

The Danger of False Teachers Galatians 5:7-12

I. Distort the Truth (v.7-8)

- A. The influence originated with the Judaizers.
 - “Three important applications can be garnered from this verse: (1) The Christian life is a marathon, not a hundred-yard dash...(2) Paul did not give up on the Galatians even though many of them had shifted their loyalty from him to the usurpers and, to all outward appearances, appeared to be lost to the cause of God and truth...(3) The “truth of the gospel” is not only something to be believed but also something to be obeyed.”¹ [1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 2:2]
- B. False teachers corrupt sound doctrine.
 - “The false teachers who were leading the Galatians astray were far from well-intentioned. Their purpose was to gain a following for themselves and “to make a good showing in the flesh” (6:12). They were forerunners of all the self-promoting false teachers who have plagued the church throughout its history and will continue to do so until the Lord returns.”²
 - a. How to Discern a False Teacher:
 - 1. Deceiving doctrine – False teachers deny unpleasant teachings related to sin and judgment, and offer relief of temporal problems using worldly means.[Jer. 23:17, 8:11]
 - 2. Deceptive Affirmations- False teachers tell people what they want to hear and avoid the truth. [1 Kings 22:8,13; 2 Tim. 4:3-4]
 - 3. Deny Jesus- They negate Jesus’ person and work, particularly His teachings. [2 Pet. 2:1-3; Titus 1:16]

II. Distress the Tranquility (v.9)

- A. False doctrine [leaven] spreads and disrupts the church if unchecked.
 - a. Leaven
 - 1. A substance, yeast, added to bread to make it ferment and rise.
 - 2. It is often used as an analogy for sin or false doctrine. [Matt. 8:15, 16:6]
 - “The evil introduced by the Judaizers will spread to the whole church if it is uncontained...The Galatians must not succumb to their teaching; otherwise, the deviant theology will spread. Paul does not explicitly call on the Galatians to expel the teachers from the community, but he does exhort them not to submit to their theology.”³

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- “One man’s influence may mislead thousands; one piece of false doctrine may taint our whole creed. If you have a wrong ground of confidence, you are wrong altogether.”⁴

III. Destined for Trouble (v.10)

- A. True Christians are secure in salvation but these false teachers will be judged. [2 Pet. 2:4-10; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 20:11-15]

IV. Disrupt the Teachers (v.11-12)

- A. They persecute true teachers with personal attacks. (v.11)
 - “Paul had already explained, he could never advocate circumcision as part of the gospel, because to do so would be to “nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law,” which circumcision represented for the Judaizers, “then Christ died needlessly” (Gal. 2:21). Then the stumbling block of the cross would have been abolished.”⁵
 - “Human beings take...[offense] in being told that even their best works are stained with evil, that everything they do is insufficient to be right with God, and that the only basis for right standing with God is the cross of Jesus Christ.”⁶
 - “While circumcision had once been the sign of the covenant in Israel, it now had no more religious meaning than any other ritual of cutting and marking practiced by ancient pagans.”⁷

Points to Ponder:

1. A false teacher can be identified by what they teach and believe. Compare their doctrine to Scripture. If it does not match they are to be ignored.
2. Exercise wisdom and discernment when dealing with false doctrine. Jesus and the apostles were not harsh with those who were deceived but with the deceivers.
3. Be sure of your own salvation. What are you trusting in for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life?

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¹ Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 364.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 139.

³ Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 324-25.

⁴ Charles Spurgeon, Galatians, ed. Elliot Ritzema, *Spurgeon Commentary Series* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), Ga 5:9.

⁵ MacArthur, *Commentary*, 141.

⁶ Schreiner, *Galatians*, 327.

⁷ Donald K. Campbell, "Galatians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 606.

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