

The Book of Galatians

Gospel Living

Introduction

Ancient Gaul was populated by warlike tribes which migrated across Europe into Asia Minor several centuries before the Christian era. They founded a nation called “Galatia” which means “the country of the Gauls.” About a quarter of a century before Christ was born, the Romans made Galatia a part of one of their larger provinces, and called the entire area “Galatia.” In other words, when you spoke about “Galatia” back in Paul’s day, you had to specify whether you meant the smaller nation of Galatia, or the larger Roman province.

Most Bible students today believe that Paul wrote to the churches of the province, ones he founded on his first journey. In other words, he was writing to Christians in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. If this is true, it means that Galatians was the first of Paul’s epistles, proving that the Gospel of the grace of God was just as clearly presented by Paul at the start of his ministry as at the close.

Paul was God’s apostle to the Gentiles, with a special ministry to the body, the church. However, there were Jews who would not receive the simple message of grace and who tried to mix it with the Law, blending improperly the kingdom message and the church message. We call these people “Judaizers,” since their aim was to draw Gentile believers into the Jewish system. They taught that a person was saved by faith and by keeping the Law, and that the believer was sanctified and enabled to live a holy life in the same manner. These teachers had visited the Gentile churches in Galatia and were upsetting the people. They wanted the believers to follow the Jewish laws and customs of religious holidays, circumcision, etc. This was the “other Gospel” that Paul condemned in Gal. 1:6–9. The only Gospel that God approves and blesses is the Gospel of the grace of God, justification by faith in Christ Jesus alone. We are not saved by making promises to God but by believing His promises.

Galatians is God’s strongest word against legalism. The flesh loves to do things religious (celebrate holy days, practice rituals, attempt to do good works for God). Many religious systems today mix law and grace and present a confused way of salvation that is actually a way of bondage. Keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, an earthly priesthood, holy days, obeying rules, all of these are swept away in Galatians and replaced by the glorious liberty the believer has through faith in Christ.

Author and Setting

The letter to the Galatians was written by Paul the apostle. In fact, it is one of the most important sources of information about Paul's life just after his conversion. The date of the epistle is less certain. Galatians was probably written before the council at Jerusalem (about 48-49 A.D.). If it had been written after that meeting, Paul probably would have cited the council's decision on accepting Gentiles into the faith, as it agreed with his own argument in the letter. In the light of this timing, Galatians may be Paul's earliest surviving letter.

Key Verses in Galatians

"I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" Gal. 2:20

"The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" Gal. 3:24

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" Gal. 3:28

"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" Gal. 5:16

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" Gal. 5:22-23

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" Gal. 6:7

"Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" Gal. 6:10

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 1 - Galatians 1:1-10
Gospel Living
“The True Gospel”

The first two chapters are personal, and the key word in them is “Gospel,” found ten times in these forty-five verses. Paul’s aim was to show that his message and ministry came directly from Christ and not from men. Paul did not preach a secondhand message that he learned from Peter or any of the apostles. Rather, God took every measure necessary to keep Paul’s ministry separate from that of the Twelve, to prevent anyone from thinking Paul’s ministry was given to him by the apostles.

The Judaizers who “bewitched” the Galatians (3:1) were telling them that Paul’s apostleship and message were not trustworthy because he lacked official endorsement from Jerusalem. “We have our credentials from Peter!” they would say, as though the approval of men is proof that a preacher is sent of God. Paul begins his letter by declaring that his message and ministry came directly from Jesus Christ.

Paul’s Gospel was centered in Christ, not in Moses or the Law. It was a Gospel of grace that brought peace. May we never be confused as to the content and intent of the Gospel. The Gospel is not “follow Christ and imitate His life” but “receive Christ by faith and allow Him to set you free.” There is no place in the Gospel for a salvation that is attained by keeping the Law.

The apostle speaks forcefully in condemning any other gospel, regardless of who the preacher might be, even an angel! Keep in mind that there are many “gospels” (messages of good news), but only one Gospel of the grace of God as Paul preached it. Abraham believed “the gospel,” the “good news” that through his seed all the nations would be blessed. In every age, men have been saved by believing whatever promise God revealed to them. Noah believed God’s Word about a flood and the ark; Abraham believed God’s Word about his promised seed; today we believe God’s Word about His Son’s death and resurrection.

Read Galatians 1:1-5 and answer the following questions

1. In verse 1 Paul refers to himself as an apostle. What does this mean? When was he made an apostle? (See Acts 1:21-22, 9:4-6).
2. The greeting in verse 3 is typical of all Paul's letters. Why does he always start by saying "Grace and peace" instead of "Peace and grace"?
3. Paul reminds us that Christ rescued us from "*this present evil age.*" What do you think God's purposes are in doing this? (See Eph. 1:6, 10:2:4; 3:10-11). Why is there so much evil still in the world?
4. In verse 4, Paul says it was the will of God that Jesus died to save you. Does your life personally reflect your gratitude for that rescue? In what ways does your life reflect or not reflect this?

Read Galatians 1:6-10 and answer the following questions

5. Why do you think Paul reacted so strongly to the Judaizers? Who were they and what were they doing?
6. What are some of the different or false gospels you have heard? How might we confront their false teaching to avoid being led astray?

7. What are the requirements for salvation? (See John 3:16, James 2:14).

8. What happens when people try to add to or subtract from the requirements for salvation? How do we know what to believe?

9. In verse 10, we see that Paul has apparently been accused of being a “people pleaser.” Why do you think his enemies would say this about him?

10. What is wrong with trying to win the approval of someone?

11. Why does being a “people pleaser” make it difficult to be a servant of Christ? (See Gal. 1:10).

12. Discover more of what it means to please God rather than men. (See John 12:42-43, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6, 1 Peter 3:3-4).

Only Christ **(Word in Life Study Bible)**

Throughout Christian history people have “added on” or “subtracted from” various requirements to the gospel message, almost always with an appeal to Scripture. Inevitably the result is a distortion of the faith that does great damage.

In first century Galatia, the challenge came from Judaizers teachers who insisted that belief in Jesus was not enough for salvation. One must also keep the law of Moses, they said. In a way, one can understand their point of view. For centuries,

Jews had held to the law as a righteous path to favor with God. The Judaizers perceived Jesus as perhaps building on the law of Moses, but not replacing it. Their teaching greatly troubled the young believers in Galatia who had responded to Paul's message. If what the Judaizers said was true, Paul had been wrong and Christ alone did not really save a person.

