

Freedom in Faith

A study in Galatians



*“...That we might be justified by
faith in Christ and not by works...”*
Gal. 2:16

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How to Use This Study Guide

Each week, as you sit down to study, begin with prayer. Before reading the lesson and answering the questions, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to you. You may find it helpful to have a few study aids such as a dictionary, a concordance, and more than one translation of the Bible. You may also find the following online resources helpful: BibleGateway.com BlueLetterBible.org

Note: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was used for this Study Guide with consideration of the New King James Version (NKJV) and the Amplified Bible.

At the end of each week's study questions, there is a "Lift Your Heart" section. This will be an important and personal part of your study. You are encouraged to write in your journal what transpires as you listen and respond to the whispers from God's heart to yours. When you look back through your journal at the end of the study, you will be blessed and amazed at your insight and growth.

The Bible is an endless mine of priceless treasure. The "Growing Stronger" section is designed to help you dig more treasures from God's Word that will strengthen your relationship and walk with Him. May what you find there dazzle you!

What other verses could you use?

"The Gospel is the joyous proclamation of God's redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of men enslaved by sin." ~ Walter Elwell

5. According to Galatians 1:4 and 1 John 3:8, why did Jesus come into this world?

Read Galatians 1:6-10.

6. In most of Paul's epistles, he commends the believers and thanks God for them. What does he do differently in this letter? Why?

7. Look up the word "gospel" in a dictionary. Write the definition here.

8. In verses 6-7, we find the chief tactics of false teachers. What are they?

9. According to Acts 17:11, how do you safeguard against falling prey to any other "gospel"?

10. In Galatians 1:10, Paul makes it plain that he is not running in a popularity contest!
Who is he seeking to please?

Why is this important?

Lift Your Heart...

What does the Gospel mean to you? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

Paul calls himself an apostle. According to the following verses, what qualifies Paul as an apostle?

Acts 9:1-19

2 Corinthians 12:12

Who do you allow to influence you spiritually?

Why do you trust them?

Galatians 1:11-24... *God's Messenger*

Paul explained to the Galatians that there is only one true Gospel by which we can be saved. But where did he get this Gospel from? Did he make it up? Was he relying on what others, perhaps the apostles, had told him? No, Paul received the Gospel by direct revelation from God. In this portion of the letter, we see Paul offer the best evidence of his credentials – a radically changed life.

Read Galatians Chapter One

Re-read verses 11-24

1. In verses 11-12, Paul states that God revealed His truth to him directly. Look up the word "revelation" in a dictionary and write the definition here.
2. God's direct revelation to us is the Bible, His very words. How can you use the Bible to give you discernment regarding false teachers and false doctrine?
3. In verses 13-14, Paul (Saul) refers to his "former manner of life". Using Acts 8:3, describe what kind of person Paul was.
4. Read Philippians 3:4-6. Paul was a devout Jew who followed the law given by God to Moses. Why wasn't that good enough?

5. Are there things you do to try to “be” righteous and/or to earn God’s approval?

“The greatest enemy to human souls is the self-righteous spirit which makes [women] look to themselves for salvation.” ~ Charles Spurgeon

6. Read Acts 9:1-19. What strikes you as significant about Paul’s experience?

7. While Paul was blind for three days, what do you think was going through his mind?

8. In Galatians 1:15-16, Paul said he was “set apart” from his mother’s womb and “called” through God’s grace for a purpose. How does this apply to you personally?

9. Paul was radically changed, but it was still difficult for the persecuted believers to trust him. According to Galatians 1:23-24, what was the end result?

10. List some significant changes God has made in your life.

What changes would you like God to make now?

Lift Your Heart...

Not everyone's testimony is the same, but all true believers have one. Are you prepared to share yours? Write the main points of your testimony in your journal. Ask the Lord for an opportunity to share your testimony with someone.

Growing Stronger...

It is clear that Paul was a messenger of the Gospel. What do the following verses say to you about being a messenger of the Gospel?

