

07.14.24

## Galatians

### Chapter 4 - Man's Way Enslaves Enslaved Again (vs.8-11)

**Galatians 4:8-11:** However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

Scripture tells us that the righteous are bold as lions. That's an interesting picture, isn't it? Where the Holy Spirit is filling us, Scripture tells us it creates boldness and confidence. Think about that, the Spirit of God literally infuses us with boldness and confidence because we are anchored in the truth.

In Proverbs 28:1, it says that the wicked run when no one is chasing them. I had somebody tell me that's why they don't jog.

As we come to Galatians 4, we desire to have the Spirit of God within us; the boldness of God and the confidence of God. It's a strange thing that we would go back to another way of life, away from the Spirit of God.

Paul writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 3, that where the Spirit of God is there's liberty. There's a sense of freedom, and God desires us to walk in that. What does walking in the Spirit look like, and how do we know that we're walking in the Spirit? I was thinking about that this past week, and I think one of the things that we see throughout the Book of Galatians is that if in fact you're not walking in the Spirit, there is a sense of really childish legalism. In other words, you ask things like, "do I have to do this," or "can I do this," rather than a sense of freedom about knowing what the right thing is to do. Besides the fact that we oftentimes compare and compete with other people, because the standard is other people, because we're thinking in terms of the Law, we're thinking in terms of the flesh, thinking in terms of how we look, and according to what somebody else thinks. We're always trying to seemingly please

somebody else according to what we do or how we perform. It actually becomes a kind of performance.

I was thinking about the fact that when I was a youngster, we used to play all kinds of games out in the field, and usually it ultimately ended in some sort of football game or something like that and we had the greatest time. We'd play into the night sometimes. My mother said when the streetlights go off, I need to come home, but there was one streetlight that never went off. So, I was able to blame it on that, but we would just have the greatest time. I began to see different ones, as well as myself, get involved with teams. After a while, some went on to play in more professional positions, and you begin to see them not enjoy the game anymore. They get lost in the rules and the regulations, and then as time goes on, obviously money and things like that come into play. My grandson is playing basketball and he's going around different places, and they're going into different cities and playing. I said, "Well, what team do you play with?" He says, "Well, the colleges are looking at us. So, we don't play with a particular team. They just put us with a group of people." And I said, "So, it's like you're just a bunch of individuals playing because you don't really form a team." And he said, "Yeah, that's pretty much it. We're just a bunch of individuals playing, looking for scholarships." And you begin to realize that after a while you lose the joy of the game. I mean, it is called a game, isn't it? You are supposed to be having fun, aren't you? The sad thing is that really, God so ordained that at the very beginning of time we would enjoy our walk with Him. It should be in the garden. It should be something at the very early stages of man. God says, "Can we just enjoy each other?" Nevertheless, as man begins to grow up, he begins to think that he's somebody, and he begins to rest on his own laurels and begins to think that he can perform beyond anything that God could ever do for him. After a while, he realizes that he can't, and he can't control things. So, the only way that he's going to keep in bounds is by a law, by rules, by regulations, by things like that. He turns to those rather than turning to a sense of the Spirit that leads and guides and directs.

So, what we begin to see in the Book of Galatians is how oppressive the rules and the regulations can be. As he's already stated at the end of Chapter 3, at the beginning of Chapter 4, it's like a child that's under tutelage, under pedagogical rule in which these people begin to tell them, "Well, you can't do this," "You can do this," and this keeps them walking the straight and narrow; keeps them out of trouble and keeps them out of problems. Unfortunately, it hasn't changed his heart. So, you have to begin to live that way and how oppressive that is, how it just literally sucks the joy out of everything that you do. God came, as He says to the disciples, "I came that your joy will be made full. I want you to have joy in your life." How does that happen? Well, He transforms our heart, and He helps us enjoy life again. So, as we come into this book, that's really what Paul begins to emphasize. You begin to see the signs. I think, in my life, I oftentimes realize, "When do I know that I'm not walking in the Spirit?"

Well, let's see, I'm frustrated. I get upset really easy about what other people are doing, what other people are thinking. I become more critical of those around me. Ok, I'm walking in the flesh because I'm not trusting in the One who controls everything and I'm not walking by faith. In this particular passage, Paul is very concerned with the fact that the Galatians are going back into that realm. They had come to receive Christ.

