

MCC Small Group Study Guide

60 minutes

A Textual Study of Galatians (1 of 8 Lessons)

Introduction

Leader's Overview and Explanation:

We are beginning a new study. Because the best way to study the Bible is through textual studies rather than topical studies or studies that jump from one text to another each week., we are going to work through Paul's letter to the Galatians.

First of all, the Spirit revealed these truths in textual form rather than in topical form or in bits and pieces of different texts. Textual studies eventually take you through such an array of issues that the book will speak to everyone in your group sooner or later. Textual studies most often were written to address real life issues in the churches to whom they were sent so they tend to be more applicable than topical studies. Topical studies can miss issues that people are struggling with. In addition, by taking our groups through textual studies we model for them how to study the Bible and can encourage them to "study ahead" for next week's lesson. By doing so we will be exposing them to more Bible and more Biblical truths each week. It will be to your advantage to look ahead each week so that you can encourage your group to read the upcoming section of Galatians from which your next study will come. You may want to give them a set of the following generic questions to ask themselves as they look at the texts they read each week.

In this section of scripture...

Is there a promise to claim?

Is there a sin to repent of?

Is there a command to follow?

Is there a spiritual principle I can apply to other situations?

Is there an example I would do well to follow?

Is there a truth I had not known before?

Is there a part of this I don't yet understand?

What does this text reveal to me about Jesus?

What is the Holy Spirit showing me about my life in this text?

Thanks for all you do and for leading your group through this important study.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

(1 of 8 Lessons)

Week One

5 Minutes – Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

Leader's Note:

Since you are beginning a new study, you may want to begin with an explanation of why we are going to a textual study. Some of those reasons are listed in the Introduction of this packet. Galatians is one of the great books on grace and Christian freedom in the entire New Testament. Although we preach grace, my experience is that many of our people still have not been able to translate grace into their own lives. This study will allow us to reinforce those truths and may help some of our people take God's grace into their hearts as they talk about their struggles with grace in your group. Please pray for your study every day of the week. When we finally receive God's grace, we can begin to extend His grace.

25 Minutes – Bible Study

Please share this introductory information with your group before getting into the text.

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in the Roman province of Galatia. This was a large province running from the north shore of the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Lystra and Iconium were major cities in this province. Problems in the churches often prompted letters. Since there was no e-mail, these would be circulated from congregation to congregation and read aloud. Paul would often follow up these letters with a personal visit to see if things had been set in order.

The problem in the Galatian churches revolved around two issues. The first was a group of teachers called the Judaizers. These were Jewish "Christians" who taught that it took faith in Jesus as well as adherence to the Law of Moses to be saved. In fact, their formula for salvation would probably have been "The Law of Moses + Jesus = Salvation." They especially emphasized circumcision, dietary laws, and feast days from the Law. This group also challenged Paul's apostleship claiming that he and his teaching were "self-appointed" and that he had no authority to be leading churches.

The second issue is related to the first. There was still prejudice in the church...especially in the hearts of Jewish Christians who tended to count Gentile Christians as second class citizens. Grace offers salvation to all on an equal basis. Lineage, heritage, religious rituals, etc. have no

meaning at the foot of the cross. Therefore, we are all equal in the church and should treat one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

This letter is Paul's defense of his apostleship and his message of grace. If he were not an apostle, then his message had no authority. If he were an apostle, then his message of grace stood against the demands of these false teachers. Biblical grace is still an issue often misunderstood today. This letter still has much to say about the foundations of our faith and how we should live in response to God's grace.

Read Galatians 1:1-5

What essential truths does Paul immediately emphasize in this greeting to the church?

From what we have already said about this letter to the Galatians, why were these points immediately important?

Read Galatians 1:6-10

Paraphrase or summarize what Paul has said in these verses.

From this section, how important is the pure message of the gospel of Jesus according to Paul? How strongly did he feel about this issue?

If you were asked what the pure message of the gospel is and what is necessary for salvation, how would you answer? (See I Cor. 15:1-11)

In your experience, have churches of our day added anything to the gospel as "essential to salvation" that Christ does not require? What are some of those things?

20 minutes – Application

Do you think that in your own life, you have "added" some requirements to the pure gospel so that you have not felt acceptable to God or so that you have not been assured of your salvation? What have "your additions" been?

How does living under the sense that "you must do more or be better to be saved" effect your ability to live for Christ and your joy in doing so?

How can we deepen our understanding of God's grace in our lives so that we can live with the joy Christ intends?