Isaiah 52:7

Matthew 28:18-20

Mark 16:15

Acts 1:8

Galatians 2:1-10... *Paul Accepted*

Paul carefully guarded the Gospel which God had given him to share with the Gentiles. He was not going to allow the truth of the Gospel to be compromised. This was now his life, his passion. God chose the perfect man for the job. Before Paul's conversion, none of the other apostles would have chosen him. But God's ways are not man's ways...

Read Galatians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 1-6

1. Paul had gone up to Jerusalem taking Barnabas, Titus, and some other believers with him. Read Galatians 2:1-3 and Acts 15:1-2. Why did they go?
2. Galatians 2:3 tells us that Titus was Greek, a Gentile. Why do you think God included him in the group that went to Jerusalem?
3. Why do you think it might be difficult for people who have grown up with religious laws and traditions to give those up for the liberty they would find in Jesus?

"Those who place human traditions above the Bible, eventually lose the power of God's Word in their own lives." ~ Jim Peacock

Read Galatians 2:7-9

4. Who is Paul referring to as the "circumcised" and the "uncircumcised"?

5. Paul respected the leaders in Jerusalem, but he would not let even them persuade him to compromise the truth of the Gospel. What did the leadership confirm about Paul and Peter?

6. Who was at work in both Paul and Peter?

Why was it important for the Galatians to understand this?

7. What do you think Paul means by "the right hand of fellowship"?

Why was this important to Paul?

8. In verse 10, what is the one directive the church leaders gave?

9. What do you learn from the following verses about God's heart toward the poor?

Deuteronomy 15:11

1 Samuel 2:8

Mark 12:42-44

Lift Your Heart...

The same God who worked in and through the ministry of Paul and Peter is working in and through you. "Ministry" is not just preaching or teaching, but includes serving our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers... even strangers. God puts us into many situations, expected and unexpected. He has a plan; He is the one with the power, ability, and wisdom to make it succeed. We need to be willing and available. How has He used you to meet the needs of others? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

In Galatians 2:4, Paul charged that the Judaizers had sneaked in to spy out the liberty they had in Christ Jesus. The Jews had many laws, including what to eat, when to eat, and who to eat with. But the Christians were free from these restrictions.

Read 1 Corinthians 8:4-13. What do you think Paul means in verse 9 in cautioning us to be careful that our liberty (or freedom) doesn't become a stumbling block to the weak?

Can you think of a situation in which this has played out in your own life?

Galatians 2:11-21... *Paul Stands Firm*

Some have found Paul to be confrontational and unyielding. But the more you study his writing, the clearer you see his heart of love, concern, and compassion for his fellow believers. In the first part of this chapter, we saw that Paul's apostleship was confirmed by the church leaders in Jerusalem. Here we see him exercise his authority as an apostle as he confronts Peter with the truth of the message of grace.

Read Galatians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 11-13

1. In verses 11-14, Paul relays to the church in Galatia an incident which had happened when Peter (Cephas) had come to Antioch. What did Paul do and why?
2. Why do you think Peter yielded to the pressure of the Judaizers?
3. Peter led the other Jewish believers into joining him in his hypocrisy, even Barnabas. How can your actions, ideas, and attitudes affect other believers?
4. What do the following verses teach about the kind of influence the children of God should have on each other?

Hebrews 3:12-13

Hebrews 10:24-25

Read Galatians 2:14-18

5. What do you think Paul meant when he said, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

"It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand up for it." ~ A. A. Hodge

6. According to verse 16, can you be justified (declared righteous) in God's sight by obeying laws and/or doing good works?

How can you be justified?

Is this a hard truth for you to accept? Please explain your answer.

7. Using Ephesians 2:8-10, fill in the blanks...

"For by _____ you have been saved through _____; and that not of yourselves, it is the _____ of God; not as a result of _____, so that no one may _____. For we are His _____, created in Christ Jesus for _____ _____, which God prepared beforehand so that we would _____ in them."

8. In Galatians 2:17-18, Paul addressed the concern that if your life isn't ruled by the Law then you will be free to sin. What keeps you from sinning?

Read Galatians 2:19-21

9. What do you think Paul meant when he said, "If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly"?

Lift Your Heart...