If you look at Galatians 3:1, he makes it clear, "Foolish Galatians! You had this walk; you had this relationship with God. You saw Him as if publicly crucified before you. The Gospel drew you to Him, and it was the gospel that changed your heart."

Paul will say in Romans 1, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God that really transforms lives." And we know that when somebody comes in contact with that wonderful message that God loved you enough to sacrifice it all for you, you go, "Ok, so He doesn't hate me." It's just the lie of Satan from the garden, "God doesn't like you." That's not true. He loves you so much that He gave His Son for you, and it beckons you to come, "But I want to give my life to You."

Romans 12 says that by the mercies of God, we present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is a reasonable service for what He's done for us. Now, what motivates us? Well, what motivates us is the Spirit. It's the heart. It's the joy of really conveying to Him just how thankful we are for all that He's done for us and the things that He did on that cross, the forgiveness of sins. I mean, when the kindness of God appeared and His love for mankind, He saved us, as Titus 3 says, not on the basis of deeds which we have done, but according to His mercy, and it moves us in that. So, it's not the Law, but Scripture will tell us in Romans 3 that love, or affection for God, will fulfill the Law. I think sometimes people perceive, "Well, it's either the Law or it's Christ." No, Christ in you. It causes you to want to do the right thing. So, He changes your heart.

So, as we come into Galatians 3, we see that Paul is talking to them, "Galatians, somebody's bewitched you because you made a choice, and you made the choice not on the basis of the Law."

(Galatians 3:2) "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

At that moment, did you put your trust in God? Did you say, "I want to do the right thing" because the Law said, "You need to do the right thing," or did you do the right thing because you said, "I want to do the right thing"? Was it, "I trust Him. If God told me to do it, it's the best thing for me. I just know that's true because He spared not His own Son. So, He would obviously freely give me all things and He wants to give me good things." So, that's what motivates you; that's what moved you. Once man begins to regress into the former state before that, he begins to think, "Well, it's all up to me again. I have to start making things." And Paul reminds

them, in Galatians 2:16, "I just want to remind you, and you guys already know this." I know he's saying that because he says it in such a way. "You guys already know this, that man is not justified by the works of the Law. Why are you going back to something that doesn't work? It doesn't work."

He'll say the same thing as you go down a little bit further in Galatians 3:11,

"Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

So, you're going back to something that is not going to work and hasn't worked. It hasn't ever worked.

We now come to Chapter 4, and as we come into this passage that we're looking at, what is clear is he gives an interesting analogy between those that are walking in the flesh, they're like children that have to have tutors, pedagogues or threats; to keep them in line they have to have rewards and punishment. "If you give me enough rewards, I'll do this." And sometimes you do it for the rewards or accolades and the applause of man, and people will do a lot of things for those things; rules and regulations, laws to live by that people tend to gravitate towards that because one, as we were talking about last week, you don't have to do a lot of thinking. You don't have to reason in your heart, and it feels safer, and you can blame somebody else if it doesn't work out because they're the one that told you to do it. Man gravitates towards that sense of legalism.

The wonderful thing in Chapter 4 is, he says, "But you've been set free from this when you received Christ as Lord and Savior. What happened?" We oftentimes talk about it like in Ephesians 1, that we were sealed by the Spirit of God, and Ephesians 4:30 says we've been sealed until the day of redemption. That's telling us that when I believed, when I heard the word of Faith, as it says in Ephesians 1, and I believed, the Spirit of God came within me, the Spirit of God's Son. That's actually stated in Galatians 4:6,

"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son..."

Now, what's the Spirit of God's Son? What does that look like? If you go through the Gospel of John, it probably states it the clearest, in which Christ is very adamant, "I only came to do the will of My Father. I just want to please Him." "Thy will be done" is really that which personifies the heart or the Spirit of Christ. If the Spirit of Christ is in you, how will you be thinking? "I want to do everything to please God."

(Ephesians 5:10) "Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."