Not surprisingly, Paul was outraged. He was furious with the deceptive claims of the Judaizers and zealous to defend the integrity of the gospel. So he composed the letter that we call Galatians.

If Galatians emphasizes anything, it is that Christ alone is sufficient for salvation, nothing more nothing else. Centuries later after the church had again embraced add-ons to the faith, a young man named Martin Luther claimed Galatians for his own, calling it the Magna Carta of Christian liberty. It helped usher in the reclamation of the faith in which salvation is based on Christ's grace, not on peoples efforts.

Still every generation is marked by a tendency to classify believers according to their outward observances. Some are considered first class, others second class. In nearly every case, the resegregating of the church results from add-ons to the simple pure gospel message of Christ. But when believers hold to Christ alone, then their faith and the church will grow. That's the message of Galatians.

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 2 - Galatians 1:11-24
Gospel Living
“The Source of Truth”

In these verses, Paul seeks to show how he was completely independent of the Twelve and the assembly in Jerusalem. Paul saw the risen Christ and received his commission and message directly from Him. This experience qualified him to be an apostle. Paul was never meant to be the twelfth apostle to replace Judas. For one thing, Paul could not have met the qualifications; also God deliberately kept Paul separated from the Twelve so no one could accuse Paul of borrowing his message. Nobody could accuse Paul of inventing his message, because he had been a persecutor of the church, not a friend. His life was radically changed after he met Christ on the Damascus road. The only way to explain such a remarkable transformation is to accept the fact that Paul met Christ.

Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles and was related to the mystery of the church, the one body. The Twelve received their call from Christ on earth because their message presented the hope of Israel’s earthly kingdom. Paul received his call from heaven, because his message presented the “heavenly calling” of the church in Christ. There were twelve apostles, associated with the twelve tribes. Paul was one man representing the one body in Christ.

Paul did not confer with men after he received his calling. Had he met immediately with the Twelve, people could have said that he borrowed his message and received his authority from them. Instead, God sent Paul to Arabia for a time of meditation and investigation. Someone has said, “Paul went to Arabia with the Law and the prophets and came out with Romans and Galatians!” Like Moses and Elijah before him, Paul went to the desert to wrestle with God’s program and plan for his life. Then he went back to Damascus where he had first witnessed for Christ. After this visit, he went to Syria (Antioch). The churches there heard the wonderful news of Paul’s conversion and glorified God.

How tragic it is today that men reject Paul’s revelation of the Gospel and try to mix law and grace. We need to get back to the simple message of grace, the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone. To mix church and kingdom, law and grace, is to create confusion and pervert the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read Galatians 1:11-24 and answer the following questions

1. Read verses 11-12. How do Paul's thoughts differ from those in 1:10?
2. How did Paul's source of truth (See 1:12) differ from the Galatians source of truth? (See 1:7-8)
3. Why does Paul mention in this passage that his message and authority didn't come from man? Why is that important for us as we share that same message today?
4. In verse 13, Paul says that he persecuted the church of God. How does this affect Paul's story? How might this help him establish authority?
5. How would you describe Paul before God confronted him? (See 1:13-14)
6. Read the account of Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-22. What do you think went through his mind during this time of tremendous change? (See 1:15-16)
7. Do you think that those who did not have a dramatic change in their lives like Paul are at a disadvantage in witnessing about Jesus or in growing closer to Him? Why or why not?

8. Why do you think God sent someone so knowledgeable and with such close ties to Judaism to minister to the Gentiles instead of the Jews? (See Acts 22:17-22)

9. Paul was now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy. What is the most unbelievable and even unlikely conversion to Christ that you have ever seen?

10. Review 1:11-24 and the answers you have written. What one insight stands out as something you would like to apply to your life?

11. Paul tells his story in three stages. First, he talks about who he was before Christ. Second, he talks about how Jesus pursued and encountered him. Third, he talked about how he was changed and who he became after Jesus. Describe your story in these same three stages.

Hope for You: Watch Paul Grow

The Bible offers many examples of people who struggled as they tried to live for God. Their stories are meant to encourage us. But sometimes comparing ourselves to the “heroes” of the faith only intimidate us. Paul, for instance was a learned scholar, a fervent evangelist, a compassionate pastor, a competent businessman, and a diplomatic statesman. So when he tells us to follow his example as he follows Christ’s example it sounds a bit unrealistic. How could we ever model a super saint like Paul?

Paul didn't start out as a super-saint. Nor did he end up that way. In fact, he never saw himself that way. On the contrary, he grew in the faith with some difficulty. Notice how his view of himself changed over time.

A.D. 55 *"I am the least of the apostles"* (1 Cor. 15:9)

A.D. 57 *"I know that in me, nothing good dwells"* (Rom 7:18)

A.D. 60 *"I am less than the least of all the saints"* (Eph. 3:8)

A.D. 63 *"Jesus came to save sinners, of whom I am chief"* (1 Tim. 1:15)

It sounds like Paul was perhaps more average than we often think. If one changes a few particulars and develops the wholehearted commitment to God that Paul had, than his story could well be anyone's. That's because Paul was as human as any of us. His life challenges us to ask whether we are growing, struggling, and changing as he did. If so, than there's hope for us.

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 3 - Galatians 2:1-10
Gospel Living
“Confirmation of the Truth”

In the first chapter, Paul proved that his Gospel and apostleship came directly from Christ, independent of the Twelve. His readers would naturally ask, “Then what was Paul’s relationship to the Twelve and the Jerusalem church?” He answers that question in this chapter.

Fourteen years after Paul’s visit to Jerusalem, he was back to attend a council on the problem of law and grace. Paul went to this conference “*by revelation*,” that is, Christ personally directed him to go, just as He had personally given him the Gospel years before. Paul had been ministering among the Gentiles. He and Barnabas had seen many Gentiles saved and many local churches established. Now the future of the Gentile ministry was being discussed by the church leaders.

Paul met with the leaders privately, but not because he was afraid his message was wrong. He knew his message was the right one because it had come from Jesus. Rather, he met with them privately to keep out the “*spies*” and to avoid any open disagreements that would only add fuel to the fire.

Titus was with Paul, and, being a Gentile, was uncircumcised. According to the Judaizers, Titus was not even saved. But the church leaders did not instruct Titus to be circumcised. Paul concludes, this proves that circumcision has nothing to do with salvation. There were false brethren there, people who wanted to rob the believers of the glorious liberty they have in Christ. This party must have argued for Titus’ circumcision, but Paul “*beat them down*.” The group was divided: some were for legalism; some were for liberty; some were for a compromise between the two. The church today is still divided, with some teaching salvation by ritual; others insisting on mixing law and grace. The minority hold to Paul’s Gospel of the grace of God.