Sometimes we allow people who have power and fame in the world (including politicians, actors, celebrities, etc.) to impact how we live our lives. We are impressed by them, which can be a dangerous stumbling block. We need to be very careful about who we allow to influence our lives. Ask God to give you wisdom about the people who influence you and for the courage to take a stand for His truth. Record your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

Paul rebuked Peter openly. He did not go to others to whisper or to slander Peter; he did not stir people up causing dissention or division. He rebuked him before the church because Peter was leading the church into error. What do the following verses teach you about rebuke/reproof?

Luke 17:1-4

1 Timothy 5:1

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Timothy 4:2

Hebrews 12:4-6

Revelation 3:19

Galatians 3:1-14... *Faith Brings Righteousness*

Paul asked the Galatians if they were saved by the Law or by faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. The Galatians knew they were saved by faith alone, yet they now adopted the view that the works of the Law, especially circumcision, were also necessary for justification. How could they turn away? What had gotten into them? Paul reminds them that faith in Christ alone brings righteousness.

Read Galatians Chapter Three

Re-read verses 1-9

1. What is Paul's attitude toward the Galatians?
2. In verses 1 and 3, Paul calls the Galatians "foolish". Why is it foolish to add works to the Gospel?
3. Why do you think we sometimes imitate the Galatians and rely on self-effort?

"There are only two kinds of [women]; the righteous who know they are sinners, and the sinners who think they are righteous." ~ Blaise Pascal

4. To those promoting the works of the Law, the patriarch Abraham was a hero. How does Paul use Abraham as an example of faith instead of Law keeping?

5. Read Romans 4:1-5. What do you have in common with Abraham?

Read Galatians 3:10-14

6. Why is there a curse on those who try to rely on keeping the Law?

7. Write verses 11 and 12 in your own words.

8. What does it mean to you that Jesus became "a curse for us"? (verse 13)

9. Read Hebrews 11:1,6. How do you live by faith?

What are some obstacles to living by faith?

10. According to Galatians 3:14, what promise do you receive through faith?

Lift Your Heart...

Make a list in your journal of some things God has done for you that you could not have done for yourself. Write Him a thank You note!

Growing Stronger...

The words "righteous" and "righteousness" are important throughout the Bible. Paul uses these words over 30 times in the book of Romans alone! Look at the following verses to gain a deeper understanding of what they mean.

Deuteronomy 9:5-6

Matthew 5:6

Mark 2:17

Luke 18:9-14

1 Corinthians 1:30-31

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

Ephesians 4:20-24

Galatians 3:15-29... *The Promise of Faith*

A covenant is a binding agreement usually made between two parties. God's covenant with Abraham, however, was thoroughly one-sided; God made the promises and Abraham had only to accept them. God never goes back on His promises. Paul is emphasizing to the Galatians that Jesus Christ is *given* to us. It is the fulfillment of God's promise that He would save those who place their faith in Christ.

Read Galatians Chapter Three

Re-read verses 15-18

1. Why do you think Paul used the analogy of God's covenant and a human legal agreement in verse 15?
2. What did Abraham have to do to receive the promise an eternal relationship with God? (Galatians 3:6)
3. According to the following verses, how secure was God's covenant with Abraham?

Leviticus 26:42-45

Romans 11:25-29

Hebrews 6:13-15

"God does not give us everything we want but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest path to Himself." ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Read Galatians 3:19-22

4. In Exodus 19:7-9, who was the mediator between God and the people?

According to 1 Timothy 2:5, who is our Mediator?

5. What happens when you break the Law of God? (see Genesis 2:17, Ezekiel 18:20)

6. Why must we choose between relying on the Law or relying on God's promises?

Read Galatians 3:23-29

7. In verses 23-24, what does Paul tell us the purpose of the Law is?

8. Do you ever feel like you are a slave to certain rules and regulations? Explain.

How can you be set free? (see John 8:31-32,36)

9. According to Galatians 3:26-28, what happens when you come to Jesus in faith?

10. Verse 29 states that we are Abraham's descendants and heirs. Using the following verses, record a few things we are heirs of.

Romans 8:16-17

Ephesians 3:6

Titus 3:7

James 2:5

Lift Your Heart...