Action Step: Between now and the next time we meet, memorize Ephesians 2:8-9. After memorizing and say the verse out loud each day for several days, write out in your own words what you believe Paul is saying about your salvation in these verses. Be ready to share your summary of Paul's words the next time we meet.

Prayer – Take prayer reports and prayer requests. Pray for the Spirit to fully reveal God's grace and his salvation to each heart in your group. Pray that daily for your group until you meet again.

Before our next meeting...Read and reflect on Galatians 1:11 - 2:10. Apply your reflection questions as you study.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

(2 of 8 Lessons)

Week Two

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

Read Galatians 1:11-24

What is Paul emphasizing in verses 11-12? Why is this emphasis important to the churches in Galatia?

Paul speaks of God *calling him* to preach Jesus. What event in Paul's life is he most likely thinking about? (See Acts 9:4ff)

What is Paul's most compelling evidence for the reality of his encounter with Christ?

When we want to convince others of the reality of Jesus, what part should our personal testimony play in that conversation?

What does verse 15 suggest about God's involvement in the life of believers....even before they name Jesus as Lord? Can you think of a time before you named Jesus as Lord that God was clearly already working in your life?

Read 2:1-5

How does Paul demonstrate in this section that his gospel of grace is from the Lord?

In this section, Paul compares life under the law to slavery. How is legalism like slavery? Have you ever been enslaved by legalism? What was that like for you?

Read 2:6-10

How do you think God prepared Paul, a former Pharisee, to be an apostle to the Gentiles even before he was made an apostle? How did God move him into a "ministry role" that he probably resisted at first? Has that ever happened to you?

15 Minutes - Application

How does God prepare us ahead of time for the things he want us to do in the kingdom?

What experiences have you had that have most prepared you for the service you are now giving Jesus? What is in your testimony that would demonstrate to others the life-changing reality of Jesus:

Action Step: One of the great evidences of the resurrected Jesus is the incredible transformation in Paul's life from a man who detested Jesus to a man who declared Jesus. Between now and our next meeting, sketch out a basic testimony that communicates the ways in which Jesus has made himself known in your life so that you know he is the resurrected Lord. Be ready to share a little of that the next time we meet.

Prayer – Take prayer reports and prayer requests. Pray for the opportunity to share your testimony with others before we meet again. Be in prayer daily for the testimony of the group and for prayer requests that were shared.

Before our next meeting...Read and reflect on Galatians 2:11 - 21. Apply your reflection questions as you study.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

(3 of 8 Lessons)

Week Three

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

Leader's Note: This week the emphasis is again on grace. Many of us still live with the impression that we must do enough of something to get to heaven. We feel unworthy. We're not sure that everything is forgiven. We keep thinking we are out of God's favor because we struggle with sin. Yet the truth is that we are saved and counted righteous because we believe that Jesus is the Son of God who paid the full price for our sins by his death. We are saved and counted righteous because we trust in his word about our salvation and trust in the saving power of his sacrifice. We live for Jesus in response to our salvation, not in order to be saved.

Christ living in us is a powerful truth. It implies several things:

- We belong to Christ and thus, are protected by Christ.
- We are already made righteous by his blood, otherwise, a holy Christ could not take up residence within us.
- We are to let Christ live through us and so we are Christ to those around us. Our part is to invite Jesus to live in us and to say "no" to our flesh and all the things in our flesh that oppose him.
- As we let Christ have his way in us, we become more like him and so, we are transformed.

Please do not reveal these truths to your group before the study, but allow them to discover these and other truths as you reflect on this section of Galatians.

Read Galatians 2:11-21

In verse 14, Paul says that Peter and Barnabas were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel. What does he mean by that? What truth of the gospel is he talking about and how were they violating it?

Summarize the great spiritual principle in verse 15 & 16.

What does this truth reveal to us about the cross, about Christ's love for us, and about our relationship with him?

In light of this truth, how would you respond to a believer who says to you, "I don't know if I have done enough to be saved?"

Read verse 20 -21 Talk about all the truths and implications for the believers life that are reflected in this verse.

What does it mean for us to live as crucified?

What does it mean for Christ to live in us?

Can a believer set aside the grace of God? How might that happen? How do we prevent that from happening?

15 Minutes – Application

On a scale of 1-10, how would you score yourself on the extent to which Christ is living in you? In what part of your life is Christ most evident? In which part is he least evident?

