

WCAC Youth Group

Quiet Times

Aug 24 – Aug 31, 2008

A Journey through the book of Galatians

(Devotions from Ryan Shyu and Ben Tzeng)



A "quiet time" is simply time spent drawing closer to God. While many Christians affirm the necessity of daily, consistent time set apart for God, putting that desire into practice can be challenging given the daily demands of family, work, and the busyness of life. The following resources provide, sound, practical advice for developing, enriching, and getting the most out of your quiet time with God.

We all long for an ever-deepening fellowship with God. But how do we find it? The mystery is not great. Experience shows that those who are close to God have set aside time each day with him.

First – **make sure you devote the time.** We often take time to make sure we eat and sleep. We also all agree that God's Word is essential for our very life. So why don't we see reading and spending time in God's Word as important as eating and sleeping (because you won't go a day without those things – but we will with reading God's Word).

Second – **find a place that is quiet** and away from distractions to do your quiet time. Protect this time as sacred time with God.

When you read the Word, make sure you read it more than once. Often you **get a deeper understanding** by reading it multiple times. Also to search deeply for the 5 Ps to not just read it quickly but to find rich meaning and application.

Optional – I would highly recommend journaling and writing down the things God is showing you through the Word. This is also a place where you can write down prayer requests.

Please utilize this book too. I am including all the passages so you can mark up the text. Circle, underline, do whatever you want to see things in God's Word.

Use **Inductive Bible Study Method** for your quiet times

Observation: What does it say?

Intrepretation: What does it mean?

Application: How does the meaning apply to me?

Observe the passage by:

carefully examining the passage for –

repetition of words and themes, connecting words, key words, lists, comparisons

asking questions about the text –

- Who is writing or speaking and to whom? What is the passage about? When does this take place? Where does this take place? Why does the author write what he does? What problems were the recipients facing? How does this passage fit in with the context? (What goes before and after?)
- What are the commands? What are the promises? What are the cause/effect relationships? What are the repeated words and ideas? What do I learn about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? What do I learn about myself (or mankind)?
- What are things that I do not understand or have questions about

Intrepret the passage by –

Looking for connections in the passage

Answering your questions with material from the passage (go through these questions may help you)

- What are the meanings of the words? What are repeated themes and ideas that would give understanding to the passage?
- What does the immediate context suggest?
- What does the broader context suggest?

Go to other passages and commentaries have to say to shade light on the passage

Application

From the passage, what are ideas and principles you can apply to your life

Live out the things God has called us to - James 1:21-25, Matthew 7:24-27

God enlightens us from the Word, we apply what we've learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out these choices.

It is usually best to concentrate on applying one principle at a time.

Prayer is part of the Quiet Time Experience

How we pray - Prayer with ACTS

- **Adoration** – We adore God
- **Confession** – We confess our sins
- **Thanksgiving** – We give thanks for saving us and for all that you have given us
- **Supplications** – We pray for others, and for you to guide us.

Adoration – worship, praise, honoring God, hallowed be Thy name. God is indeed worthy. We are nothing in comparison. He still loves us and cares for each of us as His children. He deserves all of the respect and fear and honor and praise we can muster: O Lord, help me to remember all that you have done for me, all you have revealed and taught and loved.

Confession - this involves a careful exploration of the things that distract us from God's plan, simple things to identify like lust and desire and more complex things like our job, our relationships, etc. Repentance is an experience that leads to a desire to turn away from sin and be restored to the Lord.

Thanksgiving – it is certainly a help to write this on Thanksgiving Day, but it is a reminder that we need to give thanks every day. We deserve nothing as sinners, yet God has given us everything in this life and the life to come, through the death of His Son Jesus Christ.

Supplication - we have now cleared the way to approach the throne for assistance with our lives or the lives of others.

For Saturday and Sunday, we would like you to do something a little different. Please look below at each day.

Galatians: Background and Intro

: *God's devastating acceptance and our unthinkable freedom*

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

Some quick historical background:

Galatians is Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. The church in that province were planted by Paul and made up largely of previously pagans whom Paul had converted himself. Paul is writing them because he has heard that other people have gone to the Galatian church and preached what Paul calls a false gospel—that in addition to faith in Christ, following the Jewish law is also necessary to salvation, meaning one needed to be circumcised and to generally follow the mosaic law.

