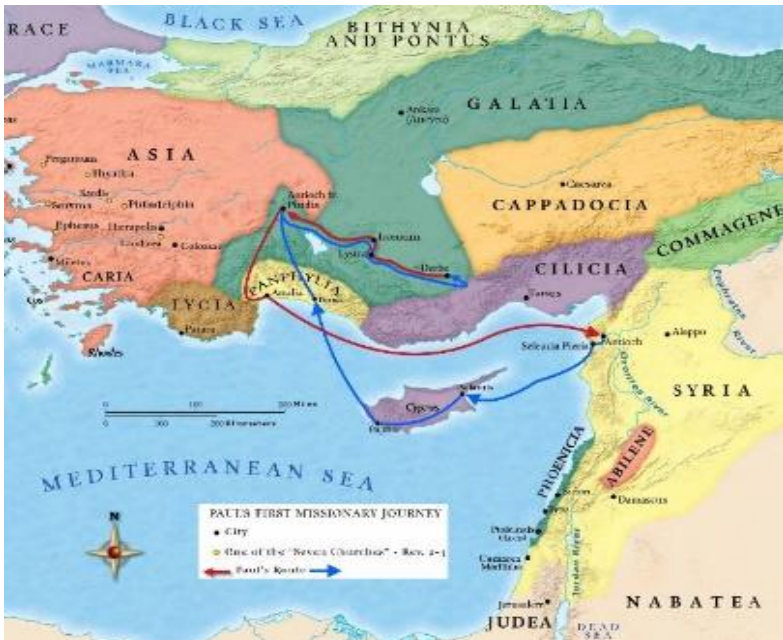


A STUDY OF GALATIANS

PAULS FIRST RECORDED SCRIPTURE

Leader's Guide

BY
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LEADERS GUIDE

**You are a facilitator—not a teacher.
But you are the leader**

For in-depth guidance on leading a small group bible study visit:

<https://bible.org/article/bible-study-small-group-guidelines-and-priorities>

Each of the following lessons will open with a reading followed by a Q&A session. Try to establish a rotation of the reading among the group members. During some sessions you may want multiple readers. REMEMBER to mention that group members may always pass if they are uncomfortable reading. Lesson one has a Background and an Introduction reading followed by Q&A. Each of the following lessons have an opening reading followed by the lesson scripture reading. This study was written in reference to the NIV Bible. The study will progress more smoothly if at least a majority of the group also use the NIV.

Lesson 1 typically runs longer than the rest of the lessons.

Group leaders are encouraged read the entire study, all 7 lessons prior to starting the study. Some study of other reference material will be of great benefit.

GALATIANS

LESSON ONE BACKGROUND Leaders copy

READ ACTS 9:1-19, 13,14,15.

Throughout this study leader's booklet, you will find notations in red. These group leader's hints and suggestions are not in the student study guide.

Scripturally Saul comes on the scene in the year 34AD when he witnesses the stoning of Stephen. In 35AD while traveling to Damascus Saul experienced the power of Jesus. We all know what happened to Saul in that encounter. Review Acts 9:1-19. After regaining his sight Saul went to the Arabian desert for three years. It is unclear but possible that Saul may have had an out of body experience while on his sabbatical in the desert. I believe Saul spent these three years receiving revelations from Jesus. Saul goes to Jerusalem in 39AD. He spends two weeks trying to preach in Jerusalem, but the Way was suspicious of him and were very cold to him. Only Peter listened to him and accepted him as a disciple of Christ. Saul left Jerusalem and proceeded to Antioch/Syria, which became his home Church. For the next five years Barnabas and Saul spread the Gospel of salvation through Christ, throughout Syria and Cilicia. It is not known how many cities and villages they visited. Only the cities of Antioch/Syria, Issus and Tarsus are documented in scripture.

Late in 49AD Barnabas and Saul were commissioned by the Church in Antioch/Syria to a mission to be guided by the Holy Spirit. So off they went on a mission guided by the Holy Spirit. An interesting note, their first stop was in Cyprus. After this stop Saul is referred to by his Roman name, Paul, throughout the rest of scripture. Prior to this time Barnabas is listed first and Saul is listed second. From that point on Paul is referred to first and Barnabas is second. ?? Was it the miracle at Cyprus that caused the change?

Stop here and discuss the significance of this miracle (Acts 13:4 – 12). Leader's may want to review this miracle and perhaps read some commentaries on the issue. It is stated that this miracle was a further validation of Paul's credentials as an Apostle of Christ.

