

Week 11
Galatians 6, Acts 17-18, Thessalonians 1-2

Theme: We need each other.

Conversation Starter

What action option did you choose to do after our discussion last week? What went well? What did not go well?

What questions do you have from the reading this week?

Weekly Review/Intro

This week, we finished the letter to the Galatians, saw more of Paul's missionary experience, and began the first letter to the Thessalonians. Let's begin by reviewing Paul's missionary experience.

Now that we are little over halfway through the book of ask, what do you notice about Paul's ministry strategy? How would you describe his pattern?

Paul's ministry strategy can be summarized in two steps.

- 1) Go to the Jewish synagogue and witness to the Jews. (Acts 18:5)
- 2) When the Jews would resist, he would switch to preaching to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6)

Why do you think Paul always started by going to the Jews first? What was his motivation behind it?

This question is not directly addressed in this section of Acts. However, one probable cause could be that these were God's chosen people and they already had the word of God from the prophets. Acts 17:2-3 says that Paul used the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

Have you completely read the Old Testament before?

Do you think it is possible to prove that Jesus is the messiah just by using the Old Testament?

This is a challenging question. Many christians do not focus on studying the old testament or focus on main stories that they were taught in Sunday School.

Read Luke 24:25-27

What does this section say about the Old Testament proving who Jesus was?

These verses take place right after Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus went through and explained to these two men that all scripture points to Jesus.

Regardless of his reasoning of going to the Jews first, how do the Jews normally react?

There are two key reactions that happen every time Paul preaches to the Jews:

- 1) Some believed (Acts 17:4)
- 2) Some rejected and persecuted Paul (Acts 17:5)

According to Acts 17:5, why did the Jews persecute Paul? (jealousy)

Why is jealousy so dangerous? What is the harm of being jealous of someone?

Read James 3:14-16

What are these verses saying about being jealous?

James is telling the believers that being envious and having self-ambition in our hearts is not good. He is saying that these two characteristics are signs that “there is disorder and every evil practice.”

What is wrong with being envious and having self-ambition?

What do these two things tell us about our hearts?

In Luke 12:22-34, Jesus addresses these issues directly. These two traits show that our heart is not right with God. Jesus says that “your Father knows you need them (food/clothes).” Our pursuit of our own gain and ambition is an example of us striving for Earthly wealth when we are called to be different from the world. Jesus told us that we cannot love both God and money (Luke 16:13).

Application

As we have seen time and again, Paul experienced great successes and great trials while on his missionary journey. As we learn more and more about Paul’s experience, we see that he did not do it alone.

Try to name as many of the people who have traveled with Paul through his missionary journey up to this point (Acts 18).

- 1) Barnabas
- 2) Silas
- 3) Timothy
- 4) Luke (See the pronouns in Acts 16:11)

- 5) Priscilla
- 6) Aquila

Besides Acts 18:1, Paul has not traveled by himself.

Why do you think Paul rarely traveled alone?

Again, this was not directly addressed in this section of scripture, but Paul was first told by the Holy Spirit in Acts 13:2 to travel with Barnabas. Paul then started traveling with Silas in Acts 15:40 and Timothy in Acts 16:1-5. Paul's example shows us the need for a christian support system in our lives, and both Paul and James address how we are to relate to our christian brothers and sisters.

Read Galatians 6:1-3

According to these verses, what are two things christian brothers and sisters are supposed to do for one another?

According to these verses, we are called to:

- 1) Restore a person who is in wrongdoing with a gentle spirit (v.1)
- 2) Carry one another's burdens. (v. 2)

In your own words, what do you think it means to "Restore a person who is in wrongdoing"?

What does that look like today?

To restore someone means to help them get back on track in their walk with Christ. You are not saving the person; Jesus does that. However, you can point out the wrongdoing to that person and encourage them to change.

What are some challenges that can come with trying to restore a person who is in wrongdoing?

According to verse 1, we are to do this with a gentle spirit. What does that mean?

The word gentle can also mean tender, mild, or kind. To have a gentle spirit means that we need to approach the person from a place of love rather than a place of judgement.

How do you help restore someone without coming across as judgemental?

The second command that we are supposed to do for our fellow believer is to "carry each other's burdens."

In your own words, what do you think it means to “carry on another’s burdens”?

What does this look like today?

This verse tells us that we as christians are meant to support one another through our difficulties. We are meant to have relationships where we share what we are struggling with and ask for help from our fellow believers.

Have you ever had someone carry a burden with you? How did it help you through the situation?

Is it easy to let someone carry your burden with you? Why can it be difficult to let someone else help you?

One of the biggest struggles with carrying one another’s burdens is this requires us to tell someone us what our burdens are. In the same way, correcting someone in wrongdoing can also require us to tell someone where we are failing.

What do these two commands imply about the type of relationship we should have with fellow believers?

These commands tell us that we are to have intimate and deep relationships with our fellow believers. In James 5:16, we are told to confess our sins to one another. This requires a deep and open relationship with another person.

Is there any risk in trying to develop this relationship with someone else?

What can be scary about developing this relationship?

Many times, we feel like we cannot develop this relationship with someone else because we are afraid of what the other person will say about us. We do not want someone else to know what we struggle with and where we have shortcomings.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8

This verse wraps up how we are to relate to other believers. We are called to love our fellow believers and share our lives with them as well. This means that we are to be involved with our fellow believers not just in a church setting. We are to love them and live together. We are a support system and a network of people that are to inspire and encourage one another in our walks with the Lord.

Week 11
Galatians 6, Acts 17-18, Thessalonians 1-2

Reflection

During this week, you are being charged with answering these questions about yourself and your walk with God. Hopefully these will force you to pray and consider what God wants you to do in your life.

- 1) Have you read the Old Testament? Could you show someone how the Old Testament connects to the New Testament?
- 2) Do you have an intimate and open relationship with another believer?
- 3) Do you have someone who you can go to when you need help carrying your burden?
- 4) Are you caught in wrongdoing and need help? If so, what can you do about it?

Action

Choose one of the following actions to do as part of your walk this week.

- 1) Read Isaiah 53:7-12 and write down how these verses point to Jesus.
- 2) Reach out to a fellow believer and spend time with them outside of church.
- 3) Confess to a trusted believer if you are caught in wrongdoing or need help carrying a burden. Pray together.