And this leads us into the real point of this discussion—that is, why read Galatians; what sets it apart, makes it unique, defines it?

Galatians is all about freedom. It's about throwing off everything that keeps us back from God. And it is very interesting because the problems the Galatians had are very parallel to some that we have. Just like the Galatians, many of us know that we are saved by faith alone. But also just like the Galatians, we let our subconscious, or actual people tell us that we still somehow aren't good enough. Like Paul exhorts the Galatian church, we must remember that with faith only, we're 100% of the way there.

Of course, today might not struggle with feeling like we need to be circumcised like the Galatians, especially if you are a girl. But there are still things which unnecessarily keep us from the perfect freedom found in the love that is ours in Jesus.

Now this is different for everyone. People can get hung up on everything from playing too many video games to doing too much homework. But in my view, once we cut all the superficial stuff like that out, there is still one large barrier to meeting God. And that is our fundamental inability to accept that we are accepted by God. We are held back by what Brennan Manning calls a "vague sense of existential guilt". This feeling is derived from a subconscious sense that I am not good enough to accept the love of Christ—like the Galatians, we feel that though in our heads we know we are saved by grace through faith, we still...somehow...for some reason...need...very much...to be better. As Bernard Bush has written:

"These feelings [of guilt] come from within ourselves and are projected outward into the mind of God. We may find that we punish ourselves mercilessly for real or imagined sins, and even then we will not forgive ourselves...Fortunately Christ has revealed the real God to us in unmistakably human form, exposed projection for the idolatry that it is, and given us the way to become free from it. I hope it is clear that feelings of guilt, accompanied by anxiety, fear, and restlessness, arise from deep within ourselves and are not an accurate gauge of the state of our souls before God. *We cannot assume that he feels about us the way we feel about ourselves, unless we love ourselves intensely and freely*"

God doesn't love us IN SPITE of our sin but REGARDLESS of it. And all he requires for access to this incredible love is faith in him. What an amazing truth. The greatest love in the world is ours, free for the taking. And to think that we get still hung up on legalism, whether in name or just in practice.

This is not to say that holy living is not important. In fact, Galatians speaks of the "fruit of the spirit," which results from a love and freedom in Christ. But just realize this—

You don't have to get better before coming to God. In other religions, in society, in our schools, change must come before we are accepted. In Christianity, love comes before, and causes, the change—you actually can't get better without the love of Christ. In light of that, Jesus wants you like you are right now, even though you might be screwed up in so many ways. Just as you are, right now. Don't give yourself to a lifetime of missing God's incredible richness of love when it is right in front of you and just waiting for you to take it. In fact I encourage you, right here and right now, to pray. Enter the presence of God. And then ask yourself, do I feel that I am totally, unconditionally accepted by God right here and right now?

Ask yourself this until you can answer, with total honesty and from your gut, yes. Yes I do believe that God accepts me right here, right now, and in fact loves me, with a devastating love, one which shatters all our insecurities and self-esteem problems and self-hatred—a truly devastating, wonderful, intimate love.

Note: I am drawing here heavily on the arguments of Brennan Manning in his book *A Glimpse of Jesus: The Stranger to Self-Hatred*. I encourage you to read this book it is AMAZING!!

Day 1 – Monday Aug 25, 2008

Greetings

Spend time reading and marking up **Galatians 1:1-5**

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Questions:

What are some key phrases that you can pick up just from the greeting that Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia?

What does it mean to be rescued from the present evil age?

How can we apply these things to our daily walks?

Things to reflect on:

Paul wrote “sent not from men nor by man”. This is an important phrase for him as he didn’t want to be seen as one doing things to please man or do things because people told him to. He wanted to please God in everything he did. There were many that were actually criticizing and persecuting Paul. There were also people following their own ways, although they were saying they were part of God’s chosen people. How do we do that? Are we following what people say or even trying to just please people or are we doing and following God as the thing that is the most important?

Spend some time in prayer

Day 2 – Tuesday Aug 26, 2008

No Other Gospel

Spend time reading and marking up **Galatians 1:6-10**

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Questions:

What do you learn about Paul’s passion for the gospel?

What is the gospel?

How can we apply these things to our daily walks?