Paul completes his first mission trip. Most of this trip was concentrated in southern Galatia. Southern Galatia in 46-48AD included Pisidian-Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. He made a loop from Pisidian-Antioch to Derbe and back to Pisidian-Antioch visiting Lystra and Iconium both ways (see map on cover). Paul invested quite a lot of time and effort in these 4 cities explaining the Gospel of Christ in great depth. Read Acts 13 and 14 for events of this mission.

After completing the first mission trip Paul was back in Antioch-Syria and there was trouble in the fellowship of Christ. There were two distinct factions growing in the Fellowship of Christ. There were those of the Circumcision and there were those who promote freedom in Christ. The Circumcision said, Christ is the Messiah, but did not want to stray from the Jewish worship traditions. They want to stay connected to temple worship as a "hedge" on salvation. They said you must be circumcised and become a proselyte Jew to receive salvation through Jesus, after all He was the Jewish Christ. Then there were the Freedom in Christ followers who were brought to Christ through Paul's teaching. To them salvation comes by faith, through the Holy Spirit.

At this time, it is recommended that you discuss with your group "The Way" and the "Christian Fellowship". Popular writing of our time muddies the distinction between the Way and the Christians. Christians were not part of the Way.

The Way was the fellowship of Jews who believed that Jesus was the Christ. It was recognized by some as a valid Jewish sect. This fellowship still observed all the Jewish customs, holy and sabbath days, prohibitions, traditions and temple worship and would do so until the temple is destroyed and the Jewish State is dissolved in the year 70AD.

The concepts of a new and separate faith-based system were first promoted by Stephen. Stephen was stoned to death, by Jews, for his enlightened teaching. The seeds of this revelation would grow and soon be christened as Christian fellowship in the church of Antioch-Syria. Keep all this in mind as you examine the problems faced by Paul as he spreads the gospel of Christ.

People of the circumcision were following behind Paul and preaching a different Gospel. They brought their version of the gospel to Antioch Syria while Paul and Barnabas were ministering there following their mission to Galatia. Paul knew it would do no good to back track his first mission journey and try to defend his Gospel if the leadership core, that is James the brother of Jesus, Cephas and John did not accept his Gospel to the Gentiles. He would be “running his race in vain”. So, in what becomes typical for Paul, he took it to the top (see Acts 15:1-35). He goes to Jerusalem addresses the leadership council of the Way. With the backing of Cephas, he receives the blessing and approval of the leadership of the Church in Jerusalem. A letter is drafted and sent to the churches in Antioch-Syria, Issus and Tarsus that gives full validation to Paul’s Gospel to the Gentiles. Problem, the letter, carried by Barsabbas and Silas is addressed only to these three cities. There is no evidence the letter went any further. It would be another 15 years before Dr. Luke will quote it in Acts (Acts 15:23-29). You may want to review the order in which the new testament books were written. Galatians was first. It would several years before the first Gospel is written

INTRODUCTION

Question, “Who were the Galatians”? This should not be a difficult question. But. Some obscure early writers and theologians muddied the water with ideas of clandestine journeys in the north of Galatia. These ideas and thoughts have been overwhelmingly rejected by the Fellowship of Christ. They suggested that Paul had made some “unrecorded” journeys to northern Galatia to unnamed cities where he established churches. They claimed that Derby, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidia-Antioch were not even part of Galatia. Well, that was true in 50BC. But Paul did not go to Galatia in 50BC he went there in 46AD. You see, by about 5BC the Romans had conquered all that region and combined several kingdoms into one administrative region they called Galatia. Derby, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidia-Antioch were in the southern most area of that region. If Paul had evangelized northern Galatia Dr. Luke would surely have mentioned it in Acts. Paul and Luke were very close. So, we will assume for this study that the Churches of Galatia are Derby, Lystra, Iconium and Pisidia-Antioch. However, references to the old ideas do pop up in second through fifteenth century commentaries and therefore find their way into modern writing. So just be aware, these ideas are still out there.

Many theologians and academics feel that Paul wrote Galatians shortly after his return to Antioch-Syria from the Jerusalem Council. I accept this interpretation. Paul knew that the “circumcision” group had not given up and was already in Galatia distorting Christ’s Gospel of salvation. He wanted to correct the “fake news” being spread and perhaps set the stage for the return visit he was surely planning. He wanted the readers of the time and all times to understand that salvation is a free gift of God. A gift made possible only by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and not dependent upon any works on our part. By sending the letter we call

Galatians out ahead of his return visit he accomplishes several tasks. In advance of his revisit, he reasserts Faith over Law. He also condemns anyone who alters his Gospel.