How secure are you in God's promises? Are there areas in your life where your fear tries to overpower your faith? Select a passage where God promises His provision in those areas and write it in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

How aware are you of God's promises? From the Bible, write some of God's promises to you. Here are a few to get you started:

Deuteronomy 31:8

Romans 8:26

1 Peter 1:3-5

Galatians 4... *Not a Slave, but an Heir*

The Gospel of grace is superior to the Law. Now we see that the Gospel of grace is also the Gospel of freedom. Those who find freedom in Jesus Christ are not just freed from bondage to the Law, but also receive adoption as sons and daughters; they become heirs.

Read Galatians Chapter Four

Re-read verses 1-11

1. Read verses 4-5 and answer the following...

when

who

what

how

why

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God." ~ C. S. Lewis

2. What benefits do you receive as God's daughter? (verses 6-7)
3. Verse 11 reveals the driving purpose behind Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. What do you think Paul felt as he wrote this letter?

Can you think of someone you know who seems to be faltering in their walk with the Lord? How does that make you feel?

Read Galatians 4:12-20

4. Read verse 12. Explain what Paul meant when he wrote, "...become as I am for I also have become as you are."
5. Read verses 13-15. When Paul was with them, how did the Galatians receive him?
6. What changed in their attitude toward Paul since that visit? (verse 16)
7. In verse 19, what do you think Paul means by "until Christ is formed in you"?
8. It can be very difficult to convey what you think and feel in writing. Since Paul was unable to be with the Galatians in person, he needed to be firm (verse 20). Have you ever been concerned that something you have written was misunderstood? How did you handle it?

Read Galatians 4:21-31

9. What point is Paul making in his allegory from the account of Sarah, Hagar, and their sons?

Lift Your Heart...

Freedom in Christ does not give you the right to live as you please, but it does give you the power and ability to live a life that pleases God. As a believer, you have the moral responsibility to submit to the principles of love you find in the Scriptures; to love God and to love your neighbor. Since giving your life to Christ, have you found it easier or harder to live as you should rather than as you please? Record your thoughts in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

Paul and Barnabas went to Galatia on Paul's first missionary journey. Read Acts 13:14 to 14:23.

What places did they go to?

Where did they preach?

How were they received?

What are some good things that happened?

What are some bad things that happened?

Do you think you would like to have gone with them?

Galatians 5:1-15... *True Freedom*

The false teachers were insisting the Galatians be circumcised. But Jesus set us free from the Law to walk in His Spirit. Seeking righteousness by the Law makes it impossible to gain salvation through Christ. If you add anything to Christ, you lose Christ. Salvation is in Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone.

Read Galatians Chapter Five

Re-read verses 1-6

1. Write verse 1 in your own words.
2. What are some consequences of attempting to keep the Law?
3. How do you interpret Paul's phrase in verse 4, "fallen from grace"?
4. What is a distinguishing characteristic of saving faith? (verse 6)

Read Galatians 5:7-12

5. How could Paul be so sure that the "persuasion" of the false teachers was not from God?

6. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump..." (verse 9). What do the following verses say about "leaven"?

Matthew 16:11-12

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

7. How can one error in doctrine nullify the work of the Cross?

Read Galatians 5:13-15

8. How would you describe Christian freedom?
9. Explain how misunderstanding the freedom we have in Christ could lead to self-indulgence.

God's purpose in redeeming men from sin is not to give them freedom to do as they please but freedom to do as He pleases, which is to live righteously.
~ John Mac Arthur

10. What is the "whole Law" as stated in the following verses?

Matthew 22:37-40

Luke 6:31

Galatians 5:13-14

Lift Your Heart...

The Judaizers were trying to make circumcision a requirement for salvation. In what ways might you be in danger of imposing a requirement like the Judaizers? Consider both positives and negatives – behaviors which Christians “must” do and “must not” do. Write your results in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

Paul proclaims his own freedom in the following verses. What principles do you find for your use of freedom?

