

Galatians and Philippians

The Law

Interpreting the Text:

1. Paul is relying heavily on his interpretation of certain Hebrew texts, like Genesis and Deuteronomy, in chapter 3. It is clear in some instances that his interpretation differs from that of his audience. Do you find yourself arguing about scripture with contemporaries? How important is it to make clear what your presuppositions about scripture are? How is Paul trying to challenge existing interpretations of, for example, the story of Abraham in Genesis?
2. Perhaps one of the most quoted verses from Galatians is 3:28 which stresses that our unique identifiers go away through Christ. That said, these groupings and divisions have not ceased to exist, even in our own world. How do you think Paul meant this line given the rest of this chapter? Is it primarily allegorical?
3. Paul's concern with covenant and the law while talking to the Galatians, a primarily gentile community, implies that there is a question of whether or not to follow the law. Still, Paul seems pretty frustrated in chapter 3. Why do you imagine this was of such concern and why Paul seems to be so frustrated? What might have been the primary concerns of this community?

Applying the Text:

1. If Paul is correct that the experience of life "in Christ" is important for understanding Christian belief, how would you describe experiences of that life that you have had? What does it mean for you to experience life in Christ?
2. Paul is wrestling with the issue of how to serve the needs of a varied group of people, Jewish and gentile, who have different customs and legal concerns regarding food. It was a challenge then, and accommodating diverse groups of people is still a concern many churches face. What should contemporary churches do in these instances?