

Speaking to the soul



The Bible

You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough! Galatians 5: 7-9

We all know what is to be disappointed. It may be that someone has let you down, or that things just haven't worked out in the way you had hoped. Paul's letter to the Galatians is dominated by his deep and agonising

disappointment that his readers had allowed false teaching to mislead them. He wondered whether his ministry to them had been a complete failure. This was clearly intensely painful for Paul because he longed to see them become joyful and fruitful Christians, and all seemed to have gone horribly wrong. They had gone back to following the rules and restrictions from which Christ had set them free.

It's easy to understand how quickly and easily false teaching spread in the early Church. Christianity was new and very few people had a deep knowledge or experience of it. Many people came from a Jewish background and found it very difficult to understand the radical nature of the changes that Christ had brought about. Others came from a background in other religions and were easily persuaded by the latest eloquent speaker. Paul was eager to help them resist false teaching and to stand strong in the freedom that Christ had brought them.

Our context is very different from the Galatians, but we should be no less concerned about false teachers. Paul describes their teaching as being like yeast. It may seem small, but it can have a huge and damaging effect. These days, false teaching can spread instantly around the world through the internet, so we need to be even more on our toes. The very best way to prepare ourselves is by sticking close to the Bible's teaching. By spending time reading, reflecting and praying through the Bible, we arm ourselves to face the latest false teaching.

QUESTION

What have you found to be the most helpful ways of getting to know the Bible better?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for the gift of the Bible and for the way in which its light shines on my life. Amen

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