

Study 5  
Galatians 3:1-5

1. In Galatians 3:1-3, what is Paul chastising the Galatians about? Do you see elements of this in our church setting? Please share
2. It is not uncommon for churches to impose an external moral code like no drinking on-premises or swearing to induce character transformation. What is the danger in that? What is the basis of eternally imposed moralistic change?
3. The church has traditionally introduced prayer meetings, communion, mission trips, fasting, life groups, and discipleship classes as means of grace. How can these be misconstrued and become a form of legalism with selfish achievement becoming the main motivation for spiritual transformation? How does legalism lead to divisions and strife within the church?

4. How do we actually grow in our Christian life? Galatians 3:5. How do the same means or disciplines of grace as mentioned in the previous question be instead instruments to true spiritual growth? What is the difference between legalism and discipline? What do we do if we do not feel like going to church or our Gamma group and we are doing it simply to keep up appearances? How do we help each other in this area?

### Case Histories

Jackie who came from a poor family, worked at a massage parlour and had come to an Alpha course at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist church. She realized that all her life she had ignored God and now wanted to come back into a relationship with Him. She realized her sin especially since she had to provide "extra" services to her clients. She wanted to turn over a new leaf and become a Christian so she started attending church. She started serving at the street feeding ministry. When she was asked if she believed that Jesus is the Son of God and who died and rose again for her sins she said "Yes" When she was asked if she would take the step of faith and commit herself to Jesus she said she was not ready yet. She did not want to be a hypocrite and when she was ready she would do it right.

She had been trying to cut down on the "extra" services she was giving customers. She had been trying to cut down on the vulgar language she was using and was still struggling to overcome her great desire for more money. She was involved in some shady deals with some underworld characters.

1. Is Jackie doing the right thing by getting her act cleaned up before making a commitment to ensure it was a genuine commitment?

2. If you were her friend from the church how would you guide her into the correct course of action?

3. Suppose Jackie made a commitment to Jesus after your sharing with her and she still feels depressed as no matter how she tries she inevitably falls into "extra" services at her place of work. She does not come to worship because she feels she is not worthy. She cannot lift up her hands to worship Jesus because they are covered with filth and blood she feels. How do you minister to her?

#### **Takeaway**

**The Christian life begins and continues by faith, not by human effort or self-cleansing, for justification comes through Christ alone. Rather than striving to make ourselves worthy before coming to God, we must trust in His grace, knowing that true transformation happens through the Spirit after we place our faith in Christ.**