Paul displayed deep wisdom in his approach to a solution of the immediate problem. He forced a ruling on his Gospel of Salvation, by the “Way” *before* issuing any rebuttal. Paul could now state that his Gospel to the Gentiles had the blessing of the Jerusalem leadership, and this was a powerful statement. Opposition from Messianic Jews did not end but their legitimacy was severely damaged.

Keep in mind as you explore Galatians that this letter was the very first New Testament document written. Think about that, no other written guidance existed. *Note the significance*, the very first written document of the New Testament was a validation of Paul’s mission on earth. As preparation for the study of the letter to the Galatians you are encouraged to read Acts 13, 14, and 15.

There are two main themes to the letter. First the insistence of justification before God is by faith in the redeeming act of sacrifice by Jesus Christ. Second, it is the Holy Spirit who instills in our hearts a desire to turn to Christ, and who assures us that Christ dwells within us.

Let’s review where we are just before Paul writes Galatians. Paul has been teaching the Gospel given him by Christ for about 11 years. The circumcision group has been gaining strength. They were following Paul and diluting his Gospel. Paul has gone to Jerusalem, confronted the “circumcision” and won a theological battle. But the war is not over. The Judaizers have been dealt a serious blow. They can no longer claim the support and blessing of the Jerusalem Church. Paul, his mission and his Gospel have been VALADATED! It is from this Position of strength that Paul writes GALATIANS.

Be aware. The questions following each lesson are not there to “get the correct answer”. The purpose is to get us to think. To open our minds to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Begin each session with a prayer for the presence and interaction of the Spirit.

GALATIANS

LESSON 1 STUDY QUESTIONS

1, Were you aware of Saul's three-year sabbatical in the Arabian desert? Yes

2, Does Saul's three-year sabbatical suggest any comparable occurrence in scripture?

To me it brings to mind the three years the 12 spent with Christ.

3, What is the significance of Saul reverting to his Roman name?

I think it emphasizes the point that Saul / Paul is commissioned to announce that salvation through Christ is for the gentiles also. Having a Roman name would make acceptance by the Gentiles much easier.

4, What is the significance of Saul being listed as subordinate early in Acts and listed in the leadership position as Paul later?

In my mind this seems to be a point where fellow Christians have accepted Paul as a fellow Apostle, leader, and teacher.

5, When problems arise with the "circumcision" group where do you think Paul gets the confidence to confront the leadership of the "Way"?

The Holy Spirit gives Paul the strength of faith to be confident that his Gospel from Christ is true.

6, What movements do you see today that would correspond to the "circumcision" groups actions of the first century (groups calling themselves Christian).

The warm and fuzzy doctrine of some churches. Churches that promote alternate life styles as blessed and holy in Gods eyes.

7, Comment on this statement: The very first written word of the first century Christian Church was a validation of the Gospel of Christ as presented by Paul.

This seems to me to validate the entire New Testament. None of the Gospels or other letters in the New Testament contradict any of Paul's words in Galatians.

GALATIANS

LESSON TWO CHAPTER 1

NO OTHER GOSPEL

It is important that we keep in mind that Paul invested quite a long time in each of the cities in Galatia. He has taught and instructed the Gospel of Grace through Jesus the Christ, in great depth to the Galatians. This letter is not a lesson in the Gospel of Grace, it is a validation of all that Paul has already taught and instructed. It will also serve as an introduction and validation to all of Paul's letters that follow. You will not find a great, in-depth clarification of the Gospel or the Christian way of life here, we will get that later in Romans.

Paul opens with a statement of "by who's authority" and moves directly into a synopsis of the Gospel given to him, through revelation, by Christ and not influenced by any man. Wasting no time, he moves quickly to why he is writing this letter. With the resolution he gained from his recent trip to Jerusalem he soundly rebukes those who would distort the Gospel given him by Jesus. (verses 1-7)

Next, he moves to a very strong condemnation of those attempting to distort his Gospel of Grace. Paul goes so far as to curse anyone that would alter or pervert the Gospel given him by Christ. Remember Paul is not the origin of the Gospel he preaches he is merely the vessel carrying it. Paul was called by God to preach God's word. Not called by any man for any man's purpose, but by God for God's purpose. (verses 8-12).

Paul's life history testifies to his dedication to his search for God. He knew, that from the time of his birth, God had been preparing him to serve the Gospel of Christ. After his experience on the road to Damascus he spent a time of revelation in the desert of Arabia. He paid Cephas a short visit and moved on to preach his Gospel in Syria and Cilicia. The word of his conversion and teaching

of salvation through Christ was praised by the “Way” (verses 13-24). Chapter 1 has two main points: There is only one true Gospel. Paul was sent by God.