The conclusion of the matter was that the church leaders agreed that Paul’s message and ministry were of God, and that he should minister to the Gentiles while Peter and the Twelve ministered to the Jews. In vs. 8, Paul is careful to point out that the same Spirit who worked in Paul worked in Peter as well. Both had the same message and the same Spirit but were responsible for different areas of ministry. The council added nothing to Paul’s message, and endorsed it as well. Paul had preserved the “*truth of the Gospel*” from the lies of the enemy.

Read Galatians 2:1-5 and answer the following questions

1. Why do you think Paul met privately with the leaders rather than meeting in a public setting?

2. Sometimes we avoid conferring with others because we are worried about what they might think. Do you normally discuss your ideas and plans with others? What happens when you do or don't?

3. How does God speak to people today? How does He speak to you?

4. Apparently, the leaders in Jerusalem agreed that Titus did not have to be circumcised. Why does Paul include this information?

5. What did the false brothers do? (vs. 2:4)

6. False brothers can infiltrate the church with the intent of harming the body. (vs. 4-5). Who should take the lead in guarding against such attacks, and how can the body be protected?

Read Galatians 2:6-10 and answer the following questions

7. In verse 6, Paul says that "God shows personal favoritism to no man." What message should we take from this statement?

8. Paul's life reflected the grace of God. How does your life in Christ testify to God's grace?

9. Both Paul and Peter were entrusted by God to preach to specific groups. (vs.7). Who has God personally entrusted to you to preach the gospel?

10. How can local churches give the right hand of fellowship to other church's that are teaching the truth and doing the work of the gospel?

11. What is legalism? Why is it dangerous?

12. Those in Christ should be eager to preach and eager to provide for the poor. What are some practical ways that we can share God's Word and provide basic needs to the poor.

13. What impact do you think the decision of 2:1-10 probably had on the church?

What is Truth

By Billy Graham

Pontius Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). And many people today are asking, "What is truth?" Inside the Bible are stories of lust and hate and war and crime equal to anything that we read about in history. The Bible tells the truth. It tells the truth about God, about man, about the devil. Jesus wasn't afraid to call Satan what he is: a liar and the father of lies. Jesus said, "There is no truth in

him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The first time that man had to make a choice between God’s truth and the devil’s lie, he chose the devil’s lie.

When Adam and Eve rejected God’s truth and accepted the devil’s lie, that was the moment that all the troubles of the whole world began. Our sinful nature often sides with the devil’s lie instead of God’s truth, because we are sinners. We’d rather believe the devil’s lie than God’s truth.

Sin is a disease that affects the entire human race. The disease of sin is at the heart of the troubles of the world. To those involved in this dying world, Satan will come with evil’s undiluted power to deceive, for they have refused the truth which could have saved them.

God sends upon them, therefore, the full force of evil’s delusion, so that they put their faith in an utter fraud and meet the inevitable judgment of all who have refused to believe the truth and who have made evil their playfellow. God says these people deliberately forfeited the truth of God and accepted a lie. God, therefore, handed them over to disgraceful passions. They see truth as a lie, and the lie as the truth. They accept the lies of the devil.

Jesus told the truth about sin. He said, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and adulteries, and all other sins that we commit.” War comes from the human heart. Family tensions and problems come from the human heart. Rebellion comes from the human heart.

He told the truth about love. God loves you. And He loves you with a love that you don’t know anything about, because there is no human love comparable to divine love.

Turn to Christ—to the truth. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). He said, “I am ... the truth” (John 14:6). Jesus did not say, “You shall know a truth” or “any truth” but “the truth.” He’s the embodiment of all truth. Jesus said, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). If you don’t believe that and don’t accept Christ, you will die in your sins and you’ll be lost. Jesus Christ claimed to be ultimate truth. Are you willing to face that truth?

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 4 - Galatians 2:11-21
Gospel Living
“Contending for the Truth”

Paul was right in ignoring the “spiritual positions” of the people mentioned in vs. 6. Even the best leaders can make mistakes, and Paul cites Barnabas and Peter as examples. After the Jerusalem conference, Peter had visited the Gentile church at Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were still ministering. In Acts 10, God had clearly revealed to Peter that no foods or peoples were unclean; but the apostle fell back into legalism just the same. When he first came to Antioch, Peter mingled with the Gentiles and ate with them; but after some visitors came from Jerusalem, he withdrew himself and put up the old Jewish barriers again. Even Barnabas fell into the trap.

Peter and Barnabas were not walking uprightly. Because Peter and Barnabas were confused about spiritual truth, they were unable to walk a straight line. The “truth of the Gospel” is not only something for us to defend, but it is also something for us to practice.

“*You are a Jew,*” said Paul to Peter, “but you used to live like the Gentiles, with no barriers between you and other Christians. Now you want the Gentiles to live like Jews, doing what you did not even do yourself!”

“We Jews have had special privileges and may not be guilty of Gentile sins; but we are saved the same way they are!” We would expect Paul to say, “They must be saved the way we are,” but he reverses the order. Salvation did not mean that Gentiles had to become like Jews, but that the Jews had to go to the level of the condemned Gentiles!

In vs. 17–18, Paul showed Peter the folly of going back to the Law. “You say you have been saved by faith in Christ. Well, if you go back to the Law, you are confessing that you are still a sinner needing to be saved and that Christ did not save you.”

“The Law is not a way of life, it is a way of death. The Law kills us that the Gospel might raise us up again. A Christian is not someone who is trying to obey an outward law. A Christian is one who has the living Christ within. By faith, I am united to Christ forever. When He died, I died; when He arose, I arose with Him. He lives out His life through me as I walk by faith. This is the Christian life! It is not a set of rules and regulations. To go back to the Law is to frustrate the grace of God! If the Law is God’s way of salvation, then Christ died in vain!”