That's my heart. That's the thing that I want to do more than anything. Look, if you ask me, "What caused that? I'm going to go, "It's a mystery." Same thing that Paul says in Ephesians 3, "Look at this mystery. I'm dying for stupid Gentiles." He didn't say "stupid," but he does call them foolish. The point is that you'll start doing things that you never thought you would do. What is it that made you do that? Well, nobody could force you to do that. I mean, there are things that I've done in my life, and people have said, "Can I pay you anything?" I say, "There's not enough money in the world that could get me to do this," but there is enough Spirit in me to get me to do it. There are things you'll find yourself doing that only the Spirit of God could move you. That's a wonderful sign of the Spirit of God moving in your heart. So, we have the Spirit of God's Son, which cries, "Abba! Father!" Once again, I just want to emphasize that it is a term of endearment, there's no doubt about that, but it's also, and probably more reflective of respect and honor. It gives this sense of a picture of "I'll do whatever You say, Father." It's an interesting picture of that particular phrase. In fact, the only three times that it's really mentioned in Scripture, it's used to really define a willingness to suffer for doing what the Father wants. It's almost always in the context of "willing to suffer."

So, as you come into this, we have this Spirit that no longer do we have the spirit of a slave that somebody has to tell us what to do or what not to do, but we have the want to within us.

(Galatians 4:8) "However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods."

Now, why is Paul bringing this particular point up? Well, he's bringing it up because he's revealing to them what they had been saved from. You know, you get into the world and once again, it's kind of like sports in that you start off having a good time, but after a while, it becomes not only legalistic, the thing that you pursue, but the world starts putting burdens and demands and things on you. Then you go, "I've got to get out of here." You might have even pursued a career. It's so funny watching people when they go into job interviews and they have to have this job, the job is the greatest thing in the world. They finally get the job, and you talk to them about three years later, "I hate this job." And I go, "Ok, I thought you were really looking forward to that." But the point is that it doesn't take long before the things of the world begin to overshadow us. There are gods, we'll put it another way, powerful things in our lives that draw us; that would be another word for "god". "Elohim," the "El" in the Old Testament that uses the word "god," just simply means "strong one." When it refers to God in the sense that He is the "El Elyon," it means the "strongest strong one." So, there are those things that we turn to for a sense of strength, perhaps for status and we pursue those things, and our thought is, "This is what's going to give me joy. It's going to give me peace. It's going to give me stability. It's going to give me purpose. This is what I'm going to pursue." And you pursue it, and you find out the only thing it does is it puts you in bondage and it causes all this oppression upon you.

So, "What caused you to turn to God?" is his fundamental point. I mean, you used to pursue other things. What caused you to turn to God? You have to understand that they didn't turn to any of the other kinds of worship that were out there, whether it's goddess Diane or Apollos or all of the gods that they could have clearly chosen, as Paul would even talk about as he goes to Athens and he sees all of these different gods. But why would they choose this God? This God is the God that loves me. He came to, as it states in Galatians 5:1, set me free from these things, from the burden, from the cares of what everybody else is thinking. I mean, what an amazing gospel in which God says, "I love you." And you go, "So what did I do to get that?" And He goes, "Nothing. While you were yet a sinner, I loved you, and I've never stopped." And we're drawn to that.

So, the point is,

"...at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

(Galatians 4:9) But now that you have come to know God..."

Now, the passage is talking about the fact that I came to God because I heard this message. I came to know God, I came to know His love, I came to know His grace. Was it me? Well, he ends the phrase this way,

"... or rather to be known by God..."

"I'm so smart, I came to know God." I don't think it's because you were so smart. I think it was because He was so gracious.

There's another similar verse, if you look with me in 1 Corinthians 3. There are a lot of parallel passages to something like this. Chapter 3 talks about the fact that he wishes he could talk to them like men, but unfortunately, they're like children again. They're going back and reverting to those things.

If you jump on down to 1 Corinthians 8, he uses a similar analogy that we're looking at in Galatians. In 1 Corinthians 8, it starts off this way,

"Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant..."

"If I just had more education." Education is not bad. The only problem is, after a while, you begin to trust in your education. All of the seminaries, whether it be Yale or Harvard or many of those schools, have been transformed into just humanistic institutions. They were once seminaries, but now, well, man got full of himself, and his perception is, "I know, I know. I

know.” Yeah, that's probably where they get “yadda, yadda, yadda.” Actually, “yadda” means, “I know.” Did you know that?

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

Now, we've been talking about this, but the sign that you're walking in maturity or with the Spirit of Christ, is that you walk in love. Love fulfills the Law. Only such a word that is good for the moment, for edification. Speak the truth in love. So, not only do we know what is true, but we do what we do in the spirit of love. Well, that's an adult. I mean, you can get somebody that's immature and they can probably quote a bunch of information, but they don't know what to do with it. They don't know how to use it to benefit anybody. They only use it maybe to show off, maybe they're smarter than you, but that's just childishness. So, we know that this is what knowledge does. And then he writes this in verse 2, I love the way he puts it,

(1 Corinthians 8:2) “If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.”