READ CHAPTER 1.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 1 STUDY QUESTIONS

1, What is Paul attempting to accomplish in verses one and two and also a reference in verse 10?

___ Paul and his associates represent only Jesus the Christ and are not from any man for any man.

2, In three short verses (3-5) Paul relates the three primary points of the Gospel given to him by Jesus the Christ. What are they?

___ Grace and peace are gifts from God.

___ Jesus died for our salvation.

___ God is forever.

3, Which of the three above brings you the most peace? Why

___ Jesus died for our salvation.

4, What do you see as root problem in verses 6 and 7 that caused Paul to write this letter?

___ Our Salvation is keyed on our acceptance of the word and sacrifice of Jesus. If we do not have that we have no salvation.

5, The “circumcision” group was trying to form and mold the new covenant into the customs and rites of the temple. Can you see a parallel to that in our Christian culture today?

Feel good preaching. Gnosticism is alive and well. Scientology.

6, In verses 8 & 9 Paul proclaims a severe judgement against those who distort the Gospel. Why do you think he is so forceful?

The Gospel is direct form the Lord. The true Gospel should be the focal point of our faith. Works, law, and ceremony can and did become the focal point of faith for the Jews. God was replaced by ceremony.

7, In what manner is the Gospel being presented today to please man rather than God.

___We must be politically correct. Old taboos are not accepted as proper. You will not go to my church if I do not embrace your doctrine.

8, Where in this passage do you find evidence that the Gospel Paul preaches comes from God and not man.

___Verses 15 through 17.

9, What would it mean to the Galatians to know that the Gospel Paul preached came from God and not from a religion, mortal priest, or Synagogue?

___It relieved them from the ties, traditions, and law of the Jewish temple. Remember this Gospel was like nothing that had come before. All “religions” shared rites and rituals. Other religions had sacrifice, purification rites, circumcision and anointment. It also removed the stress and threat of the local gods and idols.

GALATIANS

LESSON 3 CHAPTER 2

LEADER

There are two key points of chapter 2. First there is the validation of Paul's apostleship and the gospel he teaches. Second is the confidence with which Paul pursues the calling from God.

THE VALIDATION

Paul completed his first mission trip. He was back in what was his "home" church, Antioch-Syria. People from Jerusalem came to Antioch-Syria, Issus and Tarsus preaching the need to become a proselyte in order to receive salvation. It was at this time Paul realized that he must go to Jerusalem and receive acceptance or rejection from the "Way" for his Gospel to the Gentiles. Only in this way will he have any hope of successfully completing the task given him by Jesus. Note two important statements, "--they added nothing to my message" and "--gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me." (verses 1-11). Both the Gospel given by the Christ, taught by Paul and the apostleship of Paul have been VALIDATED.

THE CONFIDENCE

Later back in Antioch-Syria Paul demonstrated his confidence as he corrects Peter. Peter lets the law take control of his behavior. His conduct went so far as to corrupt Barnabas. Paul sees this and in typical Pauline fashion takes it to the top. He rebukes Peter. Peter is the highest-ranking member of the "Way" present at the time. He reminds Peter of the relationship of Justification and Faith. Justification is from Christ not from the law. (verses 1-18)

Chapter 2 closes with one of the most powerful statements in the New Testament; "-- *for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!*" If the law brings salvation, righteousness or justification then Jesus is not the Christ, son of God and our New Testament is invalid. (verses 18-21).

READ CHAPTER 2

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 2 STUDY QUESTIONS

1, We know that Paul did not need approval of the 12 to teach his Gospel. Why then was it important for him to present his teaching to the leaders in Jerusalem?

The Judaizes said that Paul's Gospel was not valid, and Christ's salvation comes only through Jewish tradition. Once the leadership of the Way in Jerusalem accepted and blessed Paul the Judaizes lost all validity and Paul gained full validation.

2, What is the significance of the treatment of Titus in verses 3-5?

Titus was accepted by the Jewish Christians and was not subjected to the rituals of the law. From that day on he was proof of freedom from the law.

3, What ideas or thoughts do you get from Paul's statement "But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders....."? (2:2 see 2:6 also)

It is almost as if Paul is diminishing or discounting the leadership in Jerusalem.

4. Why was the validation of Paul's teaching and ministry important both then and now?

It makes the point that salvation through Christ is for all mankind and not just for the Jew. _

5, In verses 11-14 is a lesson in the freedom in Christ. Ceremonies naturally differ from societies, ethnic background and regional differences and this is only natural. But the **G O S P E L** does not change. The only standard in Christianity is the **T R U T H** of the **G O S P E L**.

