



FAITH matters

January 26, 2026

Hello Saints,

Today I would like to share with you the comfort and faith strengthening I receive from reading Galatians. There are also two passages in Galatians that guide my behavior and positions on gender, racial equality and the treatment of refugees and immigrants. My thoughts and beliefs, I am sharing come from multiple sermons, readings and Bible studies.

Zondervan publishing company introduced the New International Version of the Bible in 1973 and has had revisions in multiple years. In 2014 they introduced the NIV First-Century Study Bible. The purpose was to have people study the Bible from its Jewish and Early Christian Context. Kent Dobson our former pastor wrote commentary and notes for this version of the NIV. Kent wrote in the introduction of Galatians, "Galatians stands as an eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential New Testament truth that people are justified by faith in - Jesus Christ- by nothing less and nothing more- and that they are sanctified not by legalistic works but by obedience that comes from faith in God's work for them." He goes on to state "it was Luther's book ", because Luther used it for his faith journey and his work to reform the church.

I find the book of Galatians a comfort and reading it increases my faith and love for [God](#). It is amazing to me to be a child of God and to be able to call God my Father, "abba Father."

The first additional passage I would like to share is Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave or free nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ." This guides my behavior toward ethnicities, minorities, immigrants and women. It reminds me of a sermon and a Bible study on this passage. In first century Israel women were not allowed to be witnesses in legal trials. They were regarded as unreliable. The belief was

that women were inconstant meaning they had a lack of firmness or unsteadiness. So, if a woman witnessed a crime or even a murder according to society it didn't happen. Jesus had many women who were his friends and even his financial supporters. At Jesus' resurrection the first witness to see Jesus was Mary Magdalene. Three other women were told by an angel to tell the disciples Jesus was risen and would be appearing to them. This was completely opposite of what society would have done. This is instructive to me in my interactions with women. We just celebrated Jesus' birth and reading Matthew's genealogy it is striking that he included five women in the Jesus genealogy. Two were prostitutes, one was Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, another was a Moabite an enemy of Israel and of course Mary Jesus mother a very young and faithful woman. Again, God is using these events to teach me how to live.

The second passage that I believe is instructive is Galatians 5:14. In this verse Paul writes, "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Paul is referencing and quoting Jesus in His interaction with a Pharisee who asked Jesus what is the greatest commandment? Jesus answered by combining two laws from the Old Testament. They are Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Leviticus 19:18. Jesus stated "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus was using a Hebrew language technique referred to as Synonymous Parallelism. It means that the second commandment fulfills the first command. Jesus was saying in order to love God you must love your neighbor. Paul was very familiar with this technique. Therefore, he writes in Galatians that the entire law is fulfilled by loving your neighbor. Again, this passage is very instructive. In order to love God, I must love my neighbor.

In writing this piece, it reminds me of God's love for us and His desire that we love others. It makes me thankful for ministers who instruct us in God's word and Bible Studies with others, where we share the truths we are learning.

~Written by Bill Blacquiere

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8190 Lincoln Rd. Beulah, MI 49617
231.882.4241
www.benziestandrews.com



Benzie St. Andrews | 8190 Lincoln Rd | Beulah, MI 49617 US

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