

Title: Play Dough – Galatians 5 19-26

Read:

¹⁹⁻²¹It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom. ²²⁻²³But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. ²³⁻²⁴Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified. ²⁵⁻²⁶Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

Think:

How long have you been a Christian? A month, a year, five years, or maybe as long as you can remember. Being a Christian is about change. If we are afraid of change then we had better get used to it. God takes you like a lump of clay, just as you did in art class. Or maybe as you used to do at kindergarten or nursery school with the play dough. God moulds you a little bit at a time, he transforms you into a closer image of Jesus. Gods, not moulding you into some robotic exact version of Jesus, oh no. More like a version of Jesus with your personality, and looks, and life. Now you and I both know that this will never be complete on this earth, but we should probably start seeing some differences. How big the differences are, may depend on how long God has had to work with us. I am grateful that he doesn't rush things. But if we have problem with anger, we should start seeing ourselves become more patient with the guys at school, or college. If we never cared about other people, we will probably notice that we are starting to care about the way others feel. It's a slow transformation sometimes but have a look back and see if you can spot where God has worked in your life, or where he now wants to mould you.

Pray:

Father thank you for your patience. Please show me the bit's of my life I need to work with you to change. Amen.

Action:

Are there some bits of your life you need more help with? Ask a leader you trust to pray with you and to check in every now and then to see how you are doing with changing. Bye for now.