Read Galatians 2:11-21 and answer the following questions

1. When Peter came to Antioch, what did Paul do? Why did he do that? (2:11-13)
2. Paul said in 2:11 that he opposed Peter “*to his face.*” Note that he did not go to the other leaders of the church to “tattle” on Peter, nor did he write letters to the churches warning them not to follow Peter’s example. If you have a disagreement with someone what do you normally do? What should you do? (Matt. 18:15-17) Why do you think that this time Paul spoke to Peter “*in front of them all*” rather than privately?
3. Describe a time someone criticized you in front of others. How did you react?
4. Why did Paul call the behavior of the Jewish believers who withdrew from the Gentiles “hypocrisy”? (2:13, 14-16)
5. In verses 15-16 we are reminded that we are no longer “*under the law.*” Why then should we strive to obey the Ten Commandments? Or should we? (Rom. 7:4-25)

6. What do you learn about the meaning of Faith from the following Scriptures?

Romans 4:18-21

Hebrews 11:1-2, 6

7. Note why Christians are not obliged to keep the Jewish law.

Gal. 2:16

Gal. 2:19

Gal. 2:21

8. If obeying rules isn't what makes God accept us, what keeps us from habitual sin? How does dying to self and accepting a new life in Christ prevent this? (2:17-20)

9. What does "*dying to the law*" mean in verse 19?

10. In verse 20 what is the significance of having been crucified with Christ? What does it mean to God? What does it mean to you?

11. How does having Christ's life within you affect you in practical ways?

12. Note some "takeaways" from this week's study thru Gal. 2:11-21

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 5 - Galatians 3:1-14
Gospel Living
“Living by Faith”

Paul began with the Galatians’ own personal experience with Christ, for this is one of the best evidences of how God works. Paul had preached Christ crucified, not obedience to the Law; this message they believed, and it changed their lives. They had received the Spirit (the evidence of salvation) by the hearing of faith, and by believing the Word of God, not by obeying some law. The Gospel Paul preached, the Gospel that changed his life and their lives, was the true message. For them to go back to the Law after all the Spirit had done for them was to act like fools!

They had willingly suffered for their faith. Through the gifts of the Spirit, the ministers in the Galatians church were doing wonderful works, works that could never be done through the Law. Everything in their personal experience pointed to one fact: salvation is by grace, not by law.

Christians today need the truth of vs. 3, for many feel that the same Spirit who saved them is not able to keep them or help them live for Christ. They have the idea that salvation is by grace through faith, but that living the Christian life depends on their own strength. Romans chapter 7 teaches clearly that believers cannot do anything of themselves to please God; Romans chapter 8 teaches that the Spirit continues the work of grace and fulfills the demands of the law within us.

God promised to bless the heathen (Gentiles) through Abraham, which means that Jews and Gentiles are saved the very same way. The “gospel” that Abraham believed was not the full Gospel of the grace of God that we preach today; even the apostles did not fully understand the meaning of Christ’s death until it was explained to them. The gospel Abraham believed was the good news that God would bless Abraham and make him a mighty nation. Abraham believed this promise and this faith was accounted for righteousness.

The law puts us under a curse, but Christ died to remove that curse. He died on the cross and fulfilled the word given in Deuteronomy. Because He has taken our curse upon Himself, we are free to live in Christ. The blessing God promised Abraham is now available to the Gentiles by faith.

Read Galatians 3:1-5 and answer the following questions

1. Pastor Paul begins this chapter with “*You foolish Galatians, who has cast an evil spell on you*” NLT. How would you react if Pastor Jon Courson or Pastor Rob penned the beginning of a letter to you like that?

2. Why is it “foolish” and “bewitched” to choose human effort over the Spirit? Find all the reasons you can in 3:1-5.

3. In verse 3, Paul again calls his readers foolish and reminds them that although they have received the Spirit, they are still trying to please God by observing the law. Can you think of any ways that you could try to please God by doing something other than focusing on Him and your relationship with Him?

4. How can we tell the difference between religious driven things that we do and those that are faith driven?

Read Galatians 3:6-9 and answer the following questions

5. According to Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6 on what basis did God proclaim Abraham as righteous before Him?

6. What does Paul say about Abraham in verses 6-9? Why do you think he chose him as an example? (Genesis 15:6, 18:18, 22:18; Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38)

7. The Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham, that is the heirs of God's promises to him. According to verses 6-7 who are the true children of Abraham?

8. Think about the kind of faith Abraham had to have to believe God would give him a son at a ripe old age. What does this tell you about the kind of faith in Christ that a person needs to have?

Read Galatians 3:10-14 and answer the following questions

9. In verses 10-12, Paul quotes three Old Testament verses (Deuteronomy 27:26; Habakkuk 2:4; Leviticus 18:5). What do these Old Testament verses tell us about the law?

10. What do you think 3:10-12 is saying you would experience if you tried to win God's blessing by rules and self-effort?

11. What happened to the curse that went along with violation of the Law? (3:13-14)

12. Trying to be right with God by our own effort doesn't work. Good intentions such as "I'll do better next time" or "I'll never do that again" usually end in failure. How can we break the cycle of failure?

A Strong Rebuke **The Word in Life Study Bible**

The book of Ecclesiastes speaks of "a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace." When it came to a question of altering the Gospel about Jesus, Paul realized that it was no time for peace, but for intense conflict. Here in Galatians and elsewhere, he issued a strong rebuke both to those who would pervert the message of Christ in order to preserve their traditions, and to those who followed them.

Believers in Christ are called to be kind, humble, meek, longsuffering and to bear with one another, to forgive each another, and above all to love one another as they seek the unity of the body. At the same time, they are called to stand fast in the faith and in their liberty in Christ, and to contend earnestly in the faith. At times, that may mean anger and conflict when the very truth of the Gospel is under attack.

The energy with which Paul defended the fundamentals of the faith should encourage us as believers today to ask: What challenges to the faith do we need to meet? Where are compromises being made to basic biblical principles? Is our commitment to the faith strong enough that we are willing to defend it against those who would pervert it to their own ends?

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 6 - Galatians 3:15-25
Gospel Living
“The Priority of the Promise”

All of Paul’s arguments are logical. But the particular arguments here depend especially on reasoning, as Paul compares the Law to a human contract. When two people make a contract, it is illegal for a third party to step in and change it or cancel it. Now, God made a contract (covenant) with Abraham four hundred years before the Law was given. The law of Moses could never cancel God’s original promise to Abraham. God gave that promise to Abraham’s seed as well, and vs.16 indicates that this Seed is Christ. The Mosaic law was not a new way of salvation that canceled God’s promises to Abraham; this would not be logical. Promise and faith go together, but not promise and law.

Rom. 2:14 and Acts 15:24 make it clear that God never gave the Law to the Gentiles. The moral law was already written in the Gentiles hearts. But the ceremonial law (including the Sabbath laws) was never given to the Gentiles. The law was “added” and was not a replacement for the Abrahamic promises. Once the Seed (Christ) came, the Law was superseded. “How can you say it was only temporary?” Paul is ready with an answer: The Law was given by angelic mediators, but God spoke personally to Abraham. God is one and the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham depended on Him alone.