6, In verses 11 to 14 what was Peter's sin?

Peter's sin was the sin of hypocrisy. He created a barrier of separation between the Jews and Gentiles in the fellowship.

7, What impact might Peter's actions have had on the Gentile believers.

They may have been led to believe that Peter and the other Jews looked upon them as second-class Christians and somehow unworthy.

8, In today's world what debatable customs do Christians sometimes force on each other?

This is a time for discussion. Try to get as many as possible of the group to come forward with examples.

9, What is error in making customs a basis for fellowship?

THIS ONE IS A KEY POINT AS THE LEADER PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATION.

You may have to steer the group to the idea that everyone does not have the same roots. What is customary in your background may be odd or even repulsive to someone else. The point of Christian fellowship is "all inclusive". Think about and discuss the idea that customs as a rule are exclusionary. **Make the point that scripture is truth and not custom, ritual or tradition.**

In the first century, justification was a legal term. It meant that due to circumstances a known guilty person was considered just and was returned to community with full rights. From the promise of justification some Christians were promoting sinful living.

10, What is Paul's rebuttal of this line of thought?

Christ did not promote sin, He only recognized that man sins and must be justified to be present with God in eternity. Your past does not define who you are in Gods eyes.

11, What does the phrase "died to the law" mean to you?

This is an often misunderstood expression. Try to get several definitions and discuss a possible universal one-line expression.

12, What does it mean to live for God?

Living your life to please God and not seeking social recognition or acceptance.

GALATIANS

LESSON 4 CHAPTER 3

leader

The Rebuke (verses 1-14)

Paul reminds the Galatians that the crucifixion of Christ is a matter of current historic fact. The fact that they did receive rebirth by the Holy Spirit testifies to the truth of the resurrection. Paul asserts that it would be foolish to accept any other teaching that is contradictory.

The last word in verse 3 is interesting. Flesh is translated from the Greek word *Σαρχ* which in the first century meant, *of human nature in opposition to the Spirit*. That would make verse 3 read; *Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by your own means in **opposition** to the Spirit?* Here, Paul is suggesting a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

He goes on to explain how Abraham achieved righteousness 500 years before the law existed. How? By faith. By faith all nations will be blessed.

Parenthetically, I would like to inject a thought. What do we mean when speaking of the law? What are we speaking of when we speak of the commandments? In my view the Ten Commandment and the Law are separate and distinctive. The Ten Commandments are the articles of the covenant between God and His people. As was the custom the articles of the covenant were written in stone. The Mosaic law of social justice and religious rites were dictated by God and written on scrolls by Moses. The laws were defined, explained and expanded by scribes and priests. The “Commandments of the Covenant” were never altered by man. So, when Paul dismisses the law, he by no means is dismissing a covenant of God or the Ten Commandments. Remember Jesus expressed all, of the Ten Commandments in a simple statement, “Love God and Love Your Neighbor”.

That was not an alteration of the covenant which the Pharisees were trying to get Jesus to do. It was a simplification, so that even the Pharisees could understand it.

Law and Promise

In verses 10 - 14 Paul starts a clear and concise definition, delineation and separation of the law and the promise. The law was a guide for the people until the Christ came. The law prevailed until the Christ came and made the faith, that is the Holy Spirit available to all that believe.

Verse 3:22 starts a rather cryptic section of this letter. Not so much that Paul was being enigmatic but, the meaning has been distorted via translation. I get the clearest meaning if I translate 'Holy Spirit' for 'Faith' in verses 3:23 through 26. This is significant enough to warrant a quote and insertion.

NIV Galatians 3:22B - 29

*“Children of God. ²³Before the coming of this **Holy Spirit**, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until **the Holy Spirit** that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by **the Holy Spirit**. ²⁵Now that this **Holy Spirit** has come, we are no longer under a guardian. ²⁶So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through **the Holy Spirit**, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

Paul finalizes this section with the understanding that if you belong to Christ then no other label such as Jew, Gentile, slave, free, old, young, male or female can describe, define or limit who you are.

READ CHAPTER GALATIANS CHAPTER 3

GALATIANS

LESSON 4 QUESTIONS

1, Before being confused by the Judaizers how could the Galatian's faith be compared to Abraham's faith.

Neither the Galatians or Abraham had lived under the law, yet faith was strongly demonstrated in their lives.

2, a, The Gospel presented by Paul brought **J O Y** to the Galatians.

b, The Law of the Judaizers brought them **G U I L T**.

3, Redeemed means relieved from a debt.

Christ redeemed us:

How?

