

A red padlock is the central focus, hanging from a silver chain. The padlock has a heart-shaped cutout in the center and the word "GALATIANS" engraved in white capital letters on its right side. The background is a blurred blue and grey gradient.

FREE INDEED

**6 STUDIES FOR GROUPS,
INDIVIDUALS, AND 1:1**

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Welcome to Galatians, “Free Indeed”

If you're using these studies in a **Bible Study Group**, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a **Bible Study Group Leader** please don't feel that your group needs to answer every question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from slightly different perspectives. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies **individually**, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you - with God's people - might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading:

The Message of Galatians (Bible Speaks Today)

Galatians (Tyndale)

Galatians (NIV Application Commentary)

John Stott

R Alan Cole

Scot McKnight

No Other Gospel

Galatians 1:1 - 24

1. What is the most memorable letter you have every received? What makes it stand out in your mind?
2. As a teenager did you tend to be a law-keeper, a law-breaker, or a law-maker?
How has this changed as you've got older?
3. A friend asks you, "What makes Christianity different to all the other religions?" How do you respond?

Read Galatians chapters 1 - 6

As you read, note any recurring words, themes and arguments.

4. What issues, theological or otherwise does Paul seem to be addressing for the Galatian Christians?
5. Summarise the message of the letter in one sentence.

Re-read Galatians 1:1 – 24

6. What do you notice about the way Paul opens this letter? How is this significant?

7. How does Paul describe the gospel of Jesus?

8. Why does Paul state his pre- and post-conversion experience for the Galatian Christians?

Read Acts 9:19b – 31

9. How do these events help you understand Paul's themes in Galatians?

10. To what "different gospel" messages (v 6) do people today turn aside?

11. What makes these different gospel messages so appealing?

12. In what way are these messages “really no gospel at all”?

13. Why is it that there can only ever be just one gospel?

14. Have you ever heard “a different gospel” being taught?

What were the outcomes?

How did it make you feel?

How did you respond?

How might the message of Galatians, especially chapter 1, influence your response in the future?

15. In what ways might you be tempted to change the gospel message as you talk to friends who don't know Jesus?

16. Looking at your own life, can you see ways in which the gospel of Jesus has changed your life?

Eating with Gentiles

Galatians 2:1 - 21

- 1.** What stories have you heard from missionaries or others who have worked cross-culturally about the challenges of living and communicating in a different culture?
- 2.** Do you like arguments and disagreements or do you tend to avoid them?
- 3.** How do you decide whether or not to take a stand on a particular issue?
- 4.** Which scenario do you think is more difficult: to be in disagreement with other “religious” people or to be in disagreement with the secular world?
What makes it so?

Read Galatians 2:1 – 10

- 5.** How can Christianity be described as “the freedom we have in Christ” (v 4)?
- 6.** So what is the slavery that Paul is concerned will be imposed on Christian believers?

Read Acts 15:1 – 29

- 7.** This is Luke's account of what is now known as the Jerusalem Council. What were the major outcomes of this conference?

Read Galatians 2:1 – 21

- 8.** Conflict also arose in the city of Antioch. What is the issue being described in verses 11 - 21 that Paul is seeking to address?
- 9.** What are the key points of the Christian faith as explained in verses 11 - 21?
- 10.** How does all this show that Peter was "clearly in the wrong" (v 11)?
- 11.** Paul says in verse 21, "... if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Why is this statement true and enormously significant?
- 12.** What are the issues today where Christians might be tempted to add something to the gospel of Jesus?

- 13.** If someone asks you, “Which are the bits of Christianity that are essential and which are not?” how does Galatians 2 help you frame an answer?

- 14.** What sorts of issues can Christians today disagree over as what we might call “second-order issues”?

- 15.** In what circumstances can a “second-order issue” become a “first-order issue” that needs to be addressed?

- 16.** If someone were looking at your life, what would they see to convince them that the Christian faith is about a response to God’s grace?

- 17.** What areas of your life might cloud that observation?

- 18.** What have you learned in Galatians so far about how to respond to false teaching in the church?

Faith or Law

Galatians 3:2 - 29

- 1.** What “rules,” spoken or otherwise, do you see in place in your home, workplace or social circles? How about in churches?
- 2.** Think about people you know who aren’t Christians. How do they think they can get (or have got!) into a right relationship with God?
- 3.** Do you ever deliberately remind yourself of things you have experienced personally in order to keep believing that something is true?

Read Galatians 3:1 - 21

- 4.** How does Paul describe the relationship between the gospel message, Christian faith and the Holy Spirit?
- 5.** What are the Galatian Christians adding to the message of Jesus that they first heard?
- 6.** What is Paul hoping the Galatians will realise in verses 1 - 5?

- 7.** In what situations, or regarding what issues, do Christians today need a similar reminder?

- 8.** How was God's promise to Abraham "the gospel in advance" (v 8)?

- 9.** What is Paul's purpose in appealing to the example of Abraham - what does Abraham's experience prove?

- 10.** How come "all who rely on observing the law" (v 10) for a right relationship with God are under a curse?