What steps can we take to allow Christ to live in us in greater and greater ways? Remember, if you are not surrendering more and more of your life to him already, you may need to take a different approach from what you are doing rather than just doing more of the same.

Action Step: Between now and the next time we meet, memorize Gal. 2:20. Make a personal inventory of your life to determine areas in which you are not allowing Christ to rule. Be in prayer daily, asking Christ to live in you and in those areas you have not yet surrendered. If you choose, you may ask the group to pray for you about those *unsundered* areas. Ask yourself how your life would be better if those areas were surrendered to Christ/

Prayer: Take prayer reports and prayer requests Pray for hearts that will surrender every area of life to Jesus.

For next week, read Galatians 3. Apply your reflection questions.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

(4 of 8 Lessons)

Week Four

5 Minutes – Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

Leader's Note: In this section of Galatians, Paul is again hammering the issue of Law and Grace. He is making the point in this section that the Law has been replaced by grace through Christ, not because it was bad, but because it was insufficient. In fact, he makes the case that it was always insufficient. The question is then posed (or assumed), " Why did God ever give us the Law in the first place if it was insufficient to save?" Paul tells the Galatians that God had a purpose for the Law. It was not to save, but it was to point us to Christ and to convince us of the necessity of grace. The fact that Paul keeps hammering this truth tells us how important it is and how difficult it is for many to accept. Somehow, grace does seem "too good to be true." Somehow, it seems unjust that one should die for the sins of another. Since all we have ever experienced in the flesh is conditional love, we find it hard to give up the notion that we must earn God's love by our own goodness that we might be saved. In your group, many still struggle with those questions. So...spend another week exploring the foundational truth that we are saved by grace. Some of your folks need it.

20 minutes – Study

Read Galatians 3:1-5

In verse 2, Paul asks an essential question. "Did you receive the Spirit by keeping law or by believing in Christ?" In other words, did the Spirit come on you because you had done enough good works and tallied enough points, or because you believed in the sacrifice and promises of Jesus? How about us? Did we receive the Spirit of Christ on the basis of all our good works or on the basis of the cross?

Read verse 3-5. What is Paul saying here about our ongoing relationship with God?

Do you think some of us today still struggle with the thought that we **were saved** by grace but have to **stay saved** on the basis of our good works, as if God will eventually reject us if we haven't done enough of the right things after becoming a Christian?

What would Paul say in response to that notion?

If we are **saved** by grace and **continue** in grace, does that mean there is no need for increasing holiness and good works on our part? Discuss this statement in relation to the question: "The **basis** of our salvation is grace, the **evidence** of it is a life committed to Christ."

Read verses 6-9. Summarize what Paul says about Abraham and the basis of his righteousness. From what you know about Abraham (Gen.12ff), what constitutes a level of belief that God counts as righteousness?

Read verses 10 - 25.

Why is it said that those who rely on observing the law are under a curse?
How did Christ become a curse for us and, thus, save us from having to live under law?

From this text, what was the purpose of the Law? In what ways did the Law bring us to Christ?

To live under Law is to seek salvation on the basis of your own righteousness.
What is the situation of people today who rely on their own righteousness for salvation?
Do you know any?

Read 3:26-29

Paul says that we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For you, what are the implications of being "sons of God" for each of us? What benefits of sonship does Paul list?

15 minutes – Application

Though we are saved by grace through faith, saving faith bears the fruit of obedience that stands as evidence of our salvation and our relationship with Jesus. Take a minute and ask each group member to share with the group the evidence of faith he/she sees in the lives of the other group members. (Visitors and new members may not be able to affirm much about the others.)

What does it mean to you to be considered a son of God and a descendent of Abraham? Do you really believe that God sees you as a son and a child of Abraham...the father of faith? If you believed that deep in your soul, would it make any difference in your life, your prayers, your security, your joy, etc?

Action Step: Between now and the next time we meet, seriously consider what you are doing **by faith** in your life. Are you stepping out in any area of your life in a way that requires faith...serving God, witnessing for God, giving to God, etc? If not then ask God to put something in your life that will require faith to accomplish so that you can grow in this critical area. Come ready to talk about your life of faith the next time we meet.

Prayer: Take prayer reports and prayer requests. Pray daily that we will be men or women who like Abraham will live by faith have that faith credited to us as righteousness.

