer Scrooge worked his longsuffering employee Bob Cratchit to the breaking point. He provided only minimal heat, expected Cratchit to work on holidays, and constantly exuded an air of criticism and suspicion. No one would want to work for a boss like Scrooge!

In our passage today, we see a portrait of a very different sort. Jesus, the Son of God and Lord of all, promises rest and ease. He is gentle and humble. He cares about our situation.

In the early verses of our reading, Jesus is praying to the Father. The context of this passage revolves around revealing heavenly wisdom to those who are like children (v. 25). The description of Jesus that follows runs contrary to the way the world views power and leadership—you don't often hear moguls, dictators, or superstars described as gentle.

First, Jesus' gentleness is connected to His invitation to come to Him (v. 28). He invites those who are weary and burdened, not only those who are powerful and strong. Then He promises rest to the heavy-hearted. Our gentle Savior is not like Scrooge, trying to squeeze every drop of our potential for His own gain. He cares deeply about our well-being.

Second, we should not confuse Jesus' gentleness with

being soft or wishy-washy. Jesus is still our Master and Lord. He still provides a yoke for us (v. 30). But unlike any other master we could follow, only He cares for our souls and provides a burden we can manage. He is our Master, but Jesus will never treat us with abuse.

As the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of gentleness in our lives, we should look more like Jesus. We should care deeply for the souls of others, not placing burdens on them they cannot bear. We should be a place where others can find peace and rest. As we bear the fruit of the Spirit, we also should be described as "gentle and humble in heart" (v. 29).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Every day we are surrounded by weary, burdened, and hurting people.

How can you demonstrate gentleness to people around you?

If you are in leadership at work or church, pray that your management will bear the marks of the fruit of gentleness in your dealings with others. Even if you aren't a boss, you likely have neighbors, family members, and other friends who long for a place of relief from the pressure of perfection and expectations. With the power of the Holy Spirit at work, you can be that place of ministry for them.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

MATTHEW 11:30



TODAY AT MOODY

We value the contribution of the Controller's Office to upholding the Institute's example of godly stewardship and ask God to give wisdom in business decisions to George Palmiter, Roger Sipes, Annita Smith, Abigail Vega, and Linda Wahr.

“Everything is permissible” — but not everything is beneficial.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23



TODAY AT MOODY

Today, join us in prayer for Dr. Joseph Henriques, Vice President and Dean of Moody Graduate School. Our prayer is that God will continue to guide Dr. Henriques in following His vision for the Graduate School and will give strength to fulfill His calling.

Read: 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

TODAY IN THE WORD



The Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, this year gathers the elite athletes of the world in one place to compete for the most prestigious prize in sports—the coveted gold medal. Most of these men and women have focused their entire lives on reaching this goal. They have been willing to eat certain foods and avoid others, schedule their lifestyle to ensure enough sleep, and undergo intense physical training. They exercise this amount of discipline because they want their bodies to be able to respond perfectly during competition.

Few of us could ever be described as elite athletes. But we are still called to exercise self-control over our bodies and minds. We are running a spiritual race, and every part of our lives needs to be in conformity with this goal (Rom. 12:1–2).

In our passage today, Paul explicitly uses this athletic metaphor to discuss self-control. To begin, he stresses that our finish line brings greater rewards than a gold medal. Our eternal future is in view here (v. 25). Paul continues to emphasize the high stakes of self-control: if we fail in this way, we are discredited and our potential for ministry compromised.

Sadly, we can think of numerous examples of high-profile Christians whose ministries were ruined through sexual or financial misconduct. Paul uses strong language here

to describe his approach toward self-control: “I beat my body and make it my slave” (v. 27). Paul is not recommending self-flagellation, the practice of literally flogging oneself. He uses these intense images of beating and slavery to make sure that his readers understand what is at stake. We discipline our bodies, not in order to look good or win athletic glory, but so that we can serve God.

There is an interesting paradox that this final fruit of the Spirit is self-control. It implies that apart from the help of the Holy Spirit, we are incapable of controlling even our own bodies. Without the Holy Spirit working in us, we cannot take every thought captive or use our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



The Christian life isn’t just about our souls and spirits—it includes our bodies and minds, too. Is there an area where you need to exercise more self-control?