If there were a law that saved sinners, then God would have spared His Son and used that law instead of the cross. The Law is not contrary to God’s promises; by revealing sin, the law forces the sinner to trust God’s promises. The Law shows us our need of grace; grace enables us to please God through faith. The Law places all under sin, which means that all can be saved by grace. If God permitted even one sinner to be saved by law, then no man could be saved by grace. All must be saved the same way.

The Law was God’s “schoolmaster” (tutor) for the Jews. The Greek and Roman tutor used to guard and teach the minor children until they reached legal adulthood, after which the children were on their own. The Law kept the Jews “in line,” until Christ came and the full revelation of the Gospel was given to Jews and Gentiles.

Read Galatians 3:15-25 and answer the following questions

1. What is the point of the analogy between God's covenant and a human legal agreement?

2. What did Abraham have to do to receive the promise of relationship with God? (3:6)

3. The Jews believed that the law given to Moses added extra requirements for receiving the promise. Were they right, or was faith in God still the only requirement? (See 3:15-18)

4. What difference does it make to you that your relationship with God and future blessing are based on God's promises and not how well you keep the Law of Moses?

5. Does God change as circumstances do? What did God promise that we can be sure He will do? (See 3:17, Genesis 12:1-3, 17:8)

6. If the Law wasn't given as a condition for attaining God's favor, then why was it given?

7. All Scripture is profitable for our growth (See 1 Timothy 3:16-17). What can you expect to gain from the Old Testament law?

8. How does faith in Jesus set us free from legalism?

9. How would you use this portion of Scripture with someone who thinks that keeping the “Golden Rule” or “Ten Commandments” is what’s needed to get to heaven?

10. In Galatians 3:24, Paul describes the law as our tutor to lead us to Christ. Explain why using the law is necessary when trying to lead others to faith in Christ.

11. How is 3:15-25 relatable to your life today?

God’s Promises

The Bible is the Word of God and is powerful and life changing. The promises of God start with 2 Timothy 3:16 when God tells us that all Scripture in the Bible our inspired by God. With that in mind, we can rest assured that what we learn from the Bible is true and powerful.

The following ten Bible verses for the NLV are meant to encourage you. Read through them slowly and let God work them into your lives. Remember that all of God’s promises are yes and amen for His glory and His praise.

“For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him amen, to the glory of God through us.” 2 Cor. 1:20

“And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires” 2 Peter 1:4

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope” Jer. 29:11

“Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls” Matt. 11:28-29

“He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint” Isa. 40:29-31

“And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus” Phil. 4:19

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” Rom. 8:37-39

“But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm” Prov. 1:33

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” Rom. 6:23

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” Rom. 10:9

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 7 - Galatians 3:26-4:11
Gospel Living
“The Rights of a Son”

Anyone who reads the Word carefully must admit that at different times, God deals in different ways with different people. In this section, Paul explains that the period of Law was a dispensation, a special way in which God dealt with Israel for a special purpose. God never gave the Mosaic law to the Gentiles. To impose Jewish regulations on Gentiles (or even on Jews today) is totally unscriptural.

The Jews were heirs, for God had made wonderful promises to them through Abraham, but it took many centuries before they received these promises. The child, Paul reasons, might be heir to a fortune, but so long as he or she has not reached the legal age of inheritance, the child is no different from the slave. Even so, the Jews were in their “spiritual childhood” under the law. The rules and rituals of the Law were the “religious ABCs” they had to learn before they could graduate into their full inheritance. This legalism was bondage to the Mosaic system. But this order of law ran its course, having prepared the way for Christ. Christ was born at the right time, in the right manner, and for the right purpose (to set us free). Christ was made under the Law, obeyed the Law, and fulfilled the Law in His life and death. His death on the cross set the Jews free from their legalistic bondage and opened the way for the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

Had Israel received its Messiah when Peter presented Him at Pentecost, the nation would have entered into its adulthood. The blessing would have flowed out to the Gentiles through Israel, and the Abrahamic promises would have been fulfilled. The nation collectively rejected Christ, but God in His grace opened the blessings up to Jews and Gentiles alike on an individual basis. The Gentiles were not saved through Israel’s rise, but through Israel’s fall. Now, individual Jews have received their adoption as mature, grown-up children in God’s family. They are no longer little children under the guidance of tutors; believers are sons, not servants, enjoying the full inheritance in Christ.

Read Galatians 3:26-3:29 and answer the following questions

1. In verse 3:26, Paul says, “You are the sons of God.” Does this mean that everyone is a child of God? (Rom. 8:13-17, John 8:44)
2. What rights, privileges, and responsibilities do we have as earthly sons and daughters? How do these correspond with the rights, privileges, and responsibilities we have as children of God?
3. How can “*Putting on Christ*” (vs. 27) help us to break down cultural barriers?
4. What place do roles and distinctions have in Christian life, and what place do they not? (See Luke 20:34-36, 1 Cor. 7:17-24, Eph. 6:5-9, 1 Tim. 6:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17)

Read Galatians 4:1-11 and answer the following questions

5. In verses 1-7, Paul gives an analogy involving children, heirs, slaves, and sons. Describe this relationship in your own words?
6. Why do you think it was necessary for Christ to be born so completely entangled into the human situation? (See Gal. 4:4, 2 Cor. 5:12, Gal. 3:13)
7. As a believer, do you feel you have more or less rules and regulations you feel you have to follow than you did before Christ?

8. What is the Spirit's function in regards to sonship? (See Gal. 4:6-7, Rom. 8:15-17, Eph. 1:13-14)

9. What would be the difference between the Galatians original slavery to pagan gods (4:8) and their return to slavery (4:9)?

10. In verses 8-11, Paul asks the Galatians why they are turning back to their old ways. Do we ever do that today? How? Why?

11. What is the difference between "knowing God" and "being known by God" (4:9)?

12. The pagan gods had their "weak and beggarly elements" (4:9), as did Judaism. What kind of rules and regulations could a Christian today put himself or herself in bondage to?

