

## Measuring Up

When we read through Paul's book to the Galatians, it reminds us in many ways of the 21st century American Church - because so much of our thinking is a points system and measuring up. For example, if you're a *good* Christian you will serve in the church, if you are a *really good* Christian, you will go on a mission trip and give and so on... What kind of *points system* do you wrestle with when it comes to Jesus?

Read Galatians 2:19-21

Paul is addressing the issue of adding the law and religious practice to this thing called The Gospel and Christianity. Why is he so adamant about us *not* being made right by what *we* do?

## A Great Exchange

When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he understood a great exchange had occurred. Paul gave Jesus his old, try-to-be-right-before-God-by-the-law life, and it was crucified on the cross. Then Jesus gave Paul *His* life - Christ came to live *in him*. So Paul's life wasn't his own anymore, it belonged to Jesus Christ! Paul didn't own his own life (that life died); he simply managed the new life Jesus gave him. How can you actually *live* as though your life is *not* your own? What would it look like?

Read Luke 15:1-2

Notice the types of people who came to hear Jesus - people who were *far from God*. Yet, the religious leaders of the day were often *opposed* to Jesus. Why did the ones who were far from God have an easier time hearing Jesus than the religious leaders of the day? How can you be religious and yet still be unable to hear Jesus?

## The Prodigal Son

Jesus tells the story of *two* sons - one who rebels and one who does not. The rebellious son squanders his inheritance, hits rock bottom then returns home to his father, humiliated. The father forgives him and throws a feast for him. What is often overlooked in this story is the *other son* - the "*Good*" son - who becomes angry at his father for restoring his brother and the father says "My son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours". Does this parable seem just to you?

Read Luke 15:25-31

The Father was saying you're made right by your *position* ("My Son") - not by your *performance*. The "older son" represents the Religious Leaders Jesus was responding to and the religious people in Galatia. The Father's response to *both* sons represents how Jesus is wanting us to live and what Paul is encouraging the people in Galatia not to miss. Why do you think *both* sons are critical to this story?

## About A Savior, Not Behavior

In Galatians, Paul is saying "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I that live. It is no longer I who am trying to *prove myself* through good works before God in hopes He will receive me." Are you still trying to prove yourself? Why?

Read Romans 8:10-12

Christianity is not a *religion*. Religion is a human activity of *making ourselves* right with God. The Gospel - the Good News of our Savior Jesus is - God has done the *whole work* of reconciliation, without any human assistance. And that is Good News. Who's doing the work in your relationship with God *right now*?