1 Corinthians 6:12

1 Corinthians 8:9

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Galatians 5:16-26... *The Flesh and the Spirit*

Paul contrasts living according to the demands of the flesh with the life of walking in the Spirit. As Christians we have two natures: our sinful nature which produces deeds of evil, and our spiritual nature which produces the fruit of the Spirit. There is turmoil between the two natures; the one you feed is the one that will grow.

Read Galatians Chapter Five

Re-read verses 16-18

1. From your own experience, describe what it means to live by the desires of the flesh.

What do you think it means to live by the Spirit? (see Romans 8:5,6)

2. What great principle of Christian living is stated in Galatians 5:16?

Read Galatians 5:19-21

3. Using a dictionary or Bible dictionary, write the meaning of at least three words in these verses you have questions about.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Does Paul's warning "that those who practice such things" refer to habitual practice or an isolated lapse?

Why is this distinction important?

5. Which deeds of the flesh are you susceptible to?

What steps can you take to guard against giving in to your flesh?

Read Galatians 5:22-26

6. Consider the "fruit of the Spirit" in verses 22-23. What is significant about the fact that it is called "fruit" and not "deeds" or "works"?
7. Which of the "fruit of the Spirit" have you sensed in yourself or have been told by others that they see in you?
8. Which of the "fruit of the Spirit" do you lack?
9. Why is crucifixion an apt description of what must happen to the sinful nature?

"God develops the fruit of the Spirit in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you're tempted to express the exact opposite quality. Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity." ~ Rick Warren

10. How does the "fruit of the Spirit" counteract the destructive effects of the deeds of the flesh?

Lift Your Heart...

Let's consider how a tree produces fruit. It does not strive and strain to push fruit out of its branches. The Gardener must water, feed, and nurture it so it will produce luscious, desirable fruit. Take a look at the fruit of your life. Does it invite others to partake of what you have to offer? Do you need to ask the Gardener to prune away some dead branches? Write your reflections in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

We know that the old nature cannot produce spiritual fruit. Instead of being a do-it-yourselfer, how can you allow the Spirit of God to produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life?

What do the following verses say about fruit bearing?

Luke 8:15

John 12:23-25

John 15:2-8

Romans 7:4

Philippians 1:11

Hebrews 12:11

James 3:17

Galatians 6... *Free to Serve*

Paul has been correcting the believers who were being led astray by the Judaizers. Now he addresses those who had remained faithful to the Gospel of grace; there was a danger that they would fall into the sin of pride. They needed to restore those who repented, while guarding their own hearts.

Read Galatians Six

1. When a fellow believer is caught up in sin, how are they to be restored? (verse 1)

Why do you think it is important that it be done by someone who manifests the fruit of the Spirit?

2. We each have burdens (flaws, weaknesses, and shortcomings) which lead us into temptation. How would it be helpful to have someone come alongside you to help you bear your burden?

"Be honest about your weaknesses and ask God to help you overcome them so you can serve Christ more effectively. ~ Billy Graham

3. Why is it important to take time to "examine your own work"? (verses 3, 4)
4. In verse 6, Paul instructs the Galatians that they have a responsibility toward those who taught them the Word. What do the following verses say about giving?

1 Corinthians 9:11-14

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Philippians 4:13-19

1 Timothy 5:17-18

5. Write Galatians 6:7-8 in your own words.

How can you apply this to your own life?

6. What were Paul's directives in verses 9-10?

What do you think he means by "doing good"?

7. In verse 14, what does Paul say about his relationship with the world?

Read James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15-17. How are you to relate to the world?

8. Paul said, in Galatians 6:17, that he bore on his body the "brand-marks of Jesus". What do you think he means?
9. Note the ending of Paul's letter (verse 18) and look at the endings of Paul's other letters. What common thread do you find?

What do you think this says about Paul?

Lift Your Heart...

The Law is powerless to change our lives. But the grace of God is powerful and changes lives from the inside out. How has God changed you? How does your new life in Christ compare with your old life without Him? Record your thoughts in your journal and write a prayer thanking God for the grace He has lavished upon you.

Growing Stronger...

What are some truths you have learned as you studied Paul's letter to the Galatians concerning:

The Law

Faith

Grace

Freedom

Slaves/Heirs

Justification

Fruit

Giving

