

Group Time Sharing Questions

(A) Questions on the Text (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

1. Look carefully at Galatians 5:6. Paul’s entire letter up to chapter five has been taken up with combating the temptation the Gentiles were facing to return to the Mosaic legal code, represented by circumcision. He has powerfully demonstrated the weakness of that legal system. This verse could very easily serve as a summary statement of the whole epistle. Circumcision doesn’t matter; it is “faith working through love” that really matters to Paul. What is the difference between “faith alone” and “faith working through love”?
2. In Galatians 6:10, Paul urges the Galatians to “do good to all men.” Earlier he has said not to grow weary in “well-doing.” If this kind of doing good is necessary to reap the harvest of eternal life, what light does this passage shed on the traditional way Catholics speak of salvation coming through faith and “good works”?
3. Compare 6:15 to 5:6. While the two verses have different ending, they are both saying the same thing. Please explain why. (Hint: What’s common between being a new creation and faith working through love?)

Galatians 迦拉達書 5:6	⁶ For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.	⁶ 因為在基督耶穌內，割損或不割損都算不得什麼，唯有以愛德行事的信德，纔算什麼。
Galatians 迦拉達書 6:10	¹⁰ So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.	¹⁰ 所以，我們一有機會，就應向眾人行善，尤其應向有同樣信德的家人。
Galatians 迦拉達書 6:15	¹⁵ For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation.	¹⁵ 其實，割損或不割損都算不得什麼，要緊的是新受造的人。

(B) Session Review (Suggested time: 20 minutes)

Review today’s session outline for the Navigator’s Time, particularly the summary (item F). What is the most important point you learned from today’s session? Why? Are there any issues discussed in today’s Navigator’s Time that you don’t understand? Discuss them with your group members and see if they can help you. If satisfactory answers are not readily available, put the issues or questions on paper. Either bring them up during Q&A or submit them to the navigator for post-session response.

(C) Optional

Although modern Catholics are unlikely to be tempted to yield to the slavery of the Mosaic Law, meticulous persons may look on disobeying any of the Church’s disciplinary regulations as mortally sinful, whereas lax Catholics may conveniently disregard all regulations with no qualms of conscience. What is your position? What really is necessary for salvation? What are the ramifications of that position for how you live your life as a faithful Catholic?

BSP #5 SPECIAL NOTES

(A) The Council of Florence (1442) declared that Christians cannot observe the Mosaic ceremonies of the Old Covenant as necessary for salvation without sinning gravely. Although it was permitted for Jewish converts to maintain their ancestral traditions in the earliest days of the Church, this grace period ended with the wide dissemination of the gospel. Thereafter neither Jews nor Gentiles could lawfully uphold circumcision, animal sacrifices, or dietary distinctions as legitimate practices in the New Covenant. (Ref: Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Gal 5:1 footnote)

(B) “Faced with Christ who approaches, man feels called in all his being. Sanctification is a gift of God, it is His initiative, but human beings are called to correspond with all their being, leaving nothing of themselves excluded.” (Pope Benedict XVI, 1st Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2005)

COMMENT: If one is prepared to respond to God’s call to sanctification with all his being, there is nothing left in him – at least not in his will – for anything less than holy and divine. Such a disposition saves him, and the basis of his disposition, the propelling force that moves him ahead, is faith.

(C) “I dare to say that to the extent to which we serve God we are free, while to the extent that we follow the law of sin, we are still slaves”. (JPII, Splendor of Truth, #17)

“In the house of the Lord, slavery is free.” – St. Augustine

“Those who are impelled by love and ‘walk by the Spirit’ (Gal 5:16), and who desire to serve others, find in God’s Law the fundamental and necessary way in which to practice love as something freely chosen and freely lived out. Indeed, they feel an interior urge – a genuine ‘necessity’ and no longer a form of coercion – not to stop at the minimum demands of the Law, but to live them in their ‘fullness’. This is still uncertain and fragile journey as long as we are on earth, but it is one made possible by grace, which enables us to possess the full freedom of the children of God and thus to live our moral life in a way worthy of our sublime vocation as ‘sons in the Son’.” JPII, Splendor of Truth, #18)

“Once again it is St. Augustine who admirably sums up this Pauline dialectic of law and grace: ‘The law was given that grace might be sought; and grace was given that the law might be fulfilled’.” (JPII, Splendor of Truth, #23)

Web links

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM

<http://www.catholic.org.tw/bible/index.htm>

<http://www.cathlinks.org/ccc-toc.htm>

<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccc.html>