

GALATIANS: IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING LEGALISM
Part V: Discerning and Handling Legalism's Unjust Separation Beliefs
(Galatians 4:12-20)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the knotty problems of legalism is its tendency to put unjust relationship barriers between godly believers in the name of "separation from apostasy." It is true that the believer needs to withdraw fellowship from apostates, but legalists often push this fear of apostasy to separate from godly believers.
- B. Paul fingers unjust separation practices so that we can discern between separating from apostasy and unjustly, legalistically separating from brethren of like precious faith.

II. Identifying and Handling Legalism's Unjust Separation Beliefs, Galatians 4:12-20.

- A. Jesus had stated that all men would recognize His disciples for the love that they had toward one another, John 13:35. The hallmark of biblical Christianity is this reciprocating kind of love.
- B. However, the legalists did not have this kind of rapport in relationships, Gal. 4:12-18:
 - 1. Paul writes to ask the deceived Galatian believers to **join him** in becoming as free from the Mosaic Law as he had become in turning from Judaism to reach out to them with the Gospel, Gal. 4:12.
 - 2. However, the Galatian believers, deceived by the legalistic Judaizers, had **isolated themselves** unrighteously from Paul who had led them to Christ, Gal. 4:13-16:
 - a. When Paul first preached the Gospel to these people, he had done so in spite of a distracting ailment, 4:13. Yet these Galatians gladly overlooked his ailment to attach themselves to Paul, 4:14.
 - b. However, since the legalists had garnered their attentions, the Galatians had isolated themselves from him, fearing that he had taught them an errant gospel, Gal. 4:16.
 - c. Thus, Paul asked these Galatian believers to explain their departure from their former fellowship with Paul. **It didn't make sense to turn their back on such genuine, godly fellowship**, v. 15!
 - 3. Having established the fact that the Judaizers had unrighteously isolated the Galatian believers from former closeness with Paul, Paul then described the relationship divisiveness of the Judaizers, 4:17:
 - a. The Judaizers used flattery to woo the Galatian believers to their side as opposite Paul's, verse 17a.
 - b. Then, if the Galatian believers hesitated in not wanting to associate with the legalistic beliefs in deference to holding to the beliefs Paul taught, the legalists used subtle threats of "apostasy" charges were the Galatians not to join them instead of Paul, v. 17b with Ryrie St. B., KJV fn. to Gal. 4:17.
 - 4. Accordingly, Paul expressed concern over the state of affairs in his former friends, hoping that they would overcome this legalistic Judaism to mature in the Lord, Gal. 4:19-20.

Lesson: (1) *Ungodly fellowship with apostates is marked by (a) an absence of truth and (b) a "love" based on worldly lusts of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of this life.* (2) *True fellowship with others of like, true beliefs always has (a) an unflattering admission to the truth, cf. Gal. 4:13-14, 16 (b) coupled with a self-sacrificing, non-worldly character to the relationship.*

Illustration: *I talked with a Nepauger who once had been told that the NIV was a "New Age Bible" instead of God's King James Version truth! I responded, saying that I challenge any English-speaking American to make sense of Job 36:33 in the KJV which reads: "The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour." If we can't understand this KJV verse, how can the KJV be the divinely-ordered Bible?! I also pointed out that 1 Jn. 5:7b-8a in the KJV appears in no Greek manuscript, only in later Latin ones, showing that the KJV has error!!! I also revealed that Ken Barker, the Gen. Ed. of the NIV, was my Hebrew prof at Dallas, and so I asked the Nepauger if I was New Age in how I handled the Old Testament! Thus, when we use (a) the candid truth and (b) recall true fellowship of the faith, we see through false, legalistic charges of apostasy! (The NIV interprets Job 36:33 as: "His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach." Also, the autograph manuscripts, not translations, are inspired. We also condone the use of the NIV, NASB and KJV!)*