There may be an area of sin that you need to battle, or it may be a matter of being more disciplined regarding what you eat or the words you say. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we don’t have to rely on willpower—we can bear the fruit of self-control. And most importantly, we can do these things to the glory of God and the furthering of His work.

Read: Galatians 5:24–26

TODAY IN THE WORD



One of the most familiar images of boot camp to most Americans includes

rows of soldiers marching in perfect unison to the orders barked out by a drill sergeant. This may seem like rather a pointless exercise—when in real combat will soldiers ever march together in straight rows? But this misses the point of the practice. Marching teaches soldiers to work together, coordinate their efforts, and follow instructions. And these are indispensable aspects of success in true combat scenarios.

Having spent some time exploring biblical examples of the characteristics or “fruit” that indicate the Spirit’s presence in one’s life, we can now return to Paul’s argument in Galatians. Previously we saw that the real problem with humanity is that all people are enslaved to the sinful nature. The Law was and is powerless to fix this problem. Jesus, by dying for our sins and rising again, did what the Law cannot do. He rescued us from this evil age, for his crucifixion also brings about the crucifixion of the sinful nature (v. 24, see also 2:20).

The Spirit is the means by which this rescue operation is carried out. That is, those empowered by the Spirit live not as enslaved children, but as free, mature heirs of the inheritance God had promised to Abraham. They live lives characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. Keeping in step with the Spirit entails actu-

ally being a more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled person. The Law does not stand against or condemn those who live in this manner (v. 23). This is why Jews and Gentiles who are united in Jesus ought not to provoke or envy one another (v. 26).

There are no second-class citizens among those who belong to Christ. In Christ neither the Law-keeping Jews nor the “lawless” Gentiles have a leg up on the other. Circumcision and uncircumcision simply do not matter (v. 6). All those who possess the Spirit are equal participants in the salvation effected by Jesus’ death and resurrection.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Some of the ancient practices of spiritual discipline seem quaint or even

useless to us today. In our busy society with constant interaction with others, what is the point of disciplines like silence or solitude?

Actually, it is because we lead such busy lives that we need to cultivate these spiritual habits so we can hear God or exercise self-control. You may want to check out several good books that describe the spiritual benefits to Christians today of practicing these disciplines, including *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:25



TODAY AT MOODY

Our Campus Post Office is usually a hub of activity and its staff is always very busy. That’s why your prayers will be a great encouragement for Anthony Harper, Ronald Hunt, and Jenny Matthews.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2



TODAY AT MOODY

Please continue in prayer with us for the employees of MBI's Post Office: Victor Perez, Samuel Ramos, and Timothy Wisner. Their ministry may go on behind the scenes, but they bring glory to God with their joyful service, positive attitude, and excellence.

Read: Galatians 6:1–5

TODAY IN THE WORD



The winner of the beauty pageant is supposed to be the most attractive of the contestants. When selecting someone for a promotion, the boss chooses the employee who is the best fit for the new job. The gold medal is awarded to the athlete who ran that race the fastest. We are accustomed to measuring our success relative to the accomplishments of others—which we learn today is not exactly how the community of believers should operate.

As Paul nears the conclusion of this letter, he takes the opportunity to present us with some concrete examples of what it means to live in a community of Spirit-filled people. He recognizes that Christians will continue to wrestle with sin in spite of the Spirit's presence. Yet he also realizes that sin creates divisions in the church. Sin is never an individual matter. Paul notes that those who sin are spiritually distanced from the rest of the community and in need of restoration (v. 1).

He exhorts other members of the community to restore sinners gently. The entire process requires great humility so that those who restore their brothers or sisters don't become proud and fall into sin themselves (vv. 1, 3). There is no place in the church for self-righteousness—for celebrating one's own relative goodness in comparison to

the sins of others (v. 4). Paul implicitly reminds us that we are responsible before God for how we live, not for the way our lives stack up to those of others. Each of us must carry our own load (v. 5).