- 11.** If God was always intending to justify the Gentiles by faith (v 8) why did he give the law?

- 12.** In what ways do we benefit from the promises given to Abraham?

- 13.** How does the law given through Moses achieve its purpose in God's people?

- 14.** What is the relationship between law, promise and faith?

- 15.** How do verses 26 - 29 summarise Paul's argument?

- 16.** What are the benefits for us of Christ "becoming a curse for us" (v 13)?

- 17.** Think of your friends and their ideas of how they can get into a right relationship with God. How might you respond to their thoughts in the light of this chapter?

1. What aspect of your family's history are you most proud of?

2. Can you recall something you wanted to use/own/do as a child, but you had to wait until you were old enough for your parents to let you?
How did you feel when you were finally of age?

3. What are some of the ways in which Christian people sometimes fail to live out their true identity?

4. Why do you think people make these mistakes?

Read Galatians 3:26 - 4:7

5. What additional information about the Old Testament Law do we learn in this section?

6. How has the situation of God's people changed since the incarnation of the Son?

7. What does Paul say about the timing of the incarnation?

8. In what ways could the incarnation be described as the “time of fulfilment”?

9. How do you experience the benefits of “sonship” today?

Read Galatians 4:8 – 31

10. How can a life lived without Jesus be described as a life of slavery?

11. Why is the term to “know God” (v 8) a good short-hand description for being a Christian?

12. What particular aspects of the Christian faith does this phrase emphasise?

13. In what ways were the Galatian Christians becoming enslaved “all over again” (v 9)?

- 14.** How was this enslaving behaviour a rejection of their identity as sons?
- 15.** In what ways are Christians today tempted to allow themselves to becoming enslaved to the Old Testament Law?
- 16.** What does it mean for Christ to be “formed in you” (v 19)?
- 17.** What encouragement do you find in the comparison between “flesh” (translated ‘born in the ordinary way’ in the NIV) and “promise” or “Spirit” in verses 21 - 31?
- 18.** Do you think there is any comparison between celebrating Christian festivals (ie Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc) and the special festivals that Paul says were enslaving the Galatians?

True Freedom

Galatians 5:1 - 26

- 1.** What was the first thing you did when you finished school, got your first pay cheque, or moved out of home for the first time?
- 2.** How do you feel when someone jumps the queue in front of you? Have you ever been guilty of queue jumping?
- 3.** What are you like at following directions?
- 4.** Do you tend to still get lost when you're following someone's instructions?

Read Galatians 5:1 - 15

- 5.** How is "freedom" an appropriate metaphor for the Christian life?
- 6.** What particular aspect of Christian freedom does Paul have in view?
- 7.** How does submitting to one part of the Old Testament Law obligate someone to submit to all of it (v 3)?

8. How does someone's submission to the law mean they have fallen away from grace (v 4)?

9. What human-derived measures do Christians today sometimes use to evaluate the spiritual maturity of others?

Read Galatians 5:16 - 26

10. What words would you use to describe the "acts of the sinful nature" in verse 20 - 21?

11. Do you notice any similarities or common themes in that list?

12. Does Paul mean that anyone who ever displays these behaviours will be cut off from the kingdom of God?

13. How does Paul explain what it means to "live by the Spirit" (v 16)?

- 14.** In what ways is the fruit of the Spirit different from the acts of the sinful nature?
- 15.** If we have “crucified the sinful nature” (v 24) why do we still struggle with sin?
- 16.** Should Christians expect to be free from sin in this life?
- 17.** A Christian friend says to you, “Since I’m saved by grace, it doesn’t matter how I live my life.” How do you answer them in the light of Galatians 5?

1. Have you ever been guilty of boasting?
What were you so proud of?

2. When you hear the term “a spiritual person”
 - What personal characteristics come to mind?

 - Who, in particular, do you think of?

 - Do you think the term applies to you?

Read Galatians 6:1 - 18

3. From what Paul has written earlier in this letter, who are the “spiritual” ones in verse 1?

4. How are verses 1 - 5 related to the end of chapter 5?

5. What is the relationship between verse 2 and verse 4?

- 6.** Why do we sometimes “become weary in doing good” (v 9)?

- 7.** What might be the remedies to prevent that weariness?

- 8.** How were the “circumcision” party in Galatia avoiding persecution by compelling believers to be circumcised?

- 9.** What does it mean to “boast in the cross of Jesus” (v 14)?

- 10.** What might we be tempted to boast in instead of the cross?

- 11.** What have we seen in Galatians that allows Paul, a Jew and Pharisee, to say “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything” (v 15)?

- 12.** How would you summarise Paul’s understanding of the Old Testament law?

- 13.** Even into the very last verses of this letter, Paul is still warning the Galatians about the danger of submitting to the Old Testament law and allowing themselves to be circumcised. What is a similar danger today, that you would want to warn God's people about until your last breath?
- 14.** Imagine someone stopped the Apostle Paul in the street. How would he have responded to the following questions:
- How can I get right with God?
 - So do I need to follow the Old Testament Law?
 - Is there any reason for doing things that please God?
- 15.** How has the letter to the Galatians shaped your assurance of salvation?

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