



FILLING IN THE CREVICES

AUGUST 24, 2026

GALATIANS 5:9 NKJV – (9) A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

The problem with false doctrine or teaching is that it has the propensity to **spread**. It does not take much erroneous doctrine to do its damage. A little leaven (yeast, for example) kneads the whole lump (of dough). “Leaven” is an agent that produces fermentation. Leaven **transforms** the substance of something such as sourdough when it is in a high state of fermentation—in making bread, for example. What was once grace is now legalism (**MATTHEW 16:6, 12**).

Yeast takes time to ferment a substance. It is possible to transform grace so **gradually** that no one will notice the change. What looked innocent to the Galatians would change the very nature of Christianity.

Paul uses “leaven” here for **corrupt** doctrine (**MATTHEW 13:33; 16:12**). Whenever we mix even a little error with truth, it corrupts truth; it has a permeating power (**1 CORINTHIANS 5:6**). Even a little legalism corrupts grace. **Legalism** will contaminate the whole church if its leaders allow it to become invasive in the assembly. False doctrine will permeate like yeast in dough. **The point being made:** A little false doctrine can do great damage to the local church.

Those who trust in Christ have been set free. Paul's readers were in danger of wasting that freedom, by veering off in one or two directions. On the one hand, false teachers were pressuring them into circumcision in order to be sure of being right with God. On the other hand, freedom can also be squandered on serving only our sinful desires instead of investing it through serving others in love. God's Spirit gives us the power to do that when we let Him lead us. Life in the Spirit bears powerful and positive fruit in a Christian's life.

It only takes a little false doctrine to ruin a local church. Any teaching that adds to Christ's work on the cross, no matter how small, does damage to His work of grace. Grace plus any work, no matter how small, is evil leaven. A little legalism destroys all grace. Legalism and grace are mutually exclusive.

SCRIPTURE READING: MARK 8:15

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: At its heart, legalism is a desire to appear holy. It is trying to be justified before men and not God.