



In his letter to the Galatian church the Apostle Paul confronts the false teaching of his day that in order to please God, Christ-followers must adhere to Jewish religious law and customs. Perhaps we also are attracted to a legalistic approach to our faith. How do we view the grace of God? How can we shift from trying to earn God's favor in our own strength and instead live free by faith?

Week Two: Approval v. Freedom

Text: Galatians 2:11-21

Sermon Summary:

What is wrong with living by a list of “rules for righteous living” in effort to please God? Isn't that a noble aim? It's an appealing idea to be able to know we've gained God's approval. The problem is that legalism cannot make us righteous because we can't keep the rules. Additionally, our efforts to do so wind up separating us from the people God calls us to love when we gauge our performance against theirs. A legalistic approach to life makes us prisoners to the opinions of other people and to our own fears of failure. By contrast, the gospel of grace offers powerful freedom from both the law and sin...freedom to act in line with the truth of the gospel and to love our neighbors without the need to compare our performance with theirs.

Discussion Questions:

These questions can be thought of as variations on three larger questions:

- 1. What did the Holy Spirit say to you through Sunday's sermon and the associated passage?*
- 2. What are you going to do about it?*
- 3. How can others in the group help you and pray for you so you can do what God told you to do?*

What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

- Have you ever found yourself bowing to peer pressure to fit in? Explain.
- Compare Galatians 2:11-14 with Acts 10. Are you surprised that Peter bowed to the pressure of approval?
- What are some contemporary examples of peer pressure having a negative impact within Christian groups?
- What makes us susceptible to that pressure?
- What warning should we take from this?

What are you going to do about it?

- What is the difference between acting in line with the truth of the Gospel and having a list of rules to keep? How will each approach impact your relationships?
- Read Galatians 2:19-20. Paul explains that Jesus frees us from both the law and from sin. How would you explain this using your own words?
- If we are living “by faith in the Son of God,” how should we respond to the Coronavirus outbreak?

How can others in the group help you and pray for you?

The environment of fear that dominates the world right gives Christians the opportunity to give a reason for the hope we have in Jesus. The timing seems perfect to engage our friends and neighbors in conversations about ultimate things. **What’s After ATX** is giving us an easy on-ramp for those conversations.

Take the time to watch the first discussion group video (Session 1 – Evidence for the Afterlife) with your group to help get a vision for how these conversations could go. Here’s the weblink:

<https://www.christtogethergreateraustin.com/resources/#video-resources>

Your group members will be encouraged to see how simple and accessible it will be. Then PRAY:

- Pray by name for the people you have given copies of What’s After Life? (and for those you intend to give books to).
- Pray you will be bold and seize the opportunities God gives you to have spiritual conversations with people searching for Him.

Scripture Memory:

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.
The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Galatians 2:20