

February 20 & 21

PASSION

GALATIANS

John Fuller, Senior Pastor

INTRODUCTION

As Paul writes to the church in Galatia, he shares frustration with what seems to be a shift in their focus. Though Good News of freedom and grace had just been shared with the Galatians, we read how quickly they've run back to the rules and expectations they were held to before. And for what? The book of Galatians explains what we give up when our hearts switch from a focus on Jesus to being passionate for anything less. With our eyes on anything weaker than God, we put our hope on things that can't hold weight and crumble under pressure. We become enslaved to the inconsistency of our emotions, distracted by idolized priorities, and robbed of our God-given joy. As Paul invites the Galatians to reevaluate their priorities, we're reminded of the chance we have to put our passions in the right place and live fully in the freedom Jesus offers.

DISCUSSION

1. **Read Galatians 4:8-9; 2:21.** Paul calls the spiritual principles that previously enslaved the Gentiles "weak and useless." Thinking back to the previous chapters in Galatians, who is enslaving the Gentiles? How do people today "enslave" us with "weak and useless" spiritual principles?
2. **Read Galatians 4:1-7.** How does living as a child of God look differently from living as a slave to something else?
3. It can be surprisingly hard to choose freedom in Christ over being controlled by passions that offer less. As brothers and sister in Christ, it's important we hold each other accountable to live as children of God. As a group, brainstorm creative ideas of turning your passions toward Christ. How can you encourage one another to turn with joy toward Jesus? As a group, what steps do you need to take to help grow your members into that joyful, passionate relationship with Jesus?

THINK ABOUT IT

We're able to make choices about what we center our lives around and give our passions to. As we allow ourselves to be honest, we see our time and attention probably tend to shift toward something. A job, an addiction, a relationship, an achievement, saving or spending money, our education, our kids, our futures, our past. Though what we put in that spot of honor might not be an altogether bad thing, we can only convince ourselves for so long that its strength is enough to hold the weight of our lives. What drives your decisions and pulls your emotions? Where do you look for hope, encouragement, comfort, love? If the answer isn't something that's constantly good and constantly stable, what happens when it doesn't come through? Jesus and the freedom and grace He offers is the only thing that can live up to that expectation of being both good and present at all times, in all circumstances. We can live in freedom when we center our lives around Him because we can be confident He's incomparably faithful! With anything else as our sole priority, we're signing up to be let down. Let's choose to hear Paul's call to the Galatians as a call to all of us to no longer live as slaves but as free children of our constantly good, gracious, faithful father - God.

DO SOMETHING

1. **Identify:** The things you're most passionate about are probably the same things you give most of your time and attention to. Take some time this week to pray, ask others and notice what those things are and where they might be overshadowing your focus on Jesus.
2. **Evaluate:** Of the things you've identified as your passions, consider what each might look like at its best and at its worst. As you do, think of what boundaries you can give those priorities so the focus you give to them doesn't compromise or override the priority you give to Jesus in your life.
3. **Remove:** Some of the passions and priorities in our lives aren't honoring to God and need to be removed. Ask a trusted friend to help you pray and consider what steps you need to take to clear out those things and make room for freedom in Christ.
4. **Redirect:** Not all of the things we prioritize are altogether bad, and some are even gifts from God! Danger comes into play when we don't consider God's role as giver of those gifts. Ask a trusted friend to help you pray and consider what passions are in your life as gifts God has given you to both enjoy and use for His glory. What are some ways you can shift your joy and excitement to God first and your passions second?

For more information, contact grouplife@prairielakeschurch.org.