

GALATIANS

for growing believers

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GALATIANS
for growing believers

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

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Progression Toward Maturity

- **Phase 1 – Relationship with God** – (Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:9) – Call of God is first to Himself - “Creation to Christ” - (Foundation for salvation)
- **Phase 2 – Position with Christ** (1 Cor. 1:30a) New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17) – “Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained” – (Foundation for Sanctification)
- **Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit** – (2 Cor. 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14) – **Introduction of the Church** - (Church is the Pillar and foundation of Truth – 1 Tim. 3:15) - “Acts for Growing Believers”
- **Phase 4 – Practical sanctification** - **Identification with Christ/Co-crucified with Christ/ Conformed to image of Christ** – (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29) – Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers, “Principles of Spiritual Growth”, God’s Masterpiece the Cross,” and “Looking unto Jesus” lessons
- **Conclusion** – **Recommended order of study**

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1 – Foundation for Salvation - (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following;

- The attributes of God - His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.

Phase 2 – Foundation for Sanctification - (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is, and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in phase 2 teaching, includes the following;

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ.
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit and introduction of the church – (“Acts for Growing Believers”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following.

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role.

Phase 4 – Practical sanctification; Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ – (“Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers,” Principles of Spiritual Growth, God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following.

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/ fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study:

Being that there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, therefore our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contain the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth unto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

1. Creation to Christ
2. Positioned in Christ
3. Acts for growing believers

4. Romans for growing believers
5. Ephesians for growing believers
6. 1 Corinthians for growing believers
7. 1 Timothy for growing believers
8. Titus for growing believers
9. 1 & 2 Thessalonians for growing believers
10. Revelation for growing believers
11. Galatians for growing believers
12. Colossians for growing believers
13. 2 Corinthians for growing believers
14. Philippians for growing believers
15. Philemon for growing believers
16. 2 Timothy for growing believers
17. 1 & 2 Peter for growing believers
18. 1, 2 & 3 John for growing believers
19. Hebrews for growing believers
20. James for growing believers
21. Jude for growing believers
22. The Old Testament for mature believers
23. Acts through Revelation, verse by verse for mature believers

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 1

A. The Founding of the Galatian Churches



- We will now study the letter that Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia.
- We first read of the churches in Galatia when we were studying the book of Acts
- It was Paul and Barnabas who originally proclaimed the gospel in Galatia during Paul's first missionary journey.
- Looking at the map and starting from Antioch, we see that Paul and Barnabas

started out by going to the island of Cyprus (**Acts 13:1-4**).

- From there they traveled to Perga; from Perga, they went inland and crossed the mountains and entered the area of Galatia, continuing on until they returned to Antioch (**Acts 13:14**).
- In Antioch, there were some who believed, but many did not, therefore Paul and Barnabas were forced to move on (**Acts 13:50-52; 14:1-7**).
- Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were the four main areas of Galatia where Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel Galatia during their first missionary journey.
- Then after teaching in Derbe, they went back the way they had come, once again visiting the places where people had believed. They taught the disciples and appointed elders in the new churches (**Acts 14:21-23**).
- These were probably the churches to whom Paul had sent this letter.



B. Paul's Reasons For Writing This Letter

- Paul's reason for writing this letter to the Galatian churches was very important.
- During the time that Paul was preaching the gospel, there was a group of Jews who had claimed to accept Jesus as their Savior.
- However they were adding to the gospel message and were teaching that the Gentiles, who trusted in Christ for salvation, would not be accepted by God unless they were circumcised and kept the Old Testament laws given by God to Israel (**Acts 15:1**).
- These false teachers hated Paul because he taught that Gentiles could be saved through faith in Christ alone.
- So most everywhere that Paul preached the gospel, a group of Jews would come and tell the new believers that Paul really wasn't an apostle and that his message was not true; they said that Paul's gospel was not from Jesus, but it was taught to him by men (**Acts 13:45; 14:2, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:12; 20:1, 19; 21:27; 23:12; 25:7**).
- Therefore, when Paul knew that the Jews were saying these things, and that the Galatian disciples believed them, he wrote this letter.
- Paul's great concern was that this false doctrine was encouraging people to try and live the Christian life in their own strength which could only end up in discouragement and disappointment; for it is impossible to live the Christian life in the power of the flesh.

C. Paul's Greeting

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.” Galatians 1:1-2

- Paul, knowing the Jews were saying that he was not a true apostle, began his letter to the Galatians by stating his credentials; indeed he was a true apostle, chosen by Jesus Christ Himself, and not by men (**I Corinthians 15:1-8**).
- Jesus had actually appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus; to the ground and was blinded. Later Jesus



directed Ananias to go and restore Paul's sight; for He had chosen Paul to be His servant (**Acts 9:15-16**).

- It was important for the Galatians to know that Paul's apostleship was genuine, for only then, would they be confident that his message was truly from God.

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” Galatians 1:3-5

- As was mentioned before, the Jews were telling the Galatians that they needed to keep the law in order to be saved and to please God.
- However, Paul reminds them that it was through God's grace alone that He sent Jesus to die for their sins, secure their salvation, and make them acceptable to God.
- An Old Testament physical picture of this spiritual truth could be the Israelites who were in bondage in Egypt. They could do nothing to help themselves. God chose a deliverer and sent him to deliver them. In a similar way, we were unable to help ourselves. Therefore, God sent Jesus to deliver us from sin, Satan, the world, and our flesh.
- The Israelite's efforts and works could not deliver them, nor can our efforts and works deliver us. (**Ephesians 2:1-9**)

D. Only One Gospel

“I Marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:6-7

- Paul said he was shocked that they would turn away from the good News so soon after hearing it, for a different gospel that really was a false gospel.
- Notice Paul's comment in verse 6; that by turning away from the true gospel, they were actually turning away (“removed”) from God Himself, for it is His message.
- It might be good to take note of the fact that by saying the Galatians were turning away from the gospel, Paul was not saying that they were turning

away from the gospel message for salvation, but rather he was speaking of sanctification (**Galatians 3:3**).