For our next study, read Galatians 4. Apply your reflection questions.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

(5 of 8 Lessons)

Week Five

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

Leaders Note: In this chapter of Galatians, Paul continues his argument for the gospel. He wants to nail down the superiority of grace and the New Covenant over Law. It is such an issue that he keeps reinforcing his argument for four chapters. In this section Paul continues to make scriptural arguments for the covenant of grace but also appeals to his personal relationship with the Galatians. He feels so strongly about the burden of living under law that he calls it slavery on several occasions. As a former Pharisee, Paul would know better than anyone the burden of self-righteousness. As you go through this chapter, please continue to emphasize the blessing of grace over Law and the great gift that we have in Jesus Christ.

Read Galatians 3:23 - 4:7

This section emphasizes the "before" and "after" aspects of the life of the believer. Before Jesus, he was under law, after Jesus he lives by grace. What differences do you see Paul refer to here between a life under law and a life under grace? What other differences can you think of?

Read 4:8-11

According to this section, what things were these believers turning back to that enslaved them before they came to Christ? Is it always wrong to consider one day more sacred than another so that special focus is given to our faith on those days? In what way might the designation of such days be wrong? See Romans 14:5-8.

Read 4:12-20

How is Paul using his relationship to try to win back the Galatians in this section? What does this text suggest about the need for intimate relationships in the body of Christ as something God can use to keep his people faithful? Does this suggest one of the values of small groups and does it suggest a reason that we should always be open to drawing others into our small group?

15 Minutes - Application

How has God used spiritual relationships to shape your life and to help ere ever been a time when God used one of your relationships to keep you or another person faithful to the Lord?

Prayer:

Pray for God to use you in keeping others faithful in the Lord. Take other prayer requests.

For Next Week reflect on Galatians 4:21-5:15 Apply your reflection questions.

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A Textual Study of Galatians

Week 6 of 8 Lessons

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

[Leaders Note: Paul continues to make his case for grace through faith in Jesus as the basis for our salvation rather than our own righteousness. He makes an analogy using historic figures from the life of Abraham. As you recall, God had made Abraham a promise of a son and innumerable descendants. As time passed, Sara still was unable to conceive and so she persuaded Abraham to impregnate Hagar, one of Sarah's servants. Under Hebrew law, slaves were property and multiple wives were permitted. The son of Hagar, Ishmael, would technically belong to Sarah and Abraham and so in this way Abraham would have his son. On a spiritual level, Abraham and Sarah determined to fulfill God's promise of a son in ordinary rather than supernatural ways. Rather than continuing to wait on God for Sarah to miraculously conceive in her old age, they chose to have a son by their own strength. However, when we move ahead in our own strength God receives no glory. We gain faith in our own abilities rather than God's. Things often go sour because we ran ahead of God.

In Abraham's case, Sarah and Hagar became enemies as Hagar gloated over her pregnancy and Sarah become jealous. Sarah drove her servant and her son Ishmael away and Abraham was once more without a son. In God's time, he granted Abraham a son through Sarah by his supernatural power. All of the promises to Abraham came through this "son of promise" rather than through the son born of the flesh. Paul argues that the Law is man's effort to gain God's promises through the natural means of our own efforts while grace is all the miraculous work of God. His point is that every promise of God comes not through our abilities but through God's power. Salvation is no different. Therefore, we must quit trying to save ourselves through works of the law and accept God's work through the cross of Christ. Paul argues that any time we trust in our own good works for salvation, we are in danger of falling from grace and choosing to live under law...by which no man can be justified. Therefore, we must always be clear about the source of our salvation. Paul will also go on to argue that this grace of God should produce a response of thankfulness in us that causes us to live for Jesus. If we continue willingly in sin, then something is wrong in our relationship with God and that relationship needs to be examined.

These are the truths from this section that you need to help your group discover in this study.]

Choose two or three questions from this section that you think are most important for your group.....

Read Galatians 4:21-31

Would someone summarize what happened between Sarah, Abraham, and Hagar in the book of Genesis? (Gen. 16).

In this section of Galatians, Paul makes an argument for grace based on analogy from the life of Abraham. How would you summarize Paul's argument for the covenant of grace in this section? What contrasts does he make between these two covenants?

How is living under law like slavery and living under grace like being a free man?

Why do you think those living under law always have a tendency to persecute those living under grace? Have you ever had the experience?

Read Galatians 5:1-6

Paul begins by saying, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." What is this "freedom" that Paul speaks about? Freedom from what? Freedom to do what?

What in the world is Paul talking about in verses 2-4? In this context what does circumcision represent and how would submitting to circumcision alienate a person from Christ?

