

Don Hargrove  
Faith Bible Church  
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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

### **Personal Study of the Bible-89** **Galatians 4:10 – Ritual or Reality?**

Galatians 4:10 *You observe days and months and seasons and years.*

Galatians 4:10 ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτοὺς,

“You observe” (παρατηρεῖσθε). First, an exegetical point or two. The compound Greek word is made up of *para* (παρα) + *tereo* (τηρέω), which has the idea of carefully observing (alongside + guard). This refers to scrupulous observance of customs or traditions. In this word, I showed the different parts of the verb. However, it is important for every believer to recognize that there are many common fallacies committed by putting two parts of a word together, and then proceeding to build reality on that word. An example is the word *ana* + *ginosko* which literally means *up* + *know*. However, the word just means “to read” and does not have anything to do with knowing up or knowing again (*ana* is sometimes used for “again”). I just want to remind you that words are always used to point to reality, where we *always* must begin epistemologically. What reality is the word pointing to? must be the first question that one asks. It is a dangerous thing to begin reality with mental constructs rather than external reality. This has many applications in epistemology as well as in the metaphysics of biblical truths. I just wanted to remind you of the exegetical fallacy of putting two parts of a word together and building reality on it. Sometimes the compound word emphasizes a point, like in this example, but each case must be examined with respect to reality as such.

Second, the passage is pointing to the reality that, under the influence of the legalists, the Galatians began to orient themselves to the Jewish religious calendar. Love for religious holidays as a means or measure of spirituality is common in legalism. The legalists had convinced the Galatians to keep the Sabbaths and Old Testament feasts to be good Christians. Legalism is often characterized by scruples regarding outward activities to gain merit with God. This is not limited to those who become obsessed with religious holidays—a person can be very legalistic about listening to Bible doctrine and using all of the doctrinal vocabulary. It is very easy to become legalistic and self-righteous based on something you know or do. The important thing is loving the Lord *through* doctrine, as the Lord said about Mary, . . . *only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her* (Luke 10:42). The good part is loving the Lord through Truth as illustrated by her attentively listening to Him reveal Himself and the things of God.

“days” (ἡμέρας). This refers to the weekly Sabbaths in the Old Testament. The Sabbath was one day of rest out of seven. However, in the Church Age the believer is to live every day as unto the Lord. We can do this because Christ is our true rest (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 3, 4).

“and months” (καὶ μῆνας). This is the new moon observance, the monthly feast.

“and seasons” (*καὶ καιρῶς*). This refers to Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

“and years” (*καὶ ἐνιαυτούς*). This refers to sabbatical and jubilee years.

A few principles:

1. The Galatians had gone back to the Old Testament Jewish way of doing things. This is most unfortunate because all of the holidays were but shadows that pointed to the reality of Jesus Christ. For example, the Passover was a picture of the death of the Messiah, the Lamb of God. They had the Reality, but they were going back to the ritual because it had become more real to them than the Real Christ.
2. Legalism does not commend us to God. Special observance of religious holidays do not merit God’s grace. The reality of Christ is our Passover, 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. It is Christ who provides the supernatural grace that is required to lift us up above the temporal realm and into the three cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and love—all of which are only possible by the supernatural power of God in the believer’s intellect and will. There is literally nothing you can do to lift yourself up to a place where God is more real to you than all of the circumstances of life. No amount of doctrine or 1 John 1:9, in and of themselves, can do it. God must infuse the grace power in you to lift you up to that transcendent level. While doctrine and fellowship are necessary means, they are not sufficient in and of themselves because we are temporal beings and it requires supernatural power, far beyond our sense and intellect level, to take us to God and for Him to be our ultimate living reality in all things.
3. In our grace age, one day is not better than another day. We are to observe every day equally for the Lord. The moment one singles out certain days for God, he tacitly makes other days his own. Every day is God’s day; our whole life is God’s possession. Living in appreciation is a lifestyle, not something that one does just on special days, read Eph. 5:20 and 1 Thess. 5:18. Again, one cannot do this in and of himself; no matter what you do without God’s supernatural grace, it will all be just ritual without reality. It literally takes an supernatural act of God.
4. Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament religious ordinance, read Romans 10:4; Col. 2:16-17. The Christian does not need to any altar to offer a sacrifice. Christ paid the price for all sin. It is finished. God has eradicated the tabernacle and the Temple because Jesus fulfilled all in it.
5. In the last Bible class, in conjunction with our study of how all human beings seek what they think is good, e.g., God or the kosmos/evil, I mentioned very briefly that the old sin nature is not a physical guilt-bearing gene (I will be developing this after we finish with our image and concept sheet). The bottom line is that the old sin nature is not some physical bogeyman in us fighting against what we really love. No, when we sin we do it because we love that sin at that time. Neither you nor I have ever committed a sin that we did not think as good in some sense at the time. This is undeniable. We love the sin and evil, not some entity in us! This is very different from the idea that we are these pure souls that are being attacked by the evil

body that is riddled with sin nature genes. The reason such an idea was ever entertained is due to lack of metaphysical understanding of sin. Sin is not about some gene. It is not physical! It is metaphysical! Again, it is not some physical entity in our bodies. However, it does affect our entire nature in the realm of our disordered our sense and intellectual desires. The intellectual love versus the sense loves were the issues in the Garden and the test for Jesus in the wilderness. Neither Adam nor Jesus had sin natures, yet they were both tested in regard to the sense and intellectual orders. Adam failed and lost the supernatural grace that lifted him up to God. As his children we are born in that natural order, without the supernatural grace that he had before he fell, and thus, without ability to love and choose the intellectual Good over the sense level good. Regeneration fixes the disorder, and then progressive sanctification rebuilds the intellectual order so we can love God in the intellectual order more than temporal sensed goods that attractive *us*. Such transformation requires supernatural grace, which Christ provides in fullness, John 1:16-17. More later . . .

In Him, we live, and move, and be!

Pastor Don