Things to reflect on:

The perversion of the gospel mentioned by Paul isn’t something so easy as in a rejection of God and people turning away from God. It was a message about God that you had to follow the rules and laws in order to get to God. This sounds so crazy to us but it creeps up quickly in our understanding of Christ. We have to go to church, read our Bible, pray, be a good person – that is what it means to be a Christian and the only way that God loves us and we can have a relationship with Him. Christianity is not a checklist of things to do and then God loves us. It is about God’s love for us and desire for us to come back to Him. If we accept Christ and the sacrifice that He laid down for us to cleanse us of our sins, then we have the ability to live with Him through Christ’s grace nothing more. Then we reflect Christ in our lives by living holy Christian lives.

Spend some time in prayer

Day 3 – Wednesday Aug 27, 2008

Paul Called by God

Spend time reading and marking up **Galatians 1:11-24**

11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

13For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased 16to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, 17nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

18Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. 19I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. 20I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. 21Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. 22I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24And they praised God because of me.

Questions:

What are some many things you draw from Paul's writing to try to convince them about the gospel he believes in?

Things to reflect on:

Christ transforms lives. He changed a man that formerly killed people because of their faith and now preaches to people about Christ. Our lives don't have to be these crazy conversions to be used by God. What we do need to know is that God can change EVERYONE. His love and grace effects and transforms the normal suburban kid to the people with really crazy pasts. I met a youth that was afflicted with cancer. He saw it as a hardship and curse. I shared with Him that it must be hard but it could be such a gift from God. He looked at me strange. I told him that those that don't have cancer can't understand and relate and love those that have cancer. He understands them and has the ability to be transformed by God's love and be such a light for others. His story can also be such a testimony for all believers in what God does in our lives. He never shared his story every before, but that night I asked him to share for small group. He did and I could see God do a special work in him and all of us listening.

Spend some time in prayer

Day 4 – Thursday Aug 28, 2008

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

Spend time reading and marking up **Galatians 2:1-10**

1 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

6 As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. 8 For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Questions:

What are some key observations about what Paul has been called to?

How does that help us understand more God's heart?

Things to reflect on:

Many things can be drawn from this passage. Paul's desire to reach out to the Gentiles (the non-Jewish people) which very revolutionary back in that time. The Jews were God's chosen people. They were the ones that the message was suppose to be given to. God however was making it very clear that the message was for everyone. God's chosen people were always suppose to share that with those around them. We should always remember the ways that God wants us to reach out to everyone that as His children we are called to be Blessed to be a Blessing. Lastly, something we neglect so much in churches now is the last portion of this section – to "remember" the poor. The disciples and Paul were so eager to love and remember the poor. This is a challenge for us to do the same instead of just being comfortable and desiring so much more of our own comfort in the materialistic sense. **Spend some time in prayer**

Day 5 – Friday Aug 29, 2008

Paul Opposes Peter

Spend time reading and marking up **Galatians 2:11-21**

11When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

14When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

15"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

17"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. 19For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20I 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. 21I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Questions:

What are some key observations about what Paul convictions against Peter?

How can we look towards our own heart and attitudes through this passage?

Things to reflect on:

Peter was finding pressure from people. He knew God and Christ and the things that he was suppose to share. However, he couldn't back down from the people in high positions in the Jewish traditions. Paul was a brother that knew that he couldn't just sit back and let him fall into this trap. He called him out on it. Too often we don't want to be confrontational and we lack the ability to rebuke one another. Paul did it with the desire to love and love those that Peter was hurting and to correct those (Jews) that need to correct their thinking. Pray that we are able to rebuke, but with the right motives. **Spend some time in prayer**

For Saturday and Sunday, we would like you to do something a little different. Please look below at each day.

Day 6 – Saturday Aug 30, 2008

Spend some time finishing the days that you missed and also reviewing all the studies from this week. Look back to see if you were able to apply the things that God taught you in James.

Day 7 – Sunday Aug 31, 2008

Spend some time resting in the LORD. Find time to just rest and worship him in a way that allows you to grow in your love with Him. Be creative and think of ways that will allow you to be rejuvenated by His love through seeing Him through Scripture, Creation, or Fellowshiping with others. Make sure you spend some time journaling about what God taught you through Sunday worship and the ways you want to apply it during this week.

Spend some time finishing the days that you missed and also reviewing all the studies from this week. Look back to see if you were able to apply the things that God taught you in Galatians.