Some Great Verses about Believers Sonship in God

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Rom. 8:14

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God”
Rom. 8:16

“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father!” Gal. 4:16

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3:26

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” John 1:12

“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” 2 Cor. 6:18

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:1-2

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.” Rev. 21:7

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 8 - Galatians 4:12-31
Gospel Living
A Choice of Allegiance

“Brethren, I beseech you!” This is the appeal of a loving spiritual servant, a concerned father addressing his spiritual children. *“I became as one of you when I first preached to you,”* writes Paul; *“now become as I am and be true to Christ.”* He reminds them that it was through some physical affliction that he first came to them, and that they had then treated him like an angel. Now they treated him like an enemy because he was telling them the truth. *“Your false teachers make a big show of their love for you, but their motives are not pure. They want to use you to show off their spiritual conquests!”*

An allegory is an event or story that has a hidden meaning. Paul uses the story of Abraham’s two sons to show that the new covenant of grace has superseded the old covenant of law.

We Christians are children of promise, like Isaac, and therefore children of liberty. God had promised Abraham a son long before Ishmael was born. Ishmael *“was added”* and was a son of the flesh, a slave’s son. The old covenant of law was never God’s final plan for Israel. It was added, like Ishmael, and brought bondage and sorrow. God’s commandment to Abraham was to cast out Ishmael and Hagar! Law and grace, faith and works, promise and commandment, can never live in the same household. The Judaizers in Galatia wanted to invite Hagar and Ishmael back into the family again!

Paul refers to Isaiah 54:1 and applies this verse to the church. Just as Sarah was barren and had to wait for many years for her son, so the Jews had to wait many years before God’s promises to Abraham were fulfilled. Isaiah described the joy of Jerusalem after the return from exile. Paul sees a deeper meaning: joy in the church in spite of its persecution and suffering.

The danger Paul saw in Galatia is with us today. The flesh loves and craves *“religious excitement”* and feels gratified when it can keep some religious law. While there is nothing wrong with church traditions that are tied to Scripture and magnify Christ, we must beware of inviting Hagar and Ishmael back into the family. There can be no mixture of law and grace. May God help us to hold fast to His simple grace.

Read Galatians 4:12-19 and answer the following questions

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-23 in light of Galatians 4:13-14. In what ways did Paul “*become like*” the Galatians? (4:12)

2. In what ways did Paul want the Galatians to become like him?

3. How does the Lord turn trials, and difficulties into opportunities for the gospel to be preached?

4. Why did some believers turn away from Paul? (vs. 4:16) Do you ever do that?

5. How are we to communicate the truth to others when we know they’re not going to like it? (4:16)

6. What motivated the Judaizers to turn the Galatians against Paul? (4:17) How does this happen today?

7. What is Paul trying to say to the Galatians by comparing himself to a mother giving birth?

Read Galatians 4:20-31 and answer the following questions

8. What was the difference in status between Abraham's two sons? (Galatians 4:22, Genesis 15:17-16:10, 21:1-13)

9. What parallel did Paul draw between Abraham's two sons and the two covenants between God and man? (4:22-28)

10. The Galatians were trying to live by both covenants. Why wouldn't that be possible?

11. What was Paul telling the Galatians to do in 4:30? How does that relate to your walk today?

Hagar

A helpless outcast serves as a metaphor for Paul's warning to the Galatians against turning to the Law for salvation. Hagar, was an Egyptian slave of Sarah, the wife of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham.

God promised Abraham and Sarah that He would give them a son. But after 10 years of waiting, Sarah presented Hagar to her husband so he could father a child by her, according to the custom of the day. However, God viewed the substitution as a lack of faith.

When Hagar became pregnant, she mocked her mistress, who dealt with her harshly. Fleeing into the wilderness, Hagar encountered an angel of the Lord. The heavenly messenger revealed that the child she was about to bear, Ishmael, would be the father of a great nation even though he was not the son that God had promised to Abraham and Sarah.

Hagar returned to Abraham's camp and bore Ishmael, who was accepted as son. But when Ishmael was 14, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, the promised son. Later Ishmael mocked Isaac at the festival of Isaac's weaning. At Sarah's insistence, Hagar and her son were expelled from Abraham's family. However, God took care of them as they wandered in the wilderness.

The Lord also carried out His promise to make a great nation of Ishmael. He had 12 sons who had many descendants who lived as nomads in the deserts of northern Arabia. Tradition holds that all of the Arab peoples are descended from Hagar.

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 9 - Galatians 5:1-15
Gospel Living
“Christian Freedom”

We now move into the final section of the letter in which Paul makes the practical application of Christian liberty to the lives of believers. “Your doctrine of grace and liberty is dangerous!” Paul’s enemies argued. “Why, if Christians are free from the Law, they will live wicked lives! We need the Law to control them!” So people have argued down through the centuries, little realizing that grace, not law, is the greatest teacher and “controller” in the world.

Paul admonishes us to stand fast in our Christian liberty. If we step back into legalism, we risk entanglement and bondage. How well the Jews of Paul’s day knew what legal bondage meant. Circumcision was the seal of the old covenant, so Paul warns the Galatians that to turn back to the old covenant is to rob themselves of the blessings Christ had purchased for them. Christ cannot profit the sinner who rejects grace and trusts law, nor the saint who seeks to live by law instead of grace. “Circumcision” stands for the entire Mosaic system. People who put themselves under the Law become debtors to the whole system.

“*Fallen from grace*” (vs. 4) does not mean “fallen from salvation.” Paul is not writing to people who have “lost their salvation” because such a thing is not possible. “Law means I must do something for God; grace means that God does something for me.” How wonderful it is for the Christian to enjoy the liberty of grace!

How did such false teaching get into the Galatians lives? Just the way yeast (leaven) gets into good meal. Leaven is always compared to that which is evil. The false doctrine was planted as a little bit of leaven in the church, but then it grew and infected the whole body. The Galatians had run well up to that point; now they were being hindered in their Christian walk.

Paul closes this section with the reminder that liberty is not license. “*You should love your neighbor as yourself*” he says. We fulfill the law when we live in love. The Christian who says, “I have liberty to sin!” understands nothing of the cross or of God’s grace.

Read Galatians 5:1-6 and answer the following questions

1. The first part of 5:1 seems almost too obvious to require saying. What is Paul's point?

2. What pressures would the Galatians have to resist in order to "stand fast"?

3. What is the "*yoke of bondage*" that Paul talks about in 5:1?

4. What result does Paul say are the consequences if the Galatians let themselves be circumcised? (Gal. 2-3)

5. Some people thought they could be made right by keeping the law without any need of Jesus. What two things happen when one seeks to be justified by the law? (Gal. 5:4)

Read Galatians 5:7-12 and answer the following questions

6. What sports analogy did Paul use for following the gospel? How do you relate to this analogy in your personal walk today?