“I think I know everything.” Ok, so, that just shows me you're not there because Paul will make a similar statement in 1 Corinthians 3:18, let no man deceive himself by thinking he is wise in this age.

Of course, Galatians will really double up on this in Galatians 6:3, where Paul will say, “If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

It goes on and says this in 1 Corinthians 8:3,

“But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.”

His point in Galatians is that you came to God, but it was God reaching out to you and embracing you, and what happened? Well, you fell in love with God, and once you fell in love with God, you realized His love. I mean, we love because He first loved us, and we see His love for us. So, we embrace that love and God goes, “Ok, because of that, I will know you; you will know Me. We will have this relationship.”

I'll give you an example of that, John 14. I love the way that this is put, and I wouldn't have you turn to so many texts, but this is just such a great passage.

(John 14:21) “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

He'll get to know me. “I just want to get to know God.” Well. Have you loved Him? Have you loved Him enough to do what He says? Scripture is not saying that by virtue of you doing the Law that you get close to God, it's saying that out of love, if you do what God says, you draw

close to Him, and He'll be close to you. That's how you get to know God. I mean, you could never know God in a gazillion years. It would be impossible for you to know God, but God reveals Himself to those that would love Him. In fact, one of the things that Christ says in an earlier text, in John 7, He says if anyone is willing to do the Father's will, he will know what He has to say. It's such a great text because it begins to show the heart of this.

Well, Paul was saying in Galatians 4, "You used to go this way; you were transformed by virtue of what you heard, and God revealed Himself to you." Here again, the one thing that really contrasted here within the passage is that their gods never went after them. Their gods never cared for them. Their god never demonstrated the love that God did to them. So, why would you leave someone that loved you so much?

He then gives an interesting description within the passage of going into the weak and the worthless elemental things. We were talking about rudimentary things, things that are remedial; remedy. "You messed up. You've got to fix it this way," or so many "Hail Mary's," whatever. So, "You've got to fix your problem this way." And he says, "Why are you going back to that? Why are you going into something that is," and watch how he describes it,

"... weak..."

See the word there? Literally enfeebled, which means that it's powerless to motivate you. It's powerless to do anything. People go to church, they memorize things, they say certain things over and over again; they perhaps look for ways to pay for their sins or whatever they do, and then maybe a week later they go right back to it. The problem with going back to trusting in your own works, in your flesh, is it doesn't work. That's the main problem within this. So, he describes those things as "weak," and what's the next one? "Worthless," which would probably be translated "powerless" within the text. So, something that can't move, can't inspire you. When you look at things of regiment, when you look at laws and legalism and lists and things like that, it's just not inspiring. A coach will pull his team along the side, and they may be running a tight game. He doesn't as much go through at this particular case and maybe have 5 seconds left in the game or whatever, but he doesn't necessarily look towards the list of things that they could be doing. He looks to inspire, and he knows that it's the inspiration that will cause them to go across the line. The fundamental point is that these things don't work and he gives an interesting list.

"... to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

The only thing they do is they enslave you and make you weaker. You don't make any progress. The way that Ecclesiastes puts it is we keep going around in circles. Do you ever feel that way? When you realize that Hebrews will put it in the sense of, you're just chasing shadows, which means you'll never get to the real. You'll always get into the facade; it will always be show; it



will always be superficial, but you'll never make it anywhere. I love, most of all, when we come into Galatians because literally what he's saying is you're just imprisoned in what man thinks. Once you get there and you're just imprisoned in man thinks, you can't get out of that. You become weak and feeble and only oppressed. "I'm worried about them, and I'm worried about that." You never move beyond that point.

So, he gives an example in verse 10,

"You observe days and months and seasons and years."

