

ROAD TRIP DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 7

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to[b] the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.



Galatians 6:11-18

The Apostle Paul had scribes who would help him as he wrote his letters. At the end of his letter to the Galatians, Paul wanted to write something he felt was important. It was so important that he wrote it in his own handwriting and with large letters.

Paul knew that there were issues in Galatia (modern day Turkey) where people were trying to impress one another according to standards that do not fit with Jesus' teachings. There were people trying to argue that Christians couldn't be proper followers of Jesus without having been circumcised. Paul would have none of it. He was reminding people that Jesus had fulfilled the law and given us a new covenant.

Under this new covenant, Jesus commanded us to love one another. (John 13:34) Later on as he shared this new covenant, He told His disciples and us what the greatest example of loving one another looks like, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13) Jesus even demonstrated what the ultimate way to love someone is on the day after when He was crucified.



Consider This...

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As Paul notes in our scripture passage, the only thing we should ever aspire to is the cross of Christ. Another way to put that would be to die to ourselves and raise to new life as a new creation in Jesus. Instead of judging ourselves by the standards of the world, as new creations, we judge ourselves to the only standard Jesus gave us: love.

Two thousand years later, as it says in Ecclesiastes, there is “nothing new under the sun.” We still are being compelled to impress others according to standards that don’t fit with Jesus’ teachings. Today it has nothing to do with circumcision. Today it often has to do with material things including money and stuff. It might have to do with beauty, looks, and trying to look young. Social media, especially for younger people, plays a big part in us trying to impress one another with things that have no eternal value.

Paul’s words still ring true for me. The only thing that really matters is how well I’m loving people. Am I loving people truly – as Jesus did? Or am I loving people in a way that might be harmful to them. Jesus loves us just the way we are. That’s not some Mr. Rogers-style platitude. It’s simply a fact. There is nothing you can do to make Jesus love you anymore than He already does! And there’s nothing you can do make Him love you any less. BUT, here’s the deal: Jesus loves you and I so much that He doesn’t want to leave us there. He loves us so much that He calls us to turn away from ourselves and the world’s standards and turn toward Him and His standards.

Love for ourselves looks a lot like deepening our faith relationship with Jesus so that the Holy Spirit can speak into our lives and slowly change us over time into the likeness of Jesus. Love for others means doing our best to see people in our daily lives through Jesus’ eyes. That means we love them just the way they are: good, bad, or Florida State Seminole! (Go Gators!). It also means that if we are in relationship with that person, we speak the truth in love and lovingly link arms to life one another up to find the True North of Jesus.

How might each of us strive to turn away from pursuing the world’s standards and instead turn towards Jesus’ only standard of true love?



Consider This...

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The Prayer

Lord Jesus, I want to be more like You. Please forgive me for following what the world calls success. Holy Spirit, help me to open myself to be open to Your work. Empty me of me and fill me with You. Help me to decrease and Jesus to increase inside of me. Help me to see myself and others with the same eyes that You do. Help me to love myself and people in my sphere of influence so much that we link arms and lean on You for the wisdom to love well. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

- Is it hard to look at yourself with the eyes of Jesus? Loving yourself just like Jesus does? How might you start?
- Who is someone in your sphere of influence that Jesus might be calling you to speak the truth in love? How might you come together, link arms, and hold each other accountable to turning away from the world's standards and more towards Jesus' one standard?

The Questions