



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Response to the King (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Open by sharing a life-changing commitment you have made in your life (besides getting married), and what brought you to that point.
2. Talk about what most people think "holiness" means, and what Isaiah probably thought it meant after his experience (in Isaiah 6). What do you think holiness means?
3. Discuss what led Isaiah to confess his sin. What area of sin was he led to confess? Brainstorm the various "types" of sin that we might need to confess.
4. Share your feelings about the connection between confession and the commitment to serve the Lord. Has anyone had a similar experience in this area?
5. Let the group know which aspect of service you struggle with the most—needing to be perfect first, getting personally involved, or needing to know specifics before you commit?
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

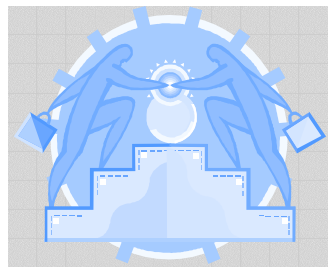
Adult Bible Fellowships—Times and Places

9:00

- Married Adults 39-46, led by Jerry Sims, Room 205-6**
- Married Adults 47up, led by Jan Christensen, Room 201**
- Master Your Money, led by Matt Lux (on break currently)**

10:45

- Open Adults ABF, Led by Ralph & Nelle Hixson, Room 104**
- Open Women ABF, Led by Karen Byrum, Room 112**
- Adults 18-31, Led by Steve & Mary Jones, Room 201-2**
- Nexus ABF (Single Adults), Led by Jay Reynolds, Room 203**
- Adults 32-38, Led by Jim Miller, Room 204**
- "Welcome" ABF, Led by Charlie Anderson/Dave Regis, Room 205**



ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -

Celebration Fellowship

Jan 4, 2004

Volume 2, Issue 22

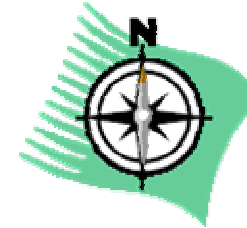
"Building Your relationship with God through 2 questions a day"

LifeGuide 22

ABF Study Questions

No Rules, Just Right

Introduction to Jan 4-10, 2004



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ABF Mission:

Adult Bible Fellowships exist to help people discover and apply God's Word to their lives, and to connect with others in the process

ABF Core Values:

- The guide for successful living is found in God's Word, the Bible.
- Everyone can understand the Bible with God's help.
- Life application of God's truth is our goal.
- People discover God's truth best through interaction with others.
- People need the support of others to make life work successfully.
- There are no dumb questions, and they all deserve God's answers.

A popular steakhouse with an Australian flavor uses the slogan "no rules, just right" to market its approach to the dining experience. They are not committed to the "rules", but rather to making their steaks "just right" for the customer. God has the same commitment to us; when we follow His plan for relating to Him and others we find that our lives are "just right". In this week's study Paul spells this out—when we follow God's plan we are able to fulfill all that God intended for us personally and in our relationships. This can be summed up in the phrase: freedom working through love. As Paul said, all of



The "good news" about Jesus changed the world forever!!

God's requirements can be captured in the verse "you shall love your neighbor as yourself". Yet, even this can become a "rule" that leads to bondage if the motive for keeping it is to impress God. Rather, we are to allow the Spirit to lead us and work through us, all as an expression of our faith in Christ.

When we walk in the Spirit we find ourselves carrying out His desires, rather than the desires of our flesh. This, in turn, results in our building up of others, restoring others, sharing with others, and fighting for their freedom in Christ. Paul, following in Jesus' footsteps, gave us an example of this as he stood firm against those who tried to lead the Galatians astray, and he exhorted the Galatians to stand firm in their freedom and to not return to living by the Law. He boasted only in the cross of Christ, and bore in his body the "brand-marks" of Christ. He believed in the way of grace; it was not about rules, but it was just right.

Planned Obsolescence

In the 1930s an engineer at General Electric proposed that batteries with a shorter lifespan be placed into their flashlights—thus requiring customers to buy them more often. And so, for the sake of increasing sales of new products, "planned obsolescence" began, with most products bearing less than possible quality and durability. Similarly, God introduced a "law" that had a limited lifespan, designed to lead people to try the "new and improved" version. In Galatians 3-4 we see the Galatians, who, at salvation had left the old way of trying to please God by "rule-keeping", had now returned to it. The

old way of living for God is by attempting to please Him through self-efforts; the new way is by trusting God's Spirit to live through us and believing that we are already pleasing to God because of Christ's life and death for us. The way of "faith", having set us free, and having been supported by miracles of God, has been shown to be right. The Galatians had believed this, but now, having been led astray by the Judaizers ("rule-keepers"), had resorted to a "works" approach to being right with God. Having begun with faith it makes no sense to resort to works to please God. In fact Abraham was justified—considered right before God—by faith.