"Days" would be like the Sabbath. "Months" would be probably more accurately translated "new moons". "New moons" gives the sense of they would have things that they would celebrate, but the "new moon" has this sense of, "Maybe I can start over again." So, what are you waiting for? "I'm waiting for the Sabbath." We'll put it in maybe our day and our way of living, "I'll get better when I just go to church. I'll change when I get to church." Look, God wants you to change when you come to church, and He wants you to grow in church, there's no doubt about that, but what are you waiting for? You can do it in your bedroom. We've had so many people receive Christ in their rooms, where they were. Shouldn't you be living for Christ all the time? I mean, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Shouldn't you be doing that all the time? Humanly speaking, if in fact we're living according to the Law, we're thinking in terms of, "Ok, it's getting time where I'm going to have to do this." It's always seemed a little strange to me that people wait for New Year's for a resolution. All during the year, doesn't matter, New Year's, "We're going to change." I mean, doesn't it seem so childish and legalistic? Anyway, the months, the seasons were really with the feast that would inspire. The feast was coming together. I know that some people are looking for that those inspirational moments; whether it be concerts, great concerts, Christian concerts or whatever, but they're looking to be inspired. What are you waiting for? This is supposed to be a way of life. The Spirit of God is in you. It should be breathing in you, every breath that you take. You're waiting for years to come by and for things to happen? Of course, "If I want to forgive somebody of all their debt, I'm going to have to wait for the year of jubilee." How about forgiving them now? But people begin to think in terms of only what they have to and the regiment of it, but their heart's never in it, and there's never a sense of real jubilee, never a sense of real joy. Paul is concerned because he's labored so much over this.

There is a passage in Romans 14 that I would like you to look at. You probably wouldn't normally place these passages side by side, but I was thinking about the whole concept of living by faith, which is walking in the Spirit. We walk by faith, not by sight, right? Walking in the Spirit is "The Spirit of God inspires me." As John 14 and John 15 will define, the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of truth. Scripture is telling us when the Spirit of Christ comes within us, the Spirit of God's Son comes within us, then it is also the Spirit of truth that takes over our life. Now, here's

the wonderful thing. From now on, we're not looking around at what everybody else thinks. We're not taking consensus about what everybody else believes. We know what the truth is. We know what it is because the truth resides in our heart. Christ says, "I am the way, the truth." So, the emphatic imperative and the dogma of this is that He's absolute truth. We are not confused about what is right and what is wrong. I don't need somebody to tell me. That's why John says in 1 John, "You don't have any need of anybody to teach you anything." Now, what he's talking about in the context is you don't have any need of anybody to teach you what truth is. You know in your heart. If a pastor comes up and begins to preach a lie, if you have the Spirit of God within you, you go, "That's a lie. That's not what Scripture says." See, it will always align with Scripture. You know what the truth is and how confident that is in you, how wonderful that is in you. God wants us to live by that.

We not only have the Spirit of truth, but we have the spirit of conviction, and that's what Romans 14 is about. I won't go into the whole chapter because obviously we don't have time, but the emphasis of Romans 14 is you're going to have convictions. You say, "Well, how do I know that it's of God?" You'll have confidence in the convictions. If you have a conviction, and you go around asking everybody, "Is this conviction ok?" It's not a conviction. You're still living in the Law, but if you know, "Thus saith the Lord. This is something that God wants me to do." So, what happens is you now begin to walk in faith. Now, once again, I'm not talking about something that doesn't align with God, because oftentimes you can pursue or have a facsimile of confidence in doing the wrong thing. "There is a way which seems right," but what I'm talking about is that which aligns with Scripture, and that confidence that you're given in a particular instant in your life in which you know exactly what God wants you to do in this. Whether it's minister in this way, I mean, God tells us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, right? So, we're wanting to serve one another, and God will show you how to serve. He'll inspire you to serve a particular way. That's the wonderful thing about Vacation Bible school. You watch the different ones serve. James was sharing how different ones just go and serve in a particular way. They see a need, they go, and they adjust according to the need because they are being led; not by somebody saying, "You need to do this, and you need to go here. You need to go there." Because they can see the Spirit of God is directing them in this way. So, they walk by what? It's the conviction.