Every one of our sins carries a debt to our Creator. Christ took on the punishment, **THE DEBT** for all sin with the passion of the cross. _.

Why?

For no other reason than the love of the **FATHER**.

4, Why were the Hebrews given the law.

God made a covenant with Abraham because of his faith.

Abraham's people were special to God. They would be priests to all the world. After almost 500 years they had forgotten who they were. They had lost their faith. The law was given to guide the people back to faith in the one true God.

5, The overwhelming majority of the Galatian Christians were Gentiles. Why then, does Paul go so deeply into Jewish tradition in chapter 3 of this letter.

The false gospel being preached was based in Jewish law and scripture. By defining the purpose and application of the law Paul debunks the false teaching with Jewish tradition, he clearly showed the Judaizers were preaching a false gospel.

6, A clear understanding of the law and why it was given should help us understand our need for Christ. Why?

Understanding that the law does not “pay our debt to our Creator” helps us realize the only to true fellowship with God is through the redeeming acts of the Christ Jesus.

7, How should an understanding of the source and purpose of the law and faith effect our evangelism?

Our evangelism should be based on faith Jesus, and His acts of redemption. Our personal beliefs, doctrine and customs are best left out of our efforts. Remember the goal of our evangelism is the spread of the Gospel not our personal religion.

8, Consider **very** carefully, in respect to our lives as evangelists. Who is the most important person in my life?

The person I am interacting with right now.

GALATIANS

LESSON 5 CHAPTER 4

In verses 1 to 20 Paul uses topics the first century Roman society was well aware of. A social code they lived with daily; the slave status of minors, adoption into a household, and redemption from debt or slavery. Paul clearly states, there is redemption from the law for the Jew, and redemption from sin for the Roman. This redemption comes by way of the Holy Spirit, through faith in the Gospel of the Christ, that is Jesus. Paul very astutely places the righteous goal for the Roman and the Jew in the Gospel of Christ by way of the Holy Spirit. He encourages the Galatians to return to the freedom in Christ and cast away special days, months, seasons and years. There is no salvation in ceremony but only in faith through grace.

Of special note in chapter 4 is the reference to a child. In this chapter a child is referred to as an un-redeemed person. Elsewhere, throughout scripture a child is most often referred to as an immature saved person. Here the child has hope and promise of ownership and authority. But this hope is not realized without redemption. Only the child's father can set the terms of that redemption.

Next Paul drops the theological argument and opens a personal appeal. What happened to the unity and love they shared before? You blessed me then do you curse me now. Have I become an enemy?

The Judaizers were zealous but what was the root of their zeal? Did they labor to bring the Galatians to God or to THEMSELVES? Were the Judaizers promoting the glory of God or were they attempting to justify their personal beliefs. To whom did they want the glory? Paul was heavily grieved by the anxiety of the Galatians and wished to be reunited with them.

Now there is a major shift in the target audience. In verses 21 to 31, the Hagar and Sarah allegory, Paul specifically targets the Jewish base in the Galatian Churches. He draws from Jewish scripture, the principles of inheritance. Paul even states that he is speaking figuratively. Bottom line, the off-spring of a slave cannot inherit. If the offspring is adopted, then full rights of inheritance are endowed. By virtue of the Holy Spirit all Christians are adopted children of the promise.

Paul skillfully places this Jewish scriptural discussion here to shake the shoulders of the Jews in the Galatian Church He is sending a wakeup call to the sons of Abraham, the Messiah has come, the Spirit is here, you better pay attention to the Gospel of Christ.

It is difficult to put spiritual actuality in mortal terms, but think about this. You have toiled and saved and finally paid off your home mortgage. You had the paper burning ceremony and are comfortably pleased with life in general. Then all your neighbors build sundecks and install swimming pools. They continually encourage you to “get with the pack”. So, you get a home improvement mortgage and get socially correct in your neighborhood. Well now it is winter, the pool is covered and there is 7 inches of snow on the sun-deck as you sit looking out the window while you make out the check to the mortgage company.

READ GALATIANS 4

GALATIANS

LESSON 5 CHAPTER 4 QUESTIONS

1, In the first century a father set the time and terms for the child to take on authority and ownership of the estate. How were we granted authority and ownership into the eternal estate of fellowship with the Lord? (v.3-6)

By hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, believing and having faith in its truth and by rebirth by the Holy Spirit.

2, In what ways have you experienced and demonstrated the indwelling of the spirit in your heart through redemption?

There is a peace in my inner being and a wisdom from the holy spirit of the truth of the Gospel.