(Dec 28- Jan 3, 2004)

He was the "father" of faith, so everyone who believes in God as he did comes into God's family of faith—Gentiles, as well as Jews. In fact only "spiritual" Jews who believe (in contrast to physical Jews) are included in God's covenant with Abraham. All in this covenant receive the blessing of Abraham—having been made right with God in Jesus, Abraham's seed. However, those who try to live by the Law are cursed—put outside the blessing of God and "devoted to destruction". This is because God requires perfection, and no one can do this. Only Christ has done this, thus only those who live by faith in Him are righteous before God. (Cont pg 2)

Galatians—Week 22

(continued from pg 1)

While we still should follow God's commands, this should be an expression of our faith and love, rather than a way to earn God's favor. The result of faith is that all who believe in Christ receive the promised blessing of Abraham that comes through the Holy Spirit. Even the Jews should have understood faith as the basis for being right with God. The Mosaic covenant, which represents the "works" approach, came 430 years after the "faith" covenant of Abraham. This covenant, which has priority since it came first, was made with Abraham, and with his "seed" (singular) - a prophetic reference to Christ. So, all who are "in Christ" by faith become part of the covenant family of Abraham. The Law did, however, have an important function. It expressed God's good plan for His people, yet was impossible to keep (because of man's sinful nature). This caused everyone to be shut up (found guilty) under sin, so that we would be drawn to the better way of faith. Thus, the Law became our "tutor" to lead us to faith in Christ; and, having arrived, it makes no sense to go back to the lesser standard. We now must lean on God's promise of righteousness through faith in Christ. Through this faith we have become sons of God, and are no longer shut out by various "human" distinctions.

We are now all "baptized", or identified, with Christ, and have become "Christ" people, first and foremost. Just as water baptism symbolizes our death and resurrection with Christ, through faith in His work we are set free from sin and the Law. While slaves and children are both treated the same, when children grow up they are free to make their own decisions. As those set free in Christ, we should now live like adults in God's family—rather than resorting to the slave mentality of those bound to serve God through the Law to "keep" Him happy. Jesus was sent into the world at the perfect time (the world was at peace, had one language, and a great system of roads for travel) to free all those bound under the Law. Sadly, the Galatians had returned to the Law as

a way to please God, although they were already "known" by Him personally. This had caused their treatment of Paul to change; although they once loved him so much they would have plucked out their eyes for him, they now considered him their enemy because he told them the truth. The Judaizers, whose goal was to bring the Galatians under their control, had led them astray. Paul's goal, in contrast, was to pursue them so that Christ could be formed in them—the motive all of us should have when we are trying to help someone else move towards spiritual maturity. Like Paul, we must stand against the "Law" approach, symbolized by Abraham's first wife, Hagar. Just as Sarah drove her away, so we who walk by faith must not allow ourselves to be mistreated as Isaac (symbolic of freedom through faith) was by Ishmael; rather we should totally reject works as a means of righteousness. We are children of promise by faith, and are free from keeping the Law as way to receiving our inheritance from God. In summary the Mosaic covenant leads to bondage and death since we can't keep it, while Abraham's covenant of faith leads to right standing with God. We are no longer slaves, but now sons of God by faith in Christ, able to experience freedom, hope, and the presence of God's Spirit in us.



"The Law became our "tutor" to lead us to faith in Christ."

Week 22 Study Questions - Jan 4-10, 2004

(Galatians 5-6)

Having shown the wrongness and futility of keeping the Law to earn God's favor, Paul now shows how the life lived by faith looks.

1. Read Galatians 5:1. What are we set free from (3:23-24), and what are we set free for (v1)? What must we now do to maintain this freedom (v1), and if we don't what will inevitably happen (v1)?
2. Using Galatians 5:2-4 in what condition had some Galatians found themselves (v4) and why (2-3)? What does this mean? Practically speaking, what does "rules-keeping" do to Christ's work for us (v2)?
3. From Galatians 5:5-6 what is the "grace" (v4) approach to life (v5), and why is characterized as "grace"? In living for Christ (and in Christ) what doesn't matter (v6), and what does (v6)? Apply to today.

4. Look at Galatians 5:7-12. What caused the Galatians to go astray (7, 8, 10) and what should the response to this be (v10, 12)? Who was not responsible (v8, 11)? Why do you think Paul was so harsh (v9)?

5. In Galatians 5:13-15 what is the purpose for our freedom (v13) and why (v14), and what is not the purpose for our freedom (v13)? What happens when we fail to live in love (v15)?

6. Read Galatians 5:16-24. How can we live in God's freedom (v16, 18), and what fights against this (v17)? How do we know whether we are walking in the Spirit or flesh (v19-21, 22-24)?

7. From Galatians 5:25-26 what are we encouraged to do (v25) and not do (v26)? How does this relate to Galatians 5:13-15 and what problem does this imply the Galatians were having?

8. In Galatians 6:1-5 what approach does Paul advise in dealing with those who sin (v1, 2, 3, 4)? In this situation what should our attitude be towards them (v1-2) and towards ourselves (v3-5)?

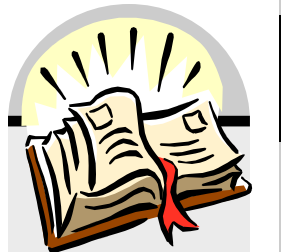
9. Using Galatians 6:6-10 what is another expression of living the "law of Christ" (v6, 10)? Explain the "law" of sowing and reaping here and how it relates to Paul's advice (v7-9).

10. Looking at Galatians 6:11-18 compare Paul's motives (v14, 17) with the Judaizers' motives (v12, 13). How had Paul demonstrated His commitment to Christ (v17) and what was his desire (v16, 18)?

11. In summary, what does living by the Law look like (5:1, 3, 15, 26, 6:12, 13), and what does living by grace look like (5:1, 5, 6, 13, 18, 22-24; 6:1-2, 6, 9-10, 14, 16, 18)?



"We now must lean on God's promise of righteousness through faith in Christ."



Verse To Memorize

"Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2