

DISCUSSION IDEAS
UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU

Galatians 4:19

July 24th, 2016

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♦ **DISCUSSION POINT ONE: CAN I SOLVE ANYTHING BY MAKING A NEW RULE?**

Read through Galatians 4:8-20 and note how serious the Apostle Paul was about legalism.

How successful have you been in changing your attitudes and actions by following rules?

If I have become a child of God and am now a member of His family, what effort of my own got me there?

Compare Isaiah 64:4-6. *[Note that the word for "filthy rags" mentioned here refers to REALLY horrible, stinking, bloody rags.]*

Also compare Titus 3:3-7.

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT TWO: DO TRUE BELIEVERS STILL SIN?**

Look at James 4:1-4. What is it that causes us to act as if we did not really belong to God?

How can that get changed?

What does it mean in Galatians 4:19 that Christ can be "formed in" me?

How does that happen?

When does it happen?

How does Galatians 2:20-21 shed light on this?

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT THREE: AN APPRENTICE OF JESUS.**

We state that our Grace Church goals are to " Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples ". Does that mean that I myself am to be a disciple?

What does being a disciple of Jesus involve?

How does the idea of an apprentice fit in?

What would my life look like if I were truly committed to being an apprentice of Jesus?

If I am His apprentice, who "calls the shots"? Who is really in charge?

Where does my fear of what my friends will think fit in?

♦ **FOR MEDITATION: AT HOME THIS WEEK:**

Read, re-read and meditate on Colossians 3:1-17.

What effort do I need to make?

Consider the following thoughts:

- ▶ Crumbs and Bubbles *(See attached story)*
(How many of these do I control?)
- ▶ God's goal for me is to become like Jesus.

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- ▶ **The secret of becoming like Jesus is to realize that if the inside is changed, the outside will follow.**

Crumbs and Bubbles

Author Gary Moon writes:

We are formed (changed, influenced, affected) by the commercials we watch on television, our work environments, conversation, and the songs we listen to on the radio. A nursing child is being formed. A teenager listening to MTV or participating in a youth group is being formed. Whether we are reading Tom Clancy or C. S. Lewis, paying income taxes, or building a Habitat for Humanity home, the raw clay of our souls is being transformed into what it will be forever.

William Barton, writing under the pen name of "Safed the Sage", gives us a great illustration of both the subtlety and power of formation. His parable goes like this:

Safed was spending time with his beloved granddaughter when the little girl had noticed that it had begun to snow.

"Grandpa, can we go outside and play in the snow?" she asked.

He could not tell her no, so the two went outside. It was not long before Safed became amazed by the words the little girl used to describe the falling snow.

"Look how it falls down in crumbs and bubbles!" she exclaimed.

"What do you mean 'crumbs' and 'bubbles'?"

"See Grandpa, it falls on your face in little bubbles and on your overcoat in crumbs."

And she was right. The snow falling on Safed's face melted quickly, resembling a bubble. The snow that found its way to his overcoat did not melt and looked like small crumbs of bread.

He marveled at the little girl's creative use of language.

They played in the crumbs and bubbles until they became tired, and they went inside to get warm by a fire. It was close to evening. After an early supper, they both went to sleep for the night.

The next morning Safed awakened to a world that was strangely silent. During the night the snow had piled up in great drifts that closed the roads and sidewalks. The whole world was still and quiet.

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Then he remembered the words of his little granddaughter and how she had described the crumbs and bubbles of snow, such small and powerless things. But now these crumbs and bubbles had piled up in such great drifts that they were able to stop trucks from driving down the street.

And so it is with the crumbs and bubbles that form our lives. Taken one by one, these activities and events seem inconsequential, but over the course of a lifetime they pile up in drifts that form the landscape of our characters, whether we're becoming Mother Teresa or Adolph Hitler.

So, take a moment to consider the "crumbs and bubbles" of a typical day in your life. How much time is being given to activities that help your spirit and character be formed in a positive way?

Paul N. stated in Sunday's message:

"My point in sharing this story is to raise our awareness of the impact of these "crumbs and bubbles" that are shaping our lives. We are not victims of this process, in fact, we have much more control over the things that shape our lives than we realize.

"When we are born again through faith in Christ we still possess the character that was formed away from God and shaped around our self-centered desires. As we said, Christians some times say of each other, "How could they do such a thing if they're a Christian?" Well, now we know; they (we) were simply living out their character as it has been formed by their self-centeredness and by the world away from God.

"When we trust in Christ are we, in that moment, completely re-formed in the likeness of Jesus?

"Being born again is not being spiritually transformed; it is the absolutely necessary starting point. Being born again connects us to God and His resources for spiritual transformation. Just as every parent is excited to see their baby grow so God's desire is for each of us to grow into Christlikeness after our spiritual birth."

♦ **FOR PRAYER:**

Continue to uphold the Shelter Valley believers, and the GCC team that serves there.

Continue to pray for the Pearsons as they prepare their home for caring for John's mother.

Pray too for wisdom and peace and health as they continue to find various ways to serve Jesus.

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Let's continue to pray for the Lord's love and power to be seen in Barangonan Island.

Pray for encouragement for Benders and Ingvoldstads. Ask God for protection from injuries and from sickness.

Thank God for the available Helicopter!

Pray for the men who are growing in Christ and taking on greater responsibilities on Barangonan Island.

Thank God and uphold in prayer the "TFG" (Time For God) group of children and young folks who meet every day!

Pray with the strong, self-motivated women's group as they study God's Word and grow to be mature believers.