3, Regarding all the promise and privilege of verses 1 to 7 What is Paul's reaction in verses 8 and 9?

Paul is bewildered that considering all the promise contained in the Gospel of Christ, they would choose the confines of the law.

4, What is the basis of Paul's fear in relation to observance of days, months and years?

Paul fears they will fall into the trap the Jews fell into that is they will become worshipers of the rituals instead of God.

5, In what ways have you become a spiritual slave?

My greatest challenge is concern over appearance of actions in place of the motivation of my actions.

How have you overcome these enslavements?

Still working on this one. I pray about it and seek wisdom. I examine and analyze my motivation in daily actions

6, How should we express care and concern for members of God's family?

Welcome all believers as though we were welcoming and caring for Jesus himself.

7, What conflicting ideals do you see in verses 4:21 to 31?

SLAVE AND FREE

OLD JERUSALUM AND NEW

LAW AND GRACE

SOCIAL NORMS AND SPIRIT GUIDANCE

8, How is Hagar relative to the old covenant and the law?

Hagar and her child were of the natural way. Nature as the way of sin.

9, How is Sarah relative to the new covenant and to the Jerusalem that is above?

Sarah and her child were the result of a promise from God.

10, Ishmael the natural born (unsaved) persecuted the Isaac born of a promise (born of the spirit). In our world today have you seen examples of the unsaved persecuting the born of the spirit.

I see it in the acts of atheist like Hitler, Stalin, Sodom Husain, and Ted Turner.

GALATIANS

LESSON 6 Chapter 5

In chapter 5 Paul moves to the conclusion of this letter. The emphasis shifts to the intensely practical implications of the good news as it translates into everyday actions and behavior. And now, these words, written almost 2000 years ago, are just as important and relevant as when they were written.

We should read this next section (5:1-6) carefully. Paul offers two choices. The law or the Gospel. The law offers definition and condemnation for sin. The Gospel offers salvation and freedom in Christ through grace. If you choose the law, you reject Christ and blasphemed the Holy Spirit. If you choose Christ you gain the Holy Spirit, grace and salvation.

Read verses 6 carefully. As the Gospel promises, from faith comes justification, love is the *expression* of that *faith* and not a “work” to earn salvation. God justifies, we respond with love.

In verses 7-12 I believe Paul is trying to lighten the mood a bit. He starts off with a couple clichés and states his confidence in their resolution of the dilemma. Then he states a wish for a mishandled circumcision on the Judaizes. Wow that was extreme.

In the next section we again, see the use of “flesh” or “σαρξ” in the Greek. Remember that carries the meaning of *by human nature or effort in opposition to the Spirit*.

In verse 13 Paul starts toward the closing of this letter. He purposefully moves the tone of the correspondence to instruction, love and caring. “do not use your freedom to indulge...”. Serve and love and all will be well. Stay in the Spirit and you will retain righteousness.

Just to remove any ambiguity Paul offers a list of the acts of the flesh we are to avoid. This is a very disquieting statement. Paul does not talk around the topic of salvation. There is no salvation for people who live in this manner.

He follows this definition and warning with a list of fruits of the Spirit, of which, there are no prohibitions. If we live by the fruits of the Spirit, we will not fall victim to the acts of the flesh.

The acts of the flesh (in opposition of the Spirit) will not, then, corrupt our fellowships. The authenticity of our fellowships is determined by the fruit of our lives.

READ GALATIANS 5

GALATIANS 5

LESSON 6 QUESTIONS

1, Name and discuss some of the modern cultural threats to our spiritual freedom.

Materialism, DIY religion, Fear, Cultural peer pressure
Poll group for other threats and discuss how to combat them.

2, What tools do we have today to combat the threats to “stand firm”?

Pray, stand firm against non-Gospel ideas and actions. One of the most powerful tools we have is Christian fellowship, a company or battalion has a better chance of winning a battle than a lone soldier.

3, In verses 2 through 12 Paul is speaking figuratively. What is the spiritual meaning of letting one’s self be circumcised? Substituting the grace of God with rituals, laws and rites.

4, Explain the fallacy and consequences of trying to be justified by law (v. 2-4).

By attempting to be justified by law you simply are saying that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was not enough. The cross is the very basis of Christian faith and therefore you are destroying your faith.

5, Explain the differences implied by verse 13 verses verse 14.

13) The use of freedom in Christ to offset a persistence in a sinful nature because all sin is forgiven.

14) Freedom from the law allows us the freedom to demonstrate love and caring, prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit rather than an external law guiding behavior.

LESSON 6 QUESTIONS CONTINUED

6, Do you see “biting and devouring” in churches today and what is the outcome.