There is another important element to Paul's teaching in this passage. In the midst of the ongoing battle we fight with sin, we have an opportunity to bear one another's burdens (that is, to restore one another gently) and thereby fulfill the law of Christ (v. 2). All through this letter we have seen Paul arguing that Gentile Christians need not keep the Jewish Law. Rather, they are to embody the fruit of the Spirit. This is the law of Christ, and living in community with other believers provides us with the context in which this fruit can flourish.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



Are you comparing yourself with others in your church?
God's Word in

Galatians instructs us that this is not the stance that believers should take with each other.

Instead of measuring your spiritual progress against others, use the fruit of the Spirit as the measuring stick. If the Holy Spirit is producing His fruit in our lives, we will then be in a position to help bear the burdens of others, without succumbing to spiritual pride.

Read: Galatians 6:6–10

TODAY IN THE WORD



In 1986, a teenager named Eli Yoder left his Amish background and embraced a modern lifestyle and technology. Yet this wasn't by his own choice—he had been put out of his Amish community for calling local law enforcement to deal with squatters on his family property, a move not sanctioned by his Amish elders. Asked why he didn't choose to remain Amish on his own, he replied, "It's impossible to be Amish without your community. There are no 'solo Amish.'" To those of us accustomed to messages like "you can be anything you want," this seems strange indeed. Paul, though, may have understood what Eli meant.

Although we may lose sight of Jesus' return, this fact is never far from Paul's mind. It is this hope that underlies the message of our reading for today. Paul exhorts us to live always with a view toward pleasing the Spirit because if we do, one day we will reap an eternal harvest. In other words, Paul is calling us to orient our lives around the coming of Jesus and the day when He will reward His people for their faithfulness. Eternity will commence, and at that point it will matter whether or not we have lived by the power of the sinful nature or by the power of the Spirit (v. 8).

It is sometimes tempting to think that as long as we have our own spiritual houses in

order that we are okay as Christians. This individualistic approach to Christianity fails to grasp the importance of how our relationship to the faith community is key for living out our faith.

Paul has already said the way to please God is "faith expressing itself through love" (see 5:6). Here he takes it a step further. As Christians we ought to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that come along to do good to all people (v. 10). We need to be looking for those moments and to act upon them when they come along.

Paul points out that even more important than being good to people in general is being good to those in our church. The primary focal point of our love for others ought to be those in our very own community of believers.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



The challenge from our reading today is that we act on this word, not simply read it and forget it. With that in mind, how can you do good to people in your church?

If the Lord lays a particular person or work on your heart, purpose to follow through as soon as possible. If you need ideas of what you could do, your pastor or other church leaders can probably give you many suggestions for how you can minister to those in your community of believers.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest.

GALATIANS 6:9



TODAY AT MOODY

Today we'd like to pray for Moody Radio's WGNB in Zeeland, Michigan, where James Curtis serves as Station Manager. May this Moody station continue to excel in bringing the Word of God to hearts and homes in Michigan.

*Neither
circumcision
nor uncir-
cumcision
means any-
thing, what
counts is a
new creation.*

GALATIANS 6:15



TODAY AT MOODY

Our students enjoy their vacations now, but next month they will come back to Moody campus. Our prayer today is that God would bless their summer ministries and that they would continue to focus on Jesus, growing in grace and truth.

Read: Galatians 6:11–18

TODAY IN THE WORD



In 1945, Marshall Tito made himself leader of the new country Yugoslavia by patching together regions with different religions and ethnicities. For the next 45 years, communism suppressed the national identities of Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. But after Tito's death, the country could no longer hold together. Nationalist and ethnic tensions erupted; today the name *Yugoslavia*, if used at all, refers only to Serbia and Montenegro.

It is difficult to create and sustain a country. That makes the work of Jesus even more amazing, for He has forged a new people that will last for eternity.

Throughout this letter Paul has argued that wise living in light of the gospel means that Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians are equal before God, apart from their relationship to the Jewish Law. Jesus died and rose again to rescue all those who believe in Him from this evil age. By faith in Jesus, the universal problem of sin has been effectively dealt with and the promises given to Abraham have come to fruition. Therefore all those who possess the Spirit are Abraham's children and are equal members of his family.