- Therefore, just as salvation is by grace alone, so sanctification, is by grace alone (sanctification can be defined in this way: “To be set apart for God’s possession and use,”) sanctification makes reference to the growth process.

E. Paul’s Warning To Those Who Preach a False Gospel

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Galatians 1:8-9

- Paul makes it very clear if anyone teaches that salvation or sanctification is by any other means than the grace of God, let him be accursed, doomed for destruction, let him go to hell.
- He then repeats it to emphasize how important the true gospel of grace is to God.

F. A Servant of Christ; Not a Man Pleaser

“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Galatians 1:10

- Paul now asks his readers to give careful consideration to who it is that he is seeking to please; men or God?
- He clearly states if it is man that he is seeking to please, then he is no longer a servant of Christ, for a servant’s desire is to please his master. Therefore, if Paul was seeking to please men, then he had become the servant of men rather than Christ.
- We read the following in **Acts 20:17-21**. *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the*

Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”
No thought here of pleasing man.

G. The Gospel Taught Directly to Paul

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11-12

- Paul wanted the Galatians to know that the gospel they had heard from him was not a message that originated with man.
- He did not receive it from man, nor was it taught to him by man; but Jesus Christ Himself revealed it to Paul.
- This message was the same message that Paul had taught to the Galatians; therefore, to reject the message of grace given to Paul by Jesus Christ was to reject Christ Himself.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 2

A. Paul, a True Apostle

- Apparently the Jewish false teachers who came to Galatia were saying that Paul was not a true apostle; they said that he had not seen Jesus and was not chosen by Him to be an apostle.
- Paul confirmed his apostleship in **Galatians 1:1**.
- The false teachers also were claiming that the gospel Paul was preaching did not come from God, but was taught to him by man.
- Paul denied this as well (**Galatians 1:11-12**).
- These false teachers were also making statements that the apostles in Jerusalem agreed with their teaching and that Paul's teaching was contrary to what was being taught in the Jerusalem church.

B. Reminder of a Past Life

- After denying these accusations, Paul went on to remind the Galatians of his past life before his conversion.

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” Galatians 1:13-14

- Paul mentions his life before conversion to make clear that he was such a hater of Christ, that he never would have accepted this teaching from any man.
- Also, the fact that Paul was so zealous in Judaism, and now this drastic change gives further proof that it was from God.

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son



in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”
Galatians 1:15-17

- There is no doubt that Paul fully recognized and rested in the supreme sovereignty of God.
- He mentions that even before he was born, God had set him apart to reproduce the life of Christ in him, and to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.
- He clearly states that it was by the grace of God that he was called, saved, sanctified, and sent out to preach.
- Paul also makes it clear that immediately after his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem to be with the Christians there, but rather went into Arabia.
- Paul’s point is that he was Christ-taught in the wilderness, not mentored by the apostles in Jerusalem.
- It’s interesting to ask the question, “Why didn’t God use other Christians to disciple Paul?”
- Very possibly it was because the truths regarding our identification with Christ had not been revealed to anyone at this point; it was Paul, to whom God first revealed these truths.
- Later, we will see that God sent Paul to teach these truths to the other apostles.

C. The Message Received Only From Christ

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.”
Galatians 1:18-20

- Paul continues on proving his point that neither his apostleship nor his message was received from the other apostles.
- However, after three years, Paul did go up to visit with Peter and James, and was with them for fifteen days.

“Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only,

That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.” Galatians 1:21-24

- After spending only fifteen days with Peter, Paul then had gone into Syria.
- Paul makes mention of the fact that none of the other churches in Judea knew him personally. However, they had heard of him and praised God for his salvation, his changed life, and they rejoiced that he was preaching the gospel which was indeed from God.

D. Visiting Jerusalem Fourteen Years Later

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.” Galatians 2:1-2

- Paul is again emphasizing the point that he did not get his message from men.
- From the time of his conversion, until seventeen years later, Paul had spent a total of fifteen days with the other apostles.
- Notice that Paul “*went up by revelation*”. God had revealed to him that he was to return to Jerusalem.



- God had given Paul a ministry to the Gentiles that He had not given to the others, as well as a message of grace that the others had not yet received.
- For Paul to continue teaching what had been revealed to him but not to the others, could have caused division.
- Therefore, God directed Paul to Jerusalem for the purpose of

meeting with the apostles and passing on to them the message that he had been given by God.

“But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:3-5

- The Judaizers were spreading lies that the apostles in Jerusalem agreed with their legalistic message and not with Paul’s teaching of grace.
- So Paul took this opportunity to tell the Galatians what really took place.
- Paul writes that neither he nor Titus, nor any of the other apostles agreed with the Judaizers; Christians are to live life by grace through faith from start to finish.
- The teaching of a pure grace gospel had been preserved.

E. Paul’s Message is of God

“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:” Galatians 2:6

- Paul is again stating to the Galatians that his apostleship and message is of God and the proof is that the other apostles added nothing to his message, but fully accepted it.

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:7-9

- Paul writes that not only did the other apostles not add anything to his message, but it was obvious to them that God had given Paul the ministry of reconciliation (**2 Corinthians 5:18**) to the Gentiles in a similar way, as He was using James, Peter and John to reach the Jews.

- Paul went on to say the apostles were convinced that what he was doing and preaching was from God, and therefore, were in full agreement with Paul and Barnabas' ministry among the Gentiles, however, they would continue focusing their ministry on the Jews.

“Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” Galatians 2:10

- The only thing that the apostles asked Paul to do was to remember the poor, for the church in Jerusalem was greatly persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, and was in great need.
- Paul responded by saying that he had planned to do this as well.
- Praise the Lord for preserving the grace message in the early church.
- Had the apostles sided with the Judaizers, we might all be trying to keep the law instead of walking in grace and resting in the finished work of the cross.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 3

A. Peter Visits Paul

- After Paul's visit with the apostles in Jerusalem, Peter made a return visit to Paul and the church at Antioch.

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” Galatians 2:11-13

- Thinking back to the book of Acts in chapter 9, verse 15; Paul was the first apostle that God revealed His will for Gentiles to be saved by grace, as well as the Jews.
- In Acts 10, God also revealed this to Peter.
- Therefore when Paul came to Jerusalem for the purpose of sharing his message with the other apostles, Peter affirmed that the Gentiles were to receive salvation by grace through faith.
- When Peter first came to Antioch, he ate and associated with the Gentile believers, but when some Jews came down to visit from Jerusalem, he stopped associating with them.
- Peter knew that as Christians, no one was required to keep the law to be accepted by God; however, these Jewish visitors were still living under the old Jewish legal system, and therefore, Peter was afraid of displeasing them, so while they were visiting, he went back to law-keeping.
- Peter was one of the main apostles and leaders in the Church; many looked up to him as a godly man and as an example of how they should live their lives.
- Therefore, when Peter reverted back to the law, others did, also, including Barnabas.

B. Peter Was Not Walking in the Gospel

“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” Galatians 2:14

- Paul implies that Peter was living in hypocrisy, not walking in accordance to the gospel.
- The gospel is a clear message that man is saved by grace and sanctified by grace.
- Peter was living his life in such a way that he was communicating by his actions that a Christian could be sanctified by keeping the law, for he was conducting his life before the Jewish visitors as one who is living under the old Jewish legal system.
- Therefore, his actions contradicted the gospel.
- Not only did Peter walk contrary to the gospel, but in so doing, he was also causing those who were weaker in faith to do the same.
- Those who are not clear regarding truth, and who do not know what it means to walk in the Spirit, will often look to others as an example of how to live the Christian life.
- If we are walking in the flesh and under the law, then those who are looking to us as examples will do the same.
- Peter’s contradiction of the gospel was seen by everyone and followed by some, therefore, to bring them all back to the truth, Paul rebuked Peter publicly (**I Timothy 5:20**).

C. Man Is Not Justified By Works

“We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:15-16

- Paul writes that man is not justified by works of the law, but rather through faith in Christ alone.

- His phrase, “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” implies that it doesn’t matter whether we are Jew or Gentile, no man will ever be justified by keeping the law.
- The law can only show us that we are sinners, it cannot give us a right standing before God, much less the power to live a holy life (**Romans 3:20**).
- Since we were all born sinners with a sin nature (**Romans 5:12**) believers who continue to try and keep the law will ultimately fail.

D. Justification Is Only Through Christ

“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.” Galatians 2:17

- Justification (salvation) is only through faith in Christ and not through the law.
- But after obtaining justification by faith, to continue walking in the flesh and under the law is sin.
- As believers continue to live under the law, the law will arouse and expose our sinfulness (**Romans 7:5**).
- It will appear as if Christ came to lead us into sin, rather than deliver us from sin (**Romans 7:15**).
- For a believer to continue living under the law is to never realize all that is ours in Christ, and to live a carnal life as if we were never saved.



E. In Christ, Sin Is Paid For

“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” Galatians 2:18

- In Christ the penalty for our sin has been paid, therefore, we have died to the law. In Christ, the law can no longer condemn us, for Christ died for all the sin that the law would otherwise condemn.
- But, if through unbelief, we do not appropriate our identification with Christ and go back to law-keeping, then we again make ourselves to be sinners.
- For failure to see ourselves crucified, dead, and risen with Christ, is to continue walking under the power of sin.

- If we walk in the flesh under the law, the law will continue to find us guilty sinners and we will never experience the deliverance that is ours in Christ.

F. Dead To the Law

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” Galatians 2:19

- We are dead to the law (**Romans 7:4**).
- The law demands righteousness. It demands that all sin be punished and condemned (**Romans 8:1**).
- Christ as our substitute so fully fulfilled the demands of the law, that now rather than condemning us, the law must pardon us (**Romans 8:4**). In Christ, the law no longer has jurisdiction over our lives.
- Therefore, it is now possible to live for God by the power of the Spirit.



“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

- It is interesting to break this verse down.
- “I am crucified with Christ.” The “I” mentioned here is the “old me” who was crucified with Christ (**Romans 6:6**).
- “Nevertheless I live.” This “I” is the “new me” (**I Corinthians 5:18**).
- “Yet not I;” the “I” mentioned here is again the “old man.”
- “But Christ lives in me;” once again, Paul refers to the “new me.” This is God’s ultimate purpose in all Christians’ lives; to reproduce the life of Christ in us (**Colossians 1:27**).
- Please note that now it is no longer I, but Christ!
- The moment we came to the saving knowledge of Christ, **I Corinthians 1:30** tells us that we were placed into Christ. When Christ went to the cross, we went to the cross; in Him, we were crucified with Christ, and now the Holy Spirit is molding us into the image of Christ who is our life (**I Corinthians 3:18**).
- Finally Paul tells us that we “live by faith of the son of God.”

- As long as our bodies are alive, we live by faith in our position in Christ and all that His work has accomplished.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21

- This verse puts into perspective the foolish thinking that we are not only declared righteous, but also made righteous by the law.
- Paul’s point is to believe our righteousness is based on our own good works is to despise the grace of God.
- If it is possible to be declared righteous and live a righteous life by our works, then there was no reason for Christ to die; for His death would not have accomplished anything.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 4

A. Paul Contrasts the Galatians' Faith

- Paul spent the first two chapters proving that the message he preached was really from God.
- In chapter 3, he now reveals to the Galatians how their faith had changed since they had first come to Christ.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” Galatians 3:1

- In the flesh, we lose the ability to discern spiritual truth (**I Corinthians 2:14**).
- Paul’s point is that the Galatians clearly saw, understood, and were saved by the gospel of grace, but now they had been bewitched (tricked).

