

Family Faith Discussion Questions
For Sunday July 3, 2022

Whether you worship with us online or in-person, you may find these questions helpful in starting meaningful faith discussions at home.

Scripture: Psalm 66:1-9 and Galatians 6: 1-16

Helpful Background:

Psalm 66 is a Psalm of praise of God. These verses may feel familiar, especially verses 1 and 2. The Book of Psalms is a unique book of scripture. It contains 160 Psalms, which are basically songs where the music was lost centuries ago and only the lyrics remain. Many Psalms are attributed to David, but the historical authors are impossible to know. Psalms is filled with the emotions of followers of God. Anything we may feel towards or perceive from God --anger, love, gratitude, lament, pain, loss, loneliness, abandonment, joy, support, calling, encouragement, praise, majesty, awesomeness—it can be found in the Psalms.

Psalms can be a wonderful place to start if you are struggling to choose something to read together in Scripture.

Questions:

Psalm 66

- What do you say when you praise God? (Praise as in telling God how great and awesome God is)
- Why do you think Christians praise God? Doesn't God already know how great God is?
- Are there times where you want to praise God or times when you don't want to praise God? Maybe, when you are sad or upset or angry? How can you talk to God during those times?
- Why is God awesome? (Could also ask: Why is God wonderful, almighty, why do we love God?)
- What does the author of our Psalm say God has done that is awesome or amazing?

Paul wrote the **Letter to the Galatians** roughly 20 years after the crucifixion and was writing to followers of Christ whom he had converted. The group of churches in Galatia were experiencing an extreme crisis of faith because a new group of unnamed Christians had visited and contradicted much of what Paul had taught them about what following Jesus meant. These Christians had worshiped pagan Gods prior to converting because of Paul's teachings of the way of following Jesus Christ. The region of Galatia was most likely what is modern day Turkey.

Chapter 6 of the Letter to the Galatians is about bearing each other's burdens and building the Christian community, as well as the benediction and end of Paul's letter. Some of the verses in this passage touch on the specific details of the argument between those brought into the faith by Paul (to whom Paul is writing in the letter to the Galatians) and the visiting, unnamed Christians. Paul believed that Jesus welcomed all people to be a follower of him and the only thing you had to do was live your life following him and be baptized. These visiting Christians believed that Jesus wanted anyone who followed his teachings to become a Jew first and then be baptized. They believed Jesus welcomed all people, but that you had to do certain things to become a Jew, like Jesus was a Jew, before you could be a true follower of Christ.

With children and youth, there are a few ways to approach the specifics if you wish:

For younger children, this might be too detailed a topic to go into the specifics. For discussion with younger children, it is okay to discuss that the argument was about following Jewish customs and becoming Jewish on top of following the specific teachings of Jesus. Jesus, all of his 12 disciples, and Paul, were Jewish as well. The early church would hold councils throughout the 1-3rd centuries to debate whether one must be a Jew before they could be a follower of Christ. The side of the debate that finally was decided to be correct, and what we still uphold today, is that Jesus was starting a new religion, and new path to follow God and live our lives. Jesus

was Jewish and the Jewish faith and heritage inform Christianity in many important ways, but that being a follower of Christ, being a Christian, does not require one to be also a Jew.

For older children and youth, you may want to talk about the specific nature of this disagreement. The issue was about circumcision. Jewish males were circumcised 8 days after they were born. In Jesus' and Paul's time, converts to the Jewish faith could follow Jewish customs as an adult, but until they were circumcised, they were not considered a Jew. Circumcision was something ONLY done by Jews; it set them apart from everyone else. While the arguments among early Christians included debating the necessity of engaging in lots of Jewish customs, the main discussion point was circumcision because many Gentile adults did not want to undergo this procedure. As an adult, it was risky and extremely painful, and considered unnecessary by people other than the Jews. *(It is also worth mentioning that this issue was only relevant to males. There was no physical procedure required of women to convert to Judaism).*

Questions:

Galatians 6:1-16

- Verse 2 calls Christians to bear each other's burdens. What do you think Paul means by this? What kinds of things can you do to follow this instruction?
 - Are there situations where bearing someone else's burden can be a harmful or hurtful thing to us? What do you think we should do in those situations?
- Verse 9 warns us to not grow weary doing the right thing, and there will be reward if we can stay strong. What does this mean to you?
 - What kinds of things might make us weary, even if we are doing the right thing?
 - When we feel tired, run down, burnt out, what can we do to find more energy and strength?
 - How can we help others who feel weary find renewed energy and strength?
- *Verse 11 is one of my favorite verses in the New Testament.* Why do you think that Paul comments about his handwriting being so large, and why does he specifically mention he is writing in his own hand?
- In verses 15 and 16, Paul says that the only thing that matters is the new creation. How are we a new creation when we follow Jesus? Does it change your perspective to view yourself as a new creation??