

Sermon Discussion Questions | May 15, 2016 **“Looking Unto Jesus, Not to the Flesh”**

1. The context of this passage is established in Galatians 1:6-9. Summarize the meaning of the doctrine of “justification by faith alone.”
2. What are the six questions that Paul is asking his readers and what do all of these questions have in common?
3. What are four common usages of the word *flesh* (*sarx*) in the New Testament?
4. What are some of the manifestations of what may be called “irreligious flesh”? (see Galatians 5:16-21)
5. What is meant by the term, “religious flesh”? Why is it harder to detect? How does it typically manifest itself? Why is it so dangerous to the Christian, and to the church?
6. Interact with the quote below from John Piper:

‘Flesh’ is the autonomous self, so in love with its personal power of self-determination that it does not and cannot submit to God’s absolute authority. But don’t think the flesh always looks wicked. In its irreligious form the flesh always flaunts its insubordination to God in immorality, idolatry, envy, drunkenness, and the like (Gal. 5:19) . . . But in its religious form the subtlety of insubordination and self-determination can manifest itself in a philosophy of Christian growth which encourages people who begin with faith to grow by works . . . The point of [verse 3] is that you must go on in the Christian life the same way you started it. Since we began by the work of the Spirit, we must go on relying on the Spirit. (Sermon: “Can You Begin by the Spirit and Be Completed by the Flesh?”, March 13, 1983)

7. How many times is the *Spirit* used in our text? How does the “shoebox illustration” help you to view the role of the Holy Spirit in your life? In what ways do you act as if there is no Holy Spirit?
8. In what ways is “religious flesh” rooted in self-reliance? What does it mean to be “Spirit reliant?”
9. Can you describe an experience in your Christian life when you were self-rather-than-Spirit reliant? What did that produce (what rotten fruit resulted)?
10. Can you describe an experience in your Christian life when you were Spirit-reliant? What did that produce?
11. Individual Christians can fall into self-reliance, and so can congregations. How does the gospel shatter our self-reliance and point us constantly to Christ?

12. What role does prayer play in our battle with self-reliance?

13. How does the love of Christ for you point you to Him and not yourself?