B. Four Questions

- Paul asks four questions in order to bring the Galatians back to the truth.

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Galatians 3:2-3

- Paul first asks, “How did you receive the Holy Spirit? By faith, or by keeping the law?” The implied answer is they received the Spirit by simply believing that Jesus died on the cross for their sins. It was by faith, not by works of the law.
- Therefore, Paul makes clear that since salvation came by faith, to now believe that our sanctification will be by law-keeping is foolishness.
- Paul is pointing out that we could no more live the Christian life in our own strength than we could have saved ourselves.
- But now having been saved by grace through faith, is it our flesh (the wretched evil that lives within each of us) that will make us holy and acceptable to God?

- Paul wants the Galatians to understand that we began our Christian lives by faith, and now we are to live our Christian lives by faith (**Colossians 2:6**).
- We are to stand (**I Corinthians 16:13**) and walk (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) and live (**Galatians 2:20**) by faith. Good works will be the fruit of faith, not the means of it (**Romans 1:5**).
- As we know, understand and believe in our co-crucifixion with Christ, we become conditionally free from the reign of the flesh and begin to walk in the Spirit.
- As we walk in the Spirit, good works will be the outflow of the Spirit's filling our lives with the life of Christ (i.e. conforming us more to the image of Christ).

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.” Galatians 3:4

- The Galatian believers may have been suffering persecution by unbelieving Jews; was it all for nothing?
- They were persecuted for their faith in Christ (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:5.

- Before the Word of God was written, God often proved the truth of the gospel message through miracles.
Paul asks the Galatians to consider the miracles that the Spirit had done and was doing among them: “Is He doing them because of their diligent law-keeping, or because of their faith in Christ?”

C. Proof

- Paul now gives proof that both justification and sanctification are by faith alone.

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen

through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” Galatians 3:6-9

- The Judaizers were pointing to the law that God gave through Moses saying that it must be kept in order to be accepted by God.
- Therefore, Paul looks back to Abraham, who lived before Moses, and reminds the Galatians of God’s acceptance that he received through faith and not through works of the law. (**Genesis 15:1-6**)
- The Judaizers taught that those who were circumcised (**Acts 15:1**) and kept the law were the true children of Abraham.
- Therefore, Paul points out that Abraham was saved through faith, and all who walk by faith are the true children of Abraham, not those who are seeking acceptance through circumcision and works.
- Paul now reveals why neither Abraham, nor anyone else can be justified through the law.

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Galatians 3:10

- Paul clearly states that no one can be justified by the law because no one can keep the law perfectly.
- Therefore, to put ourselves under the law is to put ourselves under its curse.
- Because we can’t keep it perfectly, the law must constantly condemn us.



“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:11-14

- Paul writes that God has clearly shown that man is justified through faith and not by works.

- It's interesting to consider that all men are cursed by the law, for none can keep it perfectly.
- Also, God has shown that man is justified by faith and not by works. Paul goes on to say that Christ has set us free from the curse of the law. He took all of our punishment.
- Now, it is through faith in what Christ has done on our behalf that saves and sanctifies us; not through law-keeping which only condemns
- Notice the contrast here between law and grace.
- Law is man working for God, but ending in condemnation.
- Grace is God working for man by providing our salvation and sanctification through Christ's work on our behalf.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 5

A. A Reminder

- Just a reminder that false teachers had come in and were deceiving the Galatians. No longer were they believing in a pure grace message, but were mixing the keeping of the law with the grace of God.
- In the last lesson, Paul pointed out that Abraham was justified and accepted by God through faith before he was ever commanded to take up circumcision, or before the law was even given to Israel.
- Now Paul gives more proof as to why the law has nothing to do with God's acceptance of us.

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Galatians 3:15-16

- During the time that Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians, the law said that if two people made a formal agreement or promise about a certain issue, once the covenant was made it could not be changed.



- Likewise Paul writes, if the covenants between men are this binding, how much more would be the promises of God?
- For God did indeed promise to Abraham that through his seed (Christ) all nations would be blessed; through Christ alone salvation would be available to all.

B. God's Promise

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:17-18

- God promised to Abraham that through his seed, all nations would be blessed, and then 430 years later, God gave the law through Moses.
- Paul is stating that just because God gave the law, this did not mean that God's promise was canceled or done away with.
- The law is a contractual agreement between two parties. In order for the agreement to take place, both parties have to keep their part.
- Therefore, in order for man to be justified by the law, he must not break it. But all men have broken the law, and therefore they cannot be justified through keeping the law, for man has failed to keep his part under the law.
- But, salvation by faith in God's promise is different. It is based solely on the faithfulness of the One Who made the promise; God.
- Therefore, because God can never fail, His promises will always remain, and our receiving of the benefits is not based on our faithfulness, but on God's.
- Here in chapter 3, Paul is teaching that it is not the keeping of the law that enables believers to receive the Holy Spirit, experience the miracles of God, or be accepted as righteous before God.
- He also has shown that the law can only condemn those who try and keep it. And he makes clear that God's promise of justification by faith to Abraham still stands. It was not canceled out by the giving of the law.
- Paul now answers the logical question, "What is the use of the law?"

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Galatians 3:19

- If someone promises something that we really don't want or need, how important is that promise to us? Not very important.
- That's how God's promise of salvation by faith has been to the world.
- Man is a sinner and is so spiritually blind, that he does not know he is a sinner and has need of a savior.
- This is why God gave the law; without the law, man is unaware of his sinfulness.
- God gave a law that man has been unable to keep, thereby causing him to realize his need of a savior.
- Paul reveals that the law was given only until Christ came, because Christ fulfilled the law on our behalf, thereby freeing us from its curse because of our inability to keep it.

