

Small Group Guide 18

Christianity without the Cross Gal. 6:11-13

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

What makes the cross so offensive is what it proclaims to the world....

- That our sin made His death necessary
- That there is no other way for men to be saved than through Christ death
- That all our religious efforts to reach God have failed miserably
- That we must forsake all other attempts to reach God except for Christ
- That this cross demands our repentance

Christianity without the Cross is...

1. It is for Show v.12

**Matthew 23:25–26 (ESV) ²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.*

**Matthew 23:5–7 (ESV) ⁵ They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷ and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.*

2. It Focuses on Ritual v.12

3. It Avoids Persecution v.12

**2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV) ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*

4. It is Hypocritical v.13

**Romans 2:28–29 (ESV) ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.*

5. It Exists for Self-Glory v.13

**Matthew 23:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.*

A few indicators of Christianity without the cross...

- When we do what we do for our own glory instead of God's
- When we focus on results rather than obedience
- When in the name of success, the ends justify the means
- When man's effort is glorified instead of the finished work of Christ on the cross
- When man is the focus instead of the Son of Man, Jesus.

Questions for Discussion and Application

1. Where have you seen examples of Christianity without the Cross in our culture?
2. In which areas of your life could you say you were living in light of the Gospel? In which areas of your life are you living for the world's approval?
3. What do believers boast in that cast shade upon the cross? What do you boast in?