In verses 14 and 15 Paul nicely summarizes all of this in two points. First, he says that those who belong to Christ have been crucified with Christ and therefore have died to the world

(v. 14, see also 2:20 and 5:25). Christians have, through Jesus' death, died to the powers of this evil age. Neither the sinful nature nor the Jewish Law hold authority over the believer.

Second, he notes that just as Jesus was not left in the grave, neither have those of us who have believed in Jesus been simply left for dead in relation to the world. Through the Spirit, the power of Jesus' resurrection revitalizes us. We die to the world in order that we might become a new creation (v. 15).

As we walk with the Spirit and allow the power of Jesus' resurrection to produce fruit in our lives, we are witnesses of the power of God to redeem a fallen world. As God's people we await Jesus' return. In the meantime, the renewal that occurs in our lives points ahead to that ultimate renewal when God will recreate all things.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY



We have concluded our study of Galatians this month. If you have extra time today, review the book and make notes on what you have learned.

Today is also a good opportunity to spend extra time in praise! Galatians provides numerous reasons why we should thank Jesus for His salvation and praise God for His great mercy and love to us. Whether through songs, prayers, or making a list you can refer to later, focus your thoughts on praising God.

because of what I saw through the glass, but what I saw through my heart.”

“And there was one story about a teenager who had been running with the wrong crowd, read *Left Behind*, and told his parents he was going to buy a box of the books for his old friends. Before he could do that, he was killed in a car wreck, so his parents bought the books and passed them out at his funeral. Several of his friends came to Christ.”

Jenkins says he was as surprised as anyone when the series garnered such international attention and popularity. “I quickly repented of taking any human credit for the success, because clearly the phenomenon has gone way past where that would be folly. It’s a cliché, but it’s a God thing.”

Jenkins was a prolific author even before the *Left Behind* series gained momentum and he can claim a total of 15 titles that have appeared on the *New York Times* Best-seller list. His book credits include working with Dr. Billy Graham on his memoir, *Just As I Am*, and as-told-to biographies of sport legends Hank Aaron, Orel Hershisser, Walter Payton, and Nolan Ryan.

But despite his broad success as an author, and now as owner of the Christian Writers Guild and Jenkins Entertainment, Jerry B. Jenkins retains one title he’s had for over 30 years—friend of the Moody Bible Institute.

Jenkins was 17 when he attended MBI as a freshman Bible student and has vivid memories of being on campus when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. “The city erupted and we were confined to our dorms,” he says. It was a memorable year for the country and for the freshman who developed what would become a lifelong appreci-

ation for and commitment to the mission of the Moody Bible Institute.

After his days as a student Jenkins went on to jobs in sports journalism and Christian publishing before happily returning to campus in 1974 to serve as Managing Editor of *Moody* magazine. He steadily moved up the ranks becoming director of *Moody* magazine, then director of Moody Press, and finally vice president of publishing. In 1990 Jenkins became MBI’s writer-in-residence, consulting for the publishing division and writing a column for the magazine while pursuing other freelance projects like *Left Behind*. And since his move from the Chicago-area to Colorado, Jenkins has moved to his current position as MBI’s writer-at-large.

Jenkins still keeps in touch with many of the professors and “dear friends” he made while in school and he now sits on the MBI Board of Trustees, helping to oversee the operation of the Institute. Why has he dedicated so much of his life to the ministry of the Moody Bible Institute? “I especially appreciate that the Institute has held firm to biblical doctrine since the beginning. I admire the single-minded focus,” he says.

For now, Jenkins’ single-minded focus is his newest trilogy *Soon* set in a post-World War III future where religion has been outlawed. The second book in the trilogy, *Silence*, is due out in July. But fans of *Left Behind* need not fear. Jenkins reveals that a prequel and sequel to the popular series are in the pipeline. But, who knows? Maybe neither series will have time to get to print. As Jenkins has reminded us, everything will change “in the twinkling of an eye.” ■

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