C. We Don't Need a Mediator

“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” Galatians 3:20

- Paul is showing the difference between the law and God's promise.
- With the law, there was a mediator between God and man, (Moses) and both sides had to keep their part of the agreement.
- But with God's promise of salvation by faith, there is only one side that needs to be upheld; God's promise, and there is no need for a mediator.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” Galatians 3:21

- The law is not contrary to the promises of God, for God did not give the law to make men righteous.
- But the law was given to show men that they are unrighteous and they need God's promises.
- Therefore, the law compliments and reveals the need for God's grace; it does not contradict.

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Galatians 3:22

- The law was not given as a means to life and righteousness, but as a means to death; to show us our present state of separation from God for the purpose of turning us to Christ through whom we may receive eternal life and holiness.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 6

A. No Longer Under the Law

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:23-25

- Paul continues showing God’s use of the law in the lives of the Israelites.
- The phrase “before faith came,” refers to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
- Before Jesus came, died for our sins, and was resurrected, the Jews were under the law.
- God’s purpose for the law was to reveal man’s sinfulness so that he would be brought to Christ by grace through faith.
- Now, Paul states, since Christ has already come and paid for man’s sins, there is no longer a need for that which was to point him to Christ.
- The phrase, “the law was their schoolmaster,” refers to God using the law to teach man that he was a sinner.
- God gave the law in order to prepare man to hear and believe the gospel.

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26

- Remember, the Judaizers were trying to put the Gentiles under the law.
- Paul tells the Galatians in verses 23-25 that originally God gave the law to the Jews in order to show them their need for Christ, but now since Christ has come there is no longer any need for the law.
- Now in verse 26, Paul states that the Galatian Christians (being Gentiles) have also become the adult children of God through faith in Christ, who also are no under the law.

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:27-28

- The moment that we believe that Christ's death on the cross paid for our sins, the Holy Spirit places us into Christ and we become joint heirs with Jesus (**Romans 8:17**). Everything that He is and everything that He has is ours.
- Therefore, His relationship to the law has become our relationship to the law.
- Christ has fulfilled the law and is at the right hand of God; He is not under the law.
- Paul goes on to say that the same is true for all believers. We are all in Christ and free from the law regardless of our nationality, social status, or gender.

“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:29

- God promised Abraham that through his seed (a reference to Jesus Christ), salvation would come to the world. Abraham believed God's promise and was justified, declared righteous (**Genesis 15:6**).
- All those who like Abraham, place their faith and trust in Abraham's seed will also be declared righteous, just as Abraham.
- Keep in mind that all the earthly blessings that God promised to Abraham were only for Israel; those are not our inheritance. However, spiritual blessings are ours in Christ.
- It's interesting to consider that God told Abraham the Deliverer would be his seed. As we saw in verse 27, at salvation we are placed into Christ and thereby become Abraham's seed, just as Christ was Abraham's seed.

B. Children of God

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.” Galatians 4:1-2

- In Paul's day in rich families, the father would choose one of his slaves to teach his children.
- At a designated time, that child would no longer be under the “slave-teacher,” but would become an adult-child in his father's home and begin to carry adult-like responsibilities.

- While the child was under the authority of his “slave-teacher,” he really was not much different from the other slaves, for he, too, was told what he could and could not do.

“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:3-5

- When God determined that it was time, He sent His Son to be born as a Jew under the law to deliver all who were under the curse of the law in order that we all might be made the sons of God.
- Paul wanted the Galatians to realize that they had received something much greater than living under the law; as believers, they had been made the adult children of God.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Galatians 4:6-7

- Paul goes on to say because we have now been made the children of God, He has sent His Holy Spirit to indwell us and it is the Holy Spirit who testifies to our hearts and gives us the confidence to call God, Father (**Romans 8:16**).
- Because we are no longer servants and are now God’s children, we are therefore heirs of God through Jesus Christ (**Romans 8:17**).
- In Christ, man has been raised above the law; it is foolish to place ourselves back under it.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 7

A. No Longer Slaves

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” Galatians 4:7-11

- Paul reminds the Galatians that they are no longer slaves, for they have been made the children of God.
- Paul then asks, “When you didn’t know God, you served idols that really weren’t gods, but now that you have come to know the one true God, how is it that you are once again enslaved to that which has no power to save or make holy?”
- The Galatians had turned from their freedom in Christ and what He had accomplished on their behalf, and had placed themselves back under the law by observing special days of worship, just like the Jews in the Old Testament, hoping that it would make them acceptable to God.
- Paul said that their actions caused him to wonder if he had labored in vain, as they were drifting from the truth that he had taught them.

“Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Galatians 4:12

- In writing this letter to the Galatian believers, Paul was writing to Gentiles who were never under the old Jewish legal system, but who were now placing themselves under it.
- On the other hand, Paul was a Jew who had been under the bondage of the law, but now was free in Christ.
- Therefore, Paul writes, “I beg you, be as I am (free from the law), for I am like you are (Gentiles who were never under it).”

B. Walking In the Flesh

“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Galatians 4:13-16

- Paul reminds these Galatian believers of how they had originally received him when he first came with the gospel.
- Paul reminded them that even though he had been sickly and somewhat of a physical burden to them, they did not reject him, but received him as an angel, and considered themselves to be truly blessed by his presence and teaching.
- Paul said that they received him and loved him so much that if it were possible, they would have “plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul.”
- But now their attitude toward him had changed.
- This is a great example of what the flesh will do in our churches.
- In the beginning the Galatians were excited about the gospel and the grace of God that had saved them.
- But, now they were walking in the flesh; unable to discern truth, and therefore had turned away from the grace of God to the law, and no longer considered Paul to be their great friend (**Ephesians 4:17-18**).
- The flesh will have the same affect in our lives if we walk in the vanity of our minds. It will also turn us from grace and put us back under the law, for it is seeking self-exaltation, with no thought or desire to exalt Christ.