What does verse 6 suggest about religious rituals as a means of salvation? If rituals don't bring us God's favor, what does? Are all religious customs and rituals unacceptable to God? What might make them unacceptable?

Read Galatians 5:7-12

How strongly does Paul feel about this issue of grace and law? How strongly should we feel about it?

Read Galatians 5:13-15

What is the main danger related to grace that Paul deals with in this little section?

15 Minutes - Application

In this text, what are some indicators that would tell us whether we are submitting to the flesh or to the Spirit of Christ? What will be the result of living a life submitted to the flesh?

What does serving and loving others look like in your life right now? Can we indulge the flesh in ways that seem to be moral but are still missing the mark? Do you have any areas in your life that are missing the mark? How will you change those?

Action Step: In verse 13, Paul tells us that our lives are to be marked by serving one another in love rather than indulging the flesh. Between now and the next time we meet, spend some time considering whether how you are serving others in love as an expression of Christ living in you. If you are not serving others in love (family, church, community), Make some decisions about how you willing increase the loving service in your life. Be prepared to talk about that the next time we meet.

Prayer:

Take prayer requests and prayer reports. You may want to ask if there are any areas in the lives of your group members where the flesh still seems to dominate. You may want to lay hands on those individuals and pray for God's power to deliver them from the power of the flesh and of Satan in that area of their life.

For next week, be reading Galatians 5:16-26

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A Textual Study of Galatians

Week 7 of 8 Lessons

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

30 Minutes - Study

Leader's Note:

In this section, Paul gets to the "so whats" of his arguments about grace and law. His main point is that when we live by grace we can be led by the Spirit and must be led by the Spirit so that we live a life worthy of the gift we have received. His point is that there should be ample evidence of God's grace and Spirit in the lives of believers. If that evidence does not exist, then something is amiss that needs to be dealt with. The rest of Galatians is full of practical issues and realities that define the healthy Christian life. Our goal in the rest of our study is to help our group members understand and live up to the privilege and standards of grace. **You may want to run off copies of the word definitions in this study so that you can pass them out to the group.**

Read Galatians 5:16-26

Paul begins this section by calling on us to "live by the Spirit." What does it mean to "live by the Spirit?" How do we do that?

Can we be Spirit led and still struggle with sin in our lives? (See 17b - 18) What is the difference between a Christian who has sin in his/her life but is Spirit led and one who has sin in his/her life but who is not Spirit led?

In verse 19, Paul lists a number of sins that may have been prevalent in the churches of Galatia. This, of course, is a partial list since he ends the list with "and the like." Let's spend a little time talking about the meaning of these words that are "works of the flesh" and what they might look like in the life of an individual in West Texas in the year 2005.

Let the group discuss these words. Use these definitions only if the group is unclear about their meanings.

Sexual Immorality - porneia - sexual activity and relationships outside of God's will

Impurity - akatharsia - a heart or mind opposed or indifferent to the holiness of God, lust

Debauchery - aselgeia - sin, especially related to sexual sin that is no longer hidden or covered.
Public, open sin that recruits others to join.

Idolatry - eidololatreia - the worship of things rather than God, trusting in things for identity, security, and meaning other than God.

Witchcraft - pharmakeia - destructive use of drugs, sorcery, magic, astrology, communication with spirits, etc.

Hatred - echthra - hatred between men, races, or social classes, prejudice, bigotry, etc.

Discord - eris - a quarrelsome nature, arguing, a contentious person who promotes discord

Jealousy - phthonos - bitterness caused by seeing someone else possess something you want.
A desire to possess it so that they cannot have it or simply to make sure they don't have it whether the jealous person possesses it or not.

Rage - thumos - uncontrolled anger

Selfish Ambition - eritheia - a desire to get ahead at all costs, a desire that manipulates and uses other people for personal gain and advancement, a self centered ambition that cares for no one else.

Dissensions - dichostasia - divisions, exclusivity, cliques, elitism, etc.

Factions - haireisis - heresy, divisions within the church based on theological issues, religious fragmentation,

Envy - chronic discontentment with what God has given us, resentment toward others perceived to have more

Drunkenness - methe - loss of physical, moral, or emotional control due to alcohol intake

Orgies - komos - wild and unrestrained partying such as Mardi Gras where the desires of the flesh are catered to.

What is Paul's warning to those who would live a lifestyle where these "works of the flesh" dominated? Is he writing to Christians or non-Christians?

In verse 22, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Talk about the meaning of these words and what they should look like in the life of a Christian.

