

BRAND = New

PART 2: Apoplectic

INTRODUCTION

Jesus stepped into a world where religion was characterized by the temple model: sacred places that housed sacred texts that were interpreted by sacred men who used those texts to control superstitious people. Jesus initiated something entirely new, a complete departure from the temple model. But soon enough some of his followers began to try to assimilate Jesus into the temple model.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has your experience with church up until now emphasized rules or freedom? How has that emphasis influenced the way you view God?
2. Have you ever met a person who seemed truly free in his or her relationship with Jesus? If so, what did that person's relationships with other people look like?
3. Read Galatians 5:1-4. In what ways do you find yourself trying to be justified to God through rules (the law) instead of through Jesus? Why is it so tempting to try to earn God's favor by following rules?
4. Read Galatians 5:14. Talk about the relationship between love and God's law. How do you think love provides more freedom to individuals yet still fulfills the law?
5. What is one thing you can do this week to simply love God and receive his mercy and grace instead of trying to earn his favor?
6. Who is one person you need to do a better job of loving? What is one thing you can do this week to love that person? What can this group do to support you?

MOVING FORWARD

We're all tempted to connect with God based on the temple model. It seems easier, more clearly defined. But Jesus gave us a better way—a way characterized by love. If we drag even a bit of the old into the new, the old will win out. We will have sacred places, ruled by sacred men who interpret sacred texts to control superstitious people. But we won't have love.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1