C. False Teachers Only Exalt Themselves

“They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you”. Galatians 4:17-18

- Paul writes that the false teachers were working hard to have an effect in the lives of the Galatians, but it is not a good affect.
- Their affect on the Galatians was not for their spiritual well being and their true purpose was to exalt themselves.
- Paul said that it was good to be greatly affected, but only if it was by truth.
- As teachers of the Word, if we are walking in the flesh our teaching will not be according to truth and our purpose will be to exalt ourselves; however, if the Spirit is leading, Christ will be exalted and we will be led into truth (**John 16:13-14**).

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you”. Galatians 4:19-20

- Here Paul expresses the great love and concern that he had for the Galatian believers.
- Just as it is physically painful for a woman to bring a child into the world, Paul said that it was spiritually painful for him to watch the Galatians struggle and be led astray by false teaching.
- He strongly desired to be with them personally and to see them come back to truth and be molded into the image of Christ.
- In the Spirit, we will have great concern for the spiritual condition of our brothers and sisters in Christ, but in the flesh our concern will be for ourselves.
- In the Spirit, we like Paul, will long to see the Holy Spirit reproducing the life of Christ in others, but in the flesh, deep down in our hearts, we really hope they fail so that we look better.

D. We Are Acceptable Through Christ

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which

now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.” Galatians 4:21-28

- Paul is asking, “You who want to be under the law, don’t you understand what God was saying through the lives of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, and Ishmael?”
- Originally, God promised Abraham that through his line the Deliverer would come and be a blessing to all nations.
- Abraham tried to bring about God’s promise through his own effort when he had a child with Hagar. Abraham tried to do God’s work in man’s way.
- But, God did not accept Abraham’s help to bring about the promise and rejected Ishmael as the son through which the Deliverer would come. (Note **Genesis 22:2**; God refers to Isaac as Abraham’s only son. He did not recognize Ishmael, the son of the flesh.)
- God then miraculously brought about His promise in His own power by causing old Sarah to give birth to Isaac.
- Just as God did not accept Abraham’s self-effort to fulfill God’s promise, it is not our self-effort to keep the law that is pleasing to God, but it is what He has done through His Son on our behalf that makes us acceptable.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” Galatians 4:29

- *He that was born after the flesh* is referring to Ishmael and *he that is born after the Spirit* is referring to Isaac.
- Just as Ishmael was jealous and persecuted Isaac, so now, during the time of Paul, the Jews who were under the law were persecuting the early Church.
- We have seen clearly through the book of Acts that during the time of the early Church it was those who claimed to keep the law that persecuted Paul and the Christians (**2 Timothy 3:12**).
- So, it is today; it is those who are endeavoring to live out the Christian life in their own strength who are rejecting and fighting against the message of grace.

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” Galatians 4:30-31

- God told Abraham to cast out Hagar and her son, for His promises regarding the Deliverer would not come through her son but would come through the one that He had promised.
- God desires that we, also, cast out our endeavoring to earn God’s acceptance through the keeping of the law.
- Our inheritance comes through the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We, as children of God, are free to receive the benefits of God’s promise that He miraculously brought about by His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- God does not expect us to receive our inheritance through man’s futile efforts to keep that which should be cast away.

GALATIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 8

A. Stand Firm

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1

- In chapter 4, Paul explained that as children of God, we have been freely born into His family by His grace, and have been set free from the law and our works.
- Therefore, Paul writes since we have been liberated from the bondage of the law, why go back to it; rather stand firm by faith, in the freedom which we have already received.
- In the Old Testament, after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they did not have food or water and they wanted to return to slavery in Egypt.
- For a believer who has been set free in Christ and accepted by God, it would be extremely foolish to return to living under the law and attempting to please God by human effort.

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:2-4

- To trust in our ability to keep the law in order to obtain eternal life and gain God’s acceptance, is to believe that Christ’s death on the cross is of no benefit to us.
- Paul clearly states that those who are depending upon circumcision or any other work of the law, in order to be made acceptable to God needs to realize that they are placing themselves under the whole law.
- In order to be acceptable to God, one must keep the entire Jewish legal system.
- By only keeping part of the law is to break the law. If we have broken any part of the law then the law condemns us.
- Therefore, it is impossible for man to be justified through keeping the law (**Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16**).

- Paul then writes that anyone who is seeking to be justified by the law has fallen from God’s grace; God’s grace will have no effect on our lives.

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Galatians 5:5-6

- As we walk by faith, trusting, resting, and depending on the Lord, the Spirit will conform us more to the image of Christ, and will thereby enable us to live holy and righteous lives that are in accordance with our new position in Him.
- In Christ, circumcision and keeping the law is of no importance, but only faith in all that Christ’s finished work entails, both as our substitute and as our life.
- Doing good things does not make us holy and righteous.
- However, as we walk in the Spirit by faith in Christ’s finished work, we will be molded into the image of Christ and live holy and righteous lives; good works will be a by-product of the Christ-life.

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.” Galatians 5:7-8

- Paul writes that the Galatians had started well; they originally had been saved by faith in Christ’s death for them, knowing they could not save themselves.
- But Paul asked who turned them from the truth? Who turned them from resting in what Christ did on their behalf, to trusting in their own ability to keep the law?
- Law-keeping in order to please God is not from God.
- God, Who called and saved us, has not given us this teaching, for this teaching is contrary to the truth of God’s grace (**I Thessalonians 5:24**).
- Once we begin walking in the flesh, we turn from God’s grace, and become focused on ourselves and our ability to keep the law.