Love - agape - a commitment to always act in the best interest of others for their greatest good
To love others as Christ has loved us.

Joy - chara -to enjoy and celebrate God and his blessings in every circumstance

Peace - eirene - serenity, tranquility, contentment, harmony

Patience - makrothumea - the willingness to wait and hope for the best, endurance in situations and relationships, lasting commitment, long suffering

Kindness - chrestotes - sympathetic temper that desires to be gentle and never cause pain to Another, graciousness.

Goodness - agathosune - generous, actively seeking to benefit others, the quality that drives a person to perform good deeds without compensation.

Faithfulness - pistis - reliability, trustworthiness, a man who keeps his word and commitments
covenant keeping

Gentleness - prautes - power under control, soothing, humility

Self Control - egkrateia - the ability to keep the desires of the flesh in check and to be led by the Spirit instead.

What does Paul say about these qualities in the Christian life?

10 Minutes – Application

What does it mean to crucify the sinful nature with its passions? How do you do that? Which fruits of the Spirit do you see developing in your life right now? Which ones need a lot of work? How do you loosen the grip of the flesh on your life if you are struggling with some of the works of the flesh?

Action Step: Between now and the next time we meet, take an honest inventory of the works of the flesh in your life and the fruits of the Spirit. Between you and God, determine if you need to do some serious spiritual work in any of these areas. You may want to ask for help/prayer when we get together next time.

Prayer:

Ask each person which fruit of the Spirit they desire to grow in the most. Then ask the person on their right to pray that God would grant that desire for him/her. Pray for that person daily until you meet again.

For next week be reading Galatians 6

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A Textual Study of Galatians

Week 8 of 8 Lessons

5 Minutes –Introductions and Visiting

10 Minutes – Action Step Follow-Up (Unless this is the first time you have met with your group)

What did you do in response to our last study? What fruit has that “doing” begun to bear in your life? If you did nothing in response to last week’s study, what do you think got in the way?

20 Minutes - Study

Leaders Note: In this last chapter of Galatians, Paul continues to talk about the practical outpourings of grace in our lives. In essence, grace calls us to spiritual priorities based on our relationship with Christ and on our relationship with his body, the church. As we finish this study, continue to emphasize that we are saved by grace not by works, but that our response to the love of God must show itself in life transformation because the love of Christ constrains us to love in return. If we have the Spirit of Christ we must change. If there is no change, we may not have the Spirit. Our role as spiritual leaders is to constantly call our people to be transformed by Christ. Please keep that call always before your group.

Read Galatians 6:1-18

In Galatians 6:1, Paul gives instruction about restoring a brother who is caught in a sin. Why did he give this task to those who are "spiritual"? What does Paul mean by "spiritual"?

What is implied by the word "gentle" in the restoration process? Why might that look like?

What warning does Paul have for those who are involved in restoring those caught in sin?

Summarize the spiritual principles that Paul states in vs. 7-10. What motivation do these truths give us for "Spirit-led" living? What does it say about that part of us that thinks we will always be the exception who "gets away" with bad decisions?

From this text, what was at the core of Paul's life and teaching? How should that principle look in our own lives?

In verse 15, Paul says that circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing, but the thing that counts in a new creation? What does Paul mean by that and how does that statement relate to his entire letter to the Galatians?

15 minutes – Application

When Paul speaks of a new creation, he is pointing to the transformation that should take place in the life of an individual that is saved by grace, filled with the Spirit and serving Jesus. How has Jesus transformed your life? What is being transformed now?

In vs. 17, Paul speaks of the fact that he “carries the marks of Jesus” on his body. The scars he has received from persecution, ship wrecks, hardships, etc. are evidence of his total commitment to Christ. Can you say that you carry any marks for the name of Jesus? In other words, what persecution or hardship have you ever undergone for the Name?

Action Step: Between now and the next time we meet, I want you to think about the principle of sowing and reaping that Paul lays out in 6:7-9. Spend some time concretely identifying the positive or negative things you are sowing in your spiritual life, in your family, in other relationships, in your finances and recreational time. Think down the road and imagine what you will be reaping from what you are sowing if God cannot be mocked. If you are sowing to the Spirit...then continue. If you are sowing to the flesh...you may need to repent and ask some others to hold you accountable to a new direction in your life.

Prayer: Take prayer reports and prayer requests. Pray that God would give you wisdom to know what you are sowing for your future and your families future in the things you are doing or not doing.

Announce what your next study will be.