Stimulate open discussion, current events, church splits etc.

7, How does the Evangelical Covenant Church attempt to avoid biting and devouring?

ECC members affirm their belief in freedom in Christ. If time allows read Affirmation 6 and its definition and briefly discuss what it means to the fellowship.

8, How do we live in the Spirit?

Open your heart to the Spirit. Continually ask God to make the Spirit abundant in your life. When challenges and temptations present themselves call upon the Spirit to protect and guide you. Consciously look for and recognize the works of the Spirit in your life.

9, What is the result of living in the Spirit?

The fruits of love. A continuation of the sanctification process. A close fellowship with Christ.

Solicit other ideas from the group.

10, How do you recognize the acts of the sinful nature?

There is no love connection in acts of the sinful nature. There is only self-gratification.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 6 LESSON 7

Paul opens this section of the letter with the word *adelphoi*. Today we translate this as “Brothers and Sisters”. In some cases, it is simply translated “brothers”. Both translations truly miss the mark. This word has a deeper meaning, it refers to all members of a group (ekklesia) regardless of age, gender, class or race and implies an **equal value** to all members of the group. This is key as applied to the rest of verse 1. All members of the Fellowship or ekklesia, regardless of their cultural standing are responsible for the “**gentle restoration**” of sinners in their Church. It is not just the deacons, elders and other leaders of the church who are responsible for the success of the fellowship.

Many people get confused by the words of 6:2 and 6:5. Galatians 6:2 says we must bare one another’s burdens. Galatians 6:5 says we must bare our own load. In 6:2 the word translated as burden is the Greek “barE” the literal translation of this word is life’s heavy burdens such as grief, fear, sadness and sickness.

The Greek word that we translate as LOAD in 6:5 is “φορτίον” (phortion) which is literally translated as “portions, rations, or supplies”. The Greek word “φορτίον” (phortion) was colloquialized in the first century to mean the pack or pouch that soldiers or travelers carried containing all their sustenance for travel. They were personally responsible for their own “phortion” and could not or would not expect any one to carry it for them. From this came a secondary meaning. Things you carry by your own choice. Here we find anxiety, guilt, shame to name a few.

But life’s heavy burdens are different. Sometimes we must help a fellow Christian when the “BarE”, “BURDEN” is too difficult to handle alone. Sometimes sharing the weight of life is just a reinforcement of the shared fellowship. Sometimes it is lifesaving. **Always** it is a pleasing aroma to our Lord.

How can we put all this in simple terms? Burdens are forced upon us by life and Loads are things we take on through our own decisions.

Next, we have, once again, the sow and reap theme. If you sow only to reap for yourself, comfort, pleasure and security in this life, there is a high probability that you will succeed. But your eternal life may be lost. If instead you sow the light of Christ, you will reap eternal life. Your mortal life is the first, last and only chance you get to develop fellowship with your Creator.

Then out of nowhere comes, “See what large letters I use.....” We will see this in other letters Paul writes. **MAKE NO MISTAKE about the origin of this letter!!!**

There is a lot going on in verses 12 through 15. The Judaizers were unsure. They wanted the promise of Christ but they did not want to lose the tradition of the temple. They wanted Christ, but they wanted him confined to the temple. They did not want to lose their status in the synagogue. Paul soundly rebukes this perversion of the Gospel.

Paul closed this letter with a hope of peace and mercy, a statement of his dedication and a blessing for the *adelphoi*.

READ GALATIANS CHAPTER 6.

GALATIANS 6

LESSON 7 QUESTIONS

Study leaders, here is your test. You are on your own for this last section of questions.

1, What is the difference between gentle spiritual correction and meddling in the private affairs of a brother or sister?

2, Contrast the actions of sharing burdens and not sharing loads.

3, How do we “test” our own actions?

4, In your own words explain the life lesson of reaping and sowing in verses 7 - 9.

5, What ideal or command do you draw from verse 10?

6, What are the true motives of the opponents of Paul in verses 12 and 13.

7, In the first century, death on the cross was an event of distain. What was Paul's motive in boasting in the cross? (This one is deep)

8, What was the goal of the "circumcision's" boasting?

9, How do we boast in the cross in today's world?

GALATIANS STUDY REVIEW

Prepare for a discussion about the verses in Chapter 1:10, 5:11 and 6:17.

Notes: _____

Discussion:

Try to imagine the state of mind of the Galatians when lead astray by the circumcision group prior to receiving the “Galatians” letter from Paul.

Now visualize what they would think after receiving the “letter” prior to his return. What is the key point of the letter?