B. False Teaching Spreads

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Galatians 5:9

- **John 3:6** tells us, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

- Once the Galatians placed themselves under the law, they were in danger of having that false teaching spread throughout all the churches in Galatia. The only thing the flesh will ever produce is more of the same.

“I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.” Galatians 5:10

- Paul’s confidence was in God and not in himself. He believed that because God is faithful, He would bring the Galatians back to the truth and that God would take care of those who were leading them astray.
- We cannot force anyone to do or believe anything, but as we walk in the Spirit, we will be able to keep pointing people to the truth, all the while trusting God to reveal it to them.

“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.” Galatians 5:11

- It would appear that the false teachers lied about Paul and said that he, too, had begun to preach the law.
- Paul said that if it was so, why did they still persecute him? It was because of the cross that they were persecuting them.
- If he had cease preaching the cross, there would no longer be a conflict.
- Today, the cross is still the cause of conflict in the Church. The cross is not only where Christ died for man, but also where man died with Christ (**Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20**). This teaching causes great conflict in the church because it teaches the sovereignty of God, rather than the sovereignty of man.

“I would they were even cut off which trouble you.” Galatians 5:12

- The context has been circumcision and living under the law.
- It appears that Paul was being sarcastic by saying, “If those guys think that circumcision is so important, then why don’t they mutilate themselves like the priests of other religions do in order to please their gods?”

GALATIANS FOR NEW BELIEVERS LESSON 9

A. Called To Liberty

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Galatians 5:13-14

- The Christian life boils down to one of two things; either we walk in the flesh or in the Spirit.
- Paul has spent almost five chapters making it clear to the Galatians that they are not under the law and they should not live as if they are.
- Now Paul writes that they have been called unto liberty/freedom; however, they are not to use their liberty as license to live in the flesh.
- There are two basic misconceptions regarding God’s grace that many people make.
- The first is to think that grace teaching says it’s ok to live any way we want; Paul is addressing this misconception in this verse.
- The second mistake people make is to think that grace teaching makes for lazy Christians. Paul, the original grace teacher, makes this statement in **I Corinthians 15:10**, *“I labor more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”*
- It’s interesting to ponder Paul’s statement here, that, “through love, Christians are to serve one another.”
- Putting all this into perspective, Paul is saying that the grace of God will give us the power and desire to love and serve one another, rather than live for selfish unproductive lives.

B. The Works of the Flesh

“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Galatians 5:15

- Any believer who is living under the law is walking in the flesh and the deeds of the flesh are envy, strife, jealousy, anger, and divisions.
- Therefore, Paul is saying if we continue trying to keep the law in the power of the flesh, all we can expect are these deeds of the flesh.
- The end result will not be unity, but discouragement, bitterness, and division.

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

- Paul clearly states that those who walk in the Spirit will not carry out the desires of the flesh.
- This is a verse upon which the practical Christian life is based.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:17

- Paul reveals the battle which is constantly taking place within each born again believer. “The flesh is warring against the Spirit.” (**Romans 7:23**).
- The question is, “What are they fighting over?”
- They are fighting over the soul (mind, will, emotions). If the flesh is influencing my mind, will, and emotions, then it will control my body, my behavior (where I go, what I look at, what I listen to, what I say, etc.). However, the opposite is true when the Spirit is influencing my soul.
- Keep in mind that just as it is impossible to fulfill the lust of the flesh while walking in the Spirit, so it is impossible to manifest the fruit of the Spirit while walking in the flesh.
- So the battle is on, but the good news is that the battle is not ours, it’s God’s, and our part is to believe that the flesh has been positionally crucified (**Romans 6:6**); as we by faith rest in the truth of Romans 6:6, the Holy Spirit will hold the flesh in the place of death and the Spirit will gain influence and control over our lives.

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18

- As mentioned above, when we, by faith, rest in our co-crucifixion with Christ and the Holy Spirit gains influence over our soul (mind, will, and emotions), we will find ourselves walking free from any desire to live under the law.
- When we walk in the flesh, we will continue to live under the law and the end result will be self-condemnation. For no man can keep the whole law.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

- Animals don’t think about how to act; they just act according to their nature.
- It is the same with our flesh, and here Paul lists the works of our flesh.
- The flesh’s main purpose and motivation is to protect itself, glorify itself, exalt itself, please itself, etc.
- If we closely look at each of these manifestations of the flesh, we can trace every one of them back to its motivation of self-preservation.”
- In the flesh, even the things we do that look holy and spiritual are really motivated by some form of self- preservation or self-glorification and are thereby unacceptable to God.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

- So the flesh acts according to its nature, and likewise, the Spirit according to its nature (**Romans 8:5**).
- It’s interesting that many think Paul is listing the things we should try to do and that which we need to work and pray diligently for.
- However, Paul is merely stating a fact; whichever one (flesh or Spirit) is the source of our life, our actions will be accordingly.
- When we walk in the flesh, it controls our soul (mind, will, emotions) and body (behavior) and will carry out the deeds of the flesh.
- But, as we walk by faith in the Spirit, He will control our soul and body and cause the fruit of the Spirit to be manifested in our lives.

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” Galatians 5:24-26

- “They that are Christ’s” refers not only to salvation, but to spiritual Christians who are walking by faith in their co-crucifixion with Christ, and the Spirit is drawing their souls (mind, will, and emotions) to Christ; they are captivated with Christ; occupied with Christ; abiding in Christ; looking unto Jesus.
- As we, by faith, live in this truth and all that it entails, we become conditionally free from the reign of our flesh and begin to walk in the Spirit, *no longer desiring vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*
- And those who are captivated with Christ are living in the truth that they are dead to the affections and lusts of the flesh.