7. What saying did Paul use to illustrate the danger of the false teachers? What did he mean by this? (Gal. 5:9)

8. What strong words did Paul have for the Judaizers?

Read Galatians 5:13-15 and answer the following questions

9. How is your Christian freedom different from the freedom your sinful nature and the world wants you to claim? (Gal. 5:13)

10. What would be an abuse of our liberty in Christ?

11. How does God want us to use the freedom He has given us?

12. What is God's guiding principle for freedom? (Gal. 5:13-14)

Great Word about Personal Freedom in Christ

On the face of it, it seems strange to identify Christianity as an enemy of freedom. After all, Christians have historically stood up for the poor, the oppressed, the captive, and the underprivileged. Likewise, liberation from ignorance, disease, and political oppression have invariably resulted wherever Christian faith and principles have been adopted. Why then, would some view that faith as repressive?

Perhaps part of the answer lies in the problem of legalism. Whenever Christianity is made into a list of do's and don'ts, it becomes intolerant and restrictive. Instead of enjoying an intimate relationship with a loving God, the legalist is obsessed with rules and regulations as if God were a celestial police officer just waiting to catch us out of line.

The real question, of course is: What kind of people are we? What is our character? Christians try to mold their character after the pattern of Jesus. He was the most liberated man that had ever lived. His ultimate standard of behavior was: what does my Father want me to do? Did that code stifle His freedom? Hardly. He was free of covetousness, hypocrisy, fear of others, and every other vice. At the same time, He was free to face himself, free to tell the truth, free to love people with warmth and purity, and free to surrender His life to others.

True Christian freedom is Christlike freedom. There is no hint of legalism about it. It accepts absolute moral standards that are well known and well proven, and it takes its inspiration from the most liberated human that ever lived, Jesus of Nazareth. What is stifling about that?

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 10 - Galatians 5:16-26
Gospel Living
Living by the Spirit

Paul's first admonition was "Stand fast!" Now he says, "Walk in the Spirit!" Our standing in Christ determines our walk in Christ. The words "flesh" and "Spirit" are each found ten times in chapters 5–6. Those who live according to law depend on the energy of the flesh; those who live by grace depend on the power of the Spirit. To "walk in the Spirit" means to have our daily lives under His control, and this means under the direction of the Word of God. To be "led of the Spirit" means to be delivered from a life of bondage to legalism.

"The flesh" refers to the fallen nature still with the believer. The body itself is not sinful; appetites are not necessarily sinful, but the tendencies of the old nature are downward. In Romans 6, Paul tells us that the old man has been crucified and that we can overcome the flesh by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and by yielding ourselves to God. Here in Galatians, Paul spells out the conflict between the believer's two natures. What a contrast between works and fruit! Fruit is the result of a living union; a machine may produce works, but it can never produce fruit. Even the Law produces works, but God calls them dead works. The Law could never produce the gracious fruit described here.

Christian character comes from within, by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit seeks to transform us into Christ's likeness.

"If we live in the Spirit," "let us also walk in the Spirit." "Walking in the Spirit" is not some emotional experience, detached from everyday life. It is the daily experience of the believer who feeds on the Word, prays, and obeys what the Bible says.

In closing, note that Paul uses three pleas as he encourages these Christians to live lives of holiness by the grace of God: God the Father has called them, God the Son has died for them, and God the Holy Spirit indwells them. Each Person of the Trinity is assisting us in our battle against the flesh.

Read Galatians 5:16-18 and answer the following questions

1. What two forces are constantly fighting in your life?
2. From your own experience, describe what it means to live by the desires of the flesh?
3. Now explain what you think it means to live and walk in the Spirit?
4. Paul keep saying that if you follow the Holy Spirit you are no longer under the law. Why is a person not “under the law” if he or she is “led by the Spirit”?

Read Galatians 5:19-21 and answer the following questions

5. Which sins from 5:19-21 do you think are most frequently tolerated among Christians today?
6. How are our sinful desires contrary to those of the Holy Spirit?

7. What is the ultimate result of following your own desires? (Vs. 5:21)

Read Galatians 5:22-26 and answer the following questions

8. What are the inner fruits of the Holy Spirit? (Vs. 5:22-23)

9. What are the external fruits of the Holy Spirit?

10. What does it mean to live a life that is led by the Holy Spirit?

11. What is Paul's warning to those who feel they are living in the Spirit? (Vs. 5:26)

12. How can we be more Spirit filled and therefore have the self-control we need to avoid sins?

New Creatures with New Character

If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old habits and character traits that marked your life before Christ are passing away. He is making you entirely new. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* 2 Cor. 5:17. Paul paints several pictures of new creatures with new character:

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 1 Cor. 13:3-8

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22-23

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy meditate on these things. Phil. 4:8

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Col. 3:12-16

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 11 - Galatians 6:1-10
Gospel Living
Keeping on Track

In this final chapter, Paul presents two more contrasts in the Christian life. Keep in mind that he is describing the spiritual life of the believer who lives under grace and not under law. It is a life of liberty, not bondage, and one that is lived in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

There is a law that the believer obeys; it is the law of love in Christ. “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you.*” The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love, for God is love. If we are walking in the Spirit, we will not use our liberty in Christ for selfish purposes; we will allow the Spirit to work through us to help others. “Others” is the great Gospel word! Jesus lived for others, and we must follow His example. Being free from the Law does not mean we are independent of one another, for we are members of the same family, and we minister to each other.

Suppose a believer is suddenly caught by the enemy and falls into sin. Should our attitude be one of judgment and condemnation? No! If we are spiritual, we will seek to restore the fallen one. This Greek word for “restore” is a medical term used for the setting of a broken bone. Christians are members of Christ’s body, and a Christian in sin weakens the body.

We are to bear each other’s burdens, but we must also bear our own burdens. There are some burdens that we can share with others, but there are also some that we alone can carry. There must be the spirit of meekness as we seek to help others, not thinking we are better than they. Let God do the judging and the rewarding; He never makes a mistake.

The believer who listens to the Word should share material blessings with those who teach. We often apply these verses to reaping what we sow in terms of sin, and certainly this principle is true. But the basic lesson here is that of giving; “*Sowing to the flesh*” means living for the flesh, investing time and money on things that will not last; “*sowing to the Spirit*” means spending time and money on things eternal. How many Christians use their time and money on things fleshly and they wonder why they never grow in grace or reap spiritual fruits. It takes faith and patience to sow to the Spirit, but God promises the harvest in due season. It takes time to grow a spiritual harvest. We must be faithful sowers in our activities.

