

Week Three: *Empty Promises*
Galatians 3:6-17

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Are you inclined to make a New Year's Resolution? Why or why not?
2. Which do you think is worse, making a well-intentioned promise but failing to keep it, or never making a commitment for fear of failure?
3. Read Matthew 21:28-32. What is the point Jesus made about great sinners versus outwardly "religious people?" How does that lesson apply to us?
4. Read Galatians 3:1-6. Do you think a person's actions are important in determining maturity of faith? Explain.
5. Do you think Christians often attempt to strike a deal with God? In other words, "Lord if you do this for me; I will do this for you and for others?" How do you think God feels about such offers?
6. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for consistency of faith; that regardless of your circumstance in life, your feelings about the Lord and your behavior will remain faithful.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. Read Romans 4:1-5. How were people of the Old Testament era saved?
8. Read Genesis 12:1-3. What was the specific promise that God made to Abraham? Also Genesis 15:1-6.
9. Why do we call ourselves "children of Abraham"?
10. Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 both say there is a way that appears to be right, but leads to death. What "way" might seem so reasonable to most people?
11. What is the main purpose of God's laws? Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 for insight.
12. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to resist the temptation to measure a Christian's faithfulness by the outward appearance of goodness.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

13. How would you answer the question, “Do you consider yourself a good Christian?”

14. Is personal piety the mark of a good Christian? What is the upside? What’s the downside?

15. Read Matthew 7:15-20. Why are good works considered important in this instance?

16. Read James 1:22-25 and James 2:14-19. The great Reformer Martin Luther rightfully taught that a person is saved by grace apart from good works. Why do you suppose he was concerned that people might misunderstand the point James was making in his epistle?

17. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What is the right relationship between faith and good works?

18. Luther is remembered for once saying, “Sin boldly!” What do you think he meant? How could it be misconstrued?

19. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that you always maintain a proper motive for the good works that you are privileged to do as a child of God.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

20. Read Galatians 3:6-17. What is the main point of Paul’s teaching?

21. Look again at Galatians 3:13. What does Paul mean? Consider what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:21 for help.

22. What should a person do if they keep resolving to change an aspect of their life and fail time after time?

23. Are you easily discouraged by failure when attempting to become the mature Christian you want to be? What advice would you give to a newer Christian who is still struggling to overcome the weakness of their own sinful flesh?

24. What help has God offered to forgive and renew Christians who stumble and fall in their faith walk?

25. Why is it important to participate in regular worship if you already know you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus?

26. Read Jeremiah 29:11-12. It is one of the most treasured promises in the entire Bible. What does it mean to you?
27. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater faith to overcome discouragement based on passing circumstance.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

28. Read Galatians 3:19-22. Why do you think God gave us the Ten Commandments if we are unable to keep the Law anyway?
29. Read Galatians 3:23-29. Theologians have described three useful purposes for God's Law. As a mirror, the Law shows us the reality of our sinful nature. As a curb through the human conscience, (which is God's Law written on each person's heart), it keeps society from falling into anarchy. As a rule, it directs people of faith to those actions that please God and help other people. Describe an example when you have seen the Law work in one of these ways.
30. When you read the Bible, do you feel mostly comforted or convicted? Explain your answer.
31. Why are both the Law and the Gospel needed in our lives?
32. Paul makes a point in Galatians 3 that God's promise (as an inheritance) cannot be changed since it was sealed by the death of Jesus. Have you made promises through a Last Will and Testament? Why is it important that our laws protect those promises after we die? Why do you think Paul used that metaphor?
33. How important are God's promises to you?
34. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater confidence in your life based on the certainty of God's promises to never leave you or forsake you.