GALATIANS FOR NEW BELIEVERS

LESSON 10

A. How Christians Should Be Living

- In this last chapter of Galatians, we notice that Paul is giving some instructions for Christian living.
- It is important to keep in mind all that we have studied in the first five chapters.
- Basically, the Christian life boils down to either walking in the flesh or in the Spirit.
- In the flesh, our lives will manifest the deeds of the flesh; however, in the Spirit, the fruit of the spirit will be manifested and it will be possible to live out what we are about to study in chapter 6.
- In studying the book of Galatians, many people get confused and miss the truth of Galatians 5, skipping to the instruction of chapter 6. They attempt to live it out the Christian conduct of chapter 6 in the power of their own flesh, which will result in discouragement and disappointment and guilt.
- It is impossible to live the Christian life that Paul lays out in chapter 6, 7 in the power of the flesh.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
Galatians 6:1

- Paul previously wrote that if we were to walk in the Spirit, we would in no way fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- However, this is a life-long process; and along the way in the process, we will find ourselves in the flesh and sin will result. So, Paul tells us how it is to be dealt with.
- When we or another brother is walking in sin, Paul writes that those who are walking in the Spirit should restore such a one to walking in the Spirit.
- In other words, those who the Holy Spirit is leading should go to those in the church who the flesh is leading and point them to the truth regarding the source of their sin, the flesh and their need to appropriate Romans 6 and their co-crucifixion with Christ.

- As they appropriate this truth by faith, they will become free from the reign of their flesh and go on walking in the Spirit.

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

- This is only possible as we walk in the Spirit. For in the flesh, we only care for ourselves which will result in judging and criticizing the brethren, rather than bearing their burdens.
- But in the Spirit, the true love of God will be experienced by us and manifested through us, which will enable us to care for those who are struggling and desire to see them restored.

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” Galatians 6:3

- This is life in the flesh. We compare ourselves against ourselves and begin to think rather highly of ourselves; all the while we are deceiving ourselves.
- In **Romans 7:18**, Paul tells us that *in my flesh dwells no good thing*.
- As we begin to clearly understand that there is no good in man apart from God, God’s grace will give us a right perspective on others (**2 Corinthians 5:16**: *“Hence forth know we no man after the flesh.”*).
- Paul is saying that every person who walks in the flesh will become inflated with self-importance and therefore is walking in deception.

“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” Galatians 6:4

- As we, by faith, walk in the Spirit, the life of Christ will be lived out through us, thereby showing forth the work that the Spirit is doing in our lives.
- As we see the life of Christ is being lived out in and through us, we have reason to rejoice, though, not because we have accomplished anything, but because He has done it all.
- Our rejoicing then will be in the work that He is doing in us rather than as a result of our flesh comparing our good deeds with the lives of others.

“For every man shall bear his own burden.” Galatians 6:5

- Walking in the flesh is miserable and will make for a discouraged and disappointing life, as well as a hard and stressful life which will eventually become burdensome.
- But, God has provided everything we need in order to live a godly and righteous life (**2 Peter 1:3; I Thessalonians 5:24**).

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Galatians 6:6-8

- Once again, Paul makes mention of walking in the Spirit or walking in the flesh.
- A man in the Spirit will be encouraged by the truth that he is receiving from others, and out of thankfulness to God, there will be a desire to give back to those whom God is using to teach him.
- But, a man in the flesh is only thinking about himself and his earthly temporal life. He won't care about the truth that others are teaching him and therefore, will have no desire to help them in any way.
- Paul goes on to warn the Galatians not to be deceived, for God won't be tricked; all believers who walk in the flesh will reap a fleshly harvest that will have no eternal value.
- Those who walk in the Spirit will receive a spiritual harvest that will last for eternity.

B. Do Good To All Men

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:9-10

- In the flesh, our motive for doing good will be selfish.
- However, in the Spirit, our motive will be the love of Christ flowing through us; is part of the fruit of the Spirit and will thereby be manifested naturally as we walk in the Spirit.

- We may not always immediately see the outcome from our love motivated well-doing, but Paul said, rest assured, as we continue to walk in the Spirit and do good, the day will come when we will see God using our well doing to build up His Church.
- Therefore, in the Spirit, we will look for opportunities to do good to all men, especially to those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and God will use it for our good, His glory, and the benefit of others.

“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.” Galatians 6:11-13

- As Paul gives his closing remarks, he again refers to the false teachers that he had mentioned earlier in this letter.
- He said that the reason these false teachers were emphasizing circumcision was because they wanted to please the Jews who were persecuting the Church.
- He also mentioned that the false teachers didn’t keep the law themselves, but they wanted the Galatians to become circumcised so they could be credited for convincing the Gentiles to become circumcised.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” Galatians 6:14-15

- The false teachers and other Jews endeavored to keep the law in order to gain praise and approval from God and man.
- Paul writes that he himself did not boast in anything except the cross of Christ; the work that Jesus did on our behalf on the cross.
- He went on to say that it was through our co-crucifixion with Christ that we are crucified to the world and the world is crucified unto us.
- This means that we have no desire for the world and the world has no power over us.
- The work of Christ on the cross accomplished everything we need for life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).

- In dying as our substitute, Christ delivered us from the penalty of sin; we were also identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, and have been made free from the power of sin and the reign of the flesh.
- Paul concludes by saying that in Christ, we are a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), and neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value regarding either our eternal destination or living the Christian life.

“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” Galatians 6:16

- Only those who are trusting and resting upon Christ’s work for their salvation and sanctification can experience the peace and mercy of God.
- To rest in anything else is to be under the law and no man can find peace or mercy under the law. The law produces frustration, guilt, and self-condemnation.

“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.” Galatians 6:17-18

- The false teachers and Jews glorified in the mark of circumcision, as they thought that it helped to make them acceptable to God, but Paul states that in his body he bore the marks of the Lord Jesus; the marks from being stoned and beaten for his faith in Christ.

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