Read Galatians 6:1-6 and answer the following questions

1. Explain in your words what 6:1-6 teaches you to do in the following situations:

- a. Someone else in the church is sinning

- b. Someone else is experiencing difficulties

- c. You feel you are doing better than all others in your church

- d. Someone is sacrificing time and income to be your teacher

2. What is the best approach to helping a Christian brother caught in sin? Paul says “*you who are spiritual*” should help. To who does this refer?

3. What is involved in restoring someone “gently”? (Matt. 18:15-17, 2 Cor. 2:6-8)
What dangers should we be aware of?

4. Why is it important to have Christian friends? Wouldn't it be easier to isolate yourself or live as a lone ranger?

5. How does Christ's example show you what it means for you to carry someone else's burden?

6. How are the "burdens" in verse 2 and "load" in verse 5 different?

7. What do you think Paul is saying in verse 6:6? (See 1 Cor. 9:7-14, 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

Read Galatians 6:7-10 and answer the following questions

8. What does the principle "reaping what you sow mean"?

9. Describe at least one situation in your own life where you have seen the principle "reaping what you sow" come true?

10. It's safe to say that everyone desires a good harvest. Why would anyone (including yourself) plant bad seed? (See 6:8-9)

11. What opportunities do you have right now to do good? (See 6:10)

Pay Attention to Temptation

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Gal. 6:7

Paul's warning to "*take heed lest you fall*" (1 Cor. 10:12) is as necessary today as it has ever been. For we, like all that have gone before us are fallen, temptable, and subject to thinking and doing what is wrong. Few teachings of Scripture have more practical implications for day to day living.

Opportunities for temptation are almost endless. And since human nature is not getting any better, nor is any of us immune to the corrupted appetites of the flesh, we need to take Paul's warning seriously and watch out for temptation or we will surely fall. Scripture offers several alternatives for dealing with temptation as we find it.

1. We should avoid temptation whenever possible. Proverbs 4:14-15 urges us, "Do not enter the path of the wicked, do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel in it." Often, we know beforehand whether a certain set of circumstances is likely to lead us to sin. Therefore, the obvious way to avoid is to avoid the circumstances.

2. We should flee from powerful temptations. Earlier in this letter, Paul warned the Corinthians to flee sexual immorality (6:18). The message is clear: Don't toy with temptation. Flee from it!

3. Chronic temptation is something we need to confess and offer to Christ, and ask for His cleaning work. Some temptations are powerful inner struggles, with thoughts and attitudes that graphically remind us of how fallen we really are. What should we do with that type of temptation? Rather than deny it or try to repress it, we should bring it to Christ. He alone is able of cleaning up the insides of our minds.

4. Finally, we must resist temptation until it leaves us. When Christ was tempted by Satan, He resisted until Satan went away (Matt. 4:1:11). James encouraged us to do the same (James 4:7). Resisting begins by us bathing our minds in the Word of God and standing our ground. We have the promise, after all, that the temptation we experience will never go beyond our ability to deal with them (1 Cor. 10:13). That is great news.

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 12 - Galatians 6:11-18
Gospel Living
Focusing on the Eternal

To the very end of the letter, Paul has grace in mind. The Christian who depends on grace, through the Spirit, will always bring glory to God.

Paul usually used an assistant when he wrote, dictating the letter, and then adding his personal “grace signature” to the end. But apparently he wrote Galatians personally, and, because of his poor eyesight he had to write in large letters. “*How large a letter*” does not mean the number of words, because the letter is relatively brief; it means the size of the individual letters. Paul did not permit his physical handicap to hinder him from obeying God and warning his Christian friends of the evils of legalism.

“*These Judaizers want to use you for their glory,*” Paul asserts (vs.12). “They are not ministering to you for your good, but for their own praise. They want to avoid the persecution that comes to those who preach the cross. But they do not even obey the law themselves!” What a stinging rebuke! These Judaizers, like the Pharisees of Christ’s day, would cross land and sea to make a convert, not to help the convert, but to add more glory to their own names. But Paul was not of this type: he gloried in the cross and willingly took all of the shame and persecution that was attached to it. Paul could glory in the cross because he knew the Person of the cross, the purpose of the cross, and the power of the cross.

“These false teachers belong to the world and are living for the world,” states the apostle. “Religion” has made the cross a symbol; the Spirit makes the cross a reality in the life of the Christian who lives by grace.

The church today is the true Israel of God, because God’s ancient people have been set aside temporarily in unbelief and are termed “*not my people*” (Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23; Rom. 9:25-26). One day Israel will become God’s people and inherit their national promises. The “rule” we are to walk by is that of grace and the new creation in Christ.

With one sweep of the pen, Paul brushes away these legalistic troublemakers. “Your false teachers are marked with circumcision,” he writes, “but I have on my body the marks [brands] of Jesus Christ.” This does not mean Paul had five wounds on his body similar to Christ’s wounds; it means rather that he had scars on his body to prove that he bore reproach for the cross of Christ. Paul was Christ’s soldier, slave, and devoted follower.

Read Galatians 6:11-18 and answer the following questions

1. What reasons does Paul think are motivating those who are pushing circumcision on the Gentiles?

2. How might Christians do things for similar motives today? How might you guard yourself against each of these dangers?

3. Boasting means, “to take pride in something, to boast, glory, pride oneself.” Looking at the Judaizers in verses 12-13, how did their desire to boast lead them to destruction?

4. How is Paul’s boasting in the cross different from the Judaizers?

5. How does verse 14 capture the heart of the gospel message?

6. How can we communicate the urgency of the gospel to our friends and family who don’t know Jesus?

7. What does bosting in Christ alone look like in your daily life? In how you pray? In how you worship? In how you treat your friends and co-workers?

8. In verse 14 Paul says that through the cross, the world was crucified to him. How would it be possible to live as if the world was dead and gone?

9. From the opposite viewpoint, why would Paul be dead as far as the world was concerned?

10. Compare Galatians 6:15 to 2 Corinthians 5:17. What can we learn by seeing how these two verses overlap?

11. In verse 16-17 how do we see that grace not only begins the Christian life, but stays with us throughout it?

12. Think back on this study through Galatians. Was there a particular lesson or truth from the letter that: A. Encouraged you? B. Convicted You? C. Helped you understand something you didn't before? D. Reminded you of something you might have forgotten?

Book Ends of Grace

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ”
Galatians 1:3

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”
Galatians 6:18

Paul could wish nothing greater for the Galatians than this. If this were so, they would walk in a grace relationship with God instead of the legal, performance-based relationship that endangered them so. This is an appropriate end of the letter and prayer of all our lives.