So, if you if you come to the end of chapter 14 within this passage, he's given some interesting examples within the text. "Should I go to this place?" "Should I vacation here?" "Should I dine at this particular restaurant?" Stop. What is God telling you? I mean, is it going to cause or hurt a brother? Don't do it. "Well, I don't see any Scriptures that says I can't do that." You don't need Scripture at that juncture. You know that God doesn't want you hurting somebody else. I was thinking of this in particular, in 1 Corinthians 8, that we were looking at, and one of the things that Paul is touching upon is, he goes, "There are things that those that are weaker

perceived as gods. You can't fellowship with them, even though you say, 'Well, it's no big deal to me.'" I think of Halloween, where adults get scary masks, and they scare the kids. Have you ever seen adults do that? I know some adults just really get a big kick out of scaring little kids. They get these Halloween masks, and they put them on. I've watched the little kids, they're just like frozen. I watched this one particular incident, even when the adult took the mask off and said, "It's only a mask. See, it's only a mask." The kid was still frozen. Paul says, "You wouldn't do anything that would hurt somebody, would you?" You go, "Well, it's only a mask." And knowledge makes arrogant, but are you thinking, "How can I demonstrate love to that person?" See, you're no longer thinking in the flesh. You're no longer thinking, "Well, it's just a mask." You could talk about all the physics of the mask, that it's made out of plastic, and all the things that are dealing with it, but the question is, are you causing someone to be hurt? And you're walking in the spirit of that. So, this begins to make your decisions, as Paul will say, do all that you do out of love. Is this edifying? We oftentimes ask, "Ok, does this build up or does it tear down the body of Christ? In Romans 14, he says this in verse 13,

"Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

(Romans 14:14) I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

(Romans 14:15) For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died."

Don't hurt somebody by virtue of your freedom.

We begin to walk in the Spirit, and the Spirit has this wonderful picture of moving in the direction of always building up and always helping.

If you look with me in Romans 14:22,

"The faith which you have, have as your own conviction..."

I just want to emphasize, "conviction" and "faith" in the Greek is the same word. So, we walk by conviction. Why is it that a person that is walking in the Spirit is so bold? Because they're walking in convictions. Why is it a person walking apart in the Law isn't? Because they're walking in consensus. They're always worried about what everybody else is thinking and how they're defining what the Law says. They don't believe in the Law themselves. They don't love the truth themselves. They're not focused in living what the Word says themselves. They don't even know what it means. So, as Ephesians 4 says, they're like children being tossed by every wind and wave of doctrine, but not us, we're walking in the Spirit.

“... Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

(Romans 14:23) But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”

In other words, what is God looking for you to do? Love Him with your heart. Serve Him with your heart. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice from the mercies of God that move you and motivate you. Once you go into the whole legalistic thing, you cease pleasing God. You can stand before God, and you can give Him a list of things that you did, “Didn't I do this? Didn't I do this? Didn't I do this?” And God goes, “You didn't do what I said.” You go, “What?” He goes, “You're supposed to do it from the heart.” This is the one thing that is the game changer, walking by faith. Why would you go back to the elemental things? Listen, when you go to read your Bible, if having a regiment reading your Bible will help you, have a regiment, I have no problem there, but don't turn to the regiment to cause you to love the Bible any more than any relationship that you have. Sometimes I have to do a schedule with my wife, but I can just imagine walking up to my wife and going, “Ok, so whenever you're free, maybe we can get together.” Don't you think one of the wonderful things about having a relationship is spontaneity? Don't you think that one of the great things about relationships is that that you just love one another? I mean, one of the things that I enjoy the most with my wife is sitting in the car, going places and not talking because you know that you don't have to entertain each other. You know that you're accepted. You know that you're loved. You know that you can just enjoy being together. If you want to talk about something, you can talk about something and not feel oppressed or scared because you're with somebody that you love. This is the relationship that God wants, and He wants you to serve that same way. Everything that you do, do all to the glory of God, and the only thing that glorifies God, just want to emphasize this, is the Spirit of His Son in you, and that's a willing heart.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You to change our hearts. It's not within us to think this way. Father, we are not normally leaning towards the things of Your word, truth, but when Your Spirit came within us, when we received Your Son, a transformation happened. We began to see things differently, everything differently. He changed our hearts, and we found ourselves in many ways, emulating Your Son. The things that we did we no longer did for ourselves, and the pursuits were clearly Your desires.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what I'm asking you to do is stop living by dos and don'ts and rules and regulations and things that we have a tendency to go back to, because we have a tendency to stumble and fall and fail and we go, "I'm going to have to pick myself up and I'm going to have to fix myself." And we start thinking wrong all over again. How about doing this, how about taking this time and fixing everything the same way that it was fixed when God came to you with that wonderful message, "I love you. Just confess your sins. I'm faithful; I'm just. I'll forgive you and I'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness." How about beginning in the power of love, and how about living in convictions rather than consensus?