

SLG Study Guide On Galatians

Welcome to the small group study guide on the book of Galatians. Feel free to format these topics to meet the needs of your individual groups. We have written these to go along with the 16-week sermon series on the book of Galatians from late summer to early winter of 2009.

We hope that you enjoy this and your group grows from it. If you are new to the ministry, please see our additional resources which include:

- An application for being an Atmosphere Church Small Group
- Our Leader's Guide which gives insight into what you should know coming into the ministry
- Small group topics from other leaders

If you add or subtract anything from these topics, please show them to your adult leader before sharing with the group. If your adult leader is unavailable, please email it to me, and I will get back to you on it. If you have suggestions on these topics, please email me and I will review them.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve. If you have any questions regarding this, or any other topic, please email me at jakob@eabcministries.com.

In Christ,

Jakob Guy

Atmosphere Church SLG Coordinator

Gal. 1:1-5

Opening Question:

What is the Gospel?

The Gospel is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Talk about what this means)

(Read John 3:16) it was because of love that Jesus was crucified. If God didn't love us then he would not have sent his son to die in our place.

He then rose from the dead. Why did Jesus rise again?

- To prove His divinity.
- To prove that He was over sin and it had no control over Him.

(Read 1 Peter 2:22)

What did Peter mean when he said, "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth?"

(Read 2 Corinthians 5:21)

What does Paul mean when he says "so that in him we might become the righteousness of God?"

How do you know that Christianity is the only religion?

(1 Cor. 1.23-25)

- All Idols are made in man's image | God made us in His image
- All other visions of heaven are according to man's desires | Our heaven is according to God's desire and glory
- All other religions are self-centered and focused on personal | Ours is focused on the Cross of Christ and His glory: 1 Cor. 10.31

Why is belief in these important truths essential?

We need to understand that we are saved by grace. (Eph. 2.8-9)

To understand grace, we must understand our sin. (Rom. 3)

This comes from a Biblical understanding of God's holiness. (Is. 6.1-6)

This comes from a Biblical view of the Bible (2 Tim. 3.16-17; Heb. 4.12) and making His Word our delight (Psalm 1.2)

Supporting Scripture on what the Gospel is:

- Gal. 1.4
- Rom. 3.23; 6.23
- Jn. 3.15-18
- Heb. 4.15
- Is. 52.13-53.12
- 1 Cor. 15.3-6

Gal. 1.6-10

Recap last week:

- Remember what the true Gospel is
- Remember how one comes to belief in Christ
- Remember what is most important

Opening Question

How do you know what a different gospel is?

- If it is different than what we talked about last week
- If it adds to or subtracts from the Word of God
- If it requires other scriptures besides the Bible

If it does these things- it is a false message of salvation

(Read vs. 6-9)

Why is the consequence for preaching the wrong message so heavy?

- Teaching it leads others astray
- Leading others astray shows unbelief in Christ

(Read vs. 10)

Why does Paul make this statement?

Paul says this to let people know that serving Christ is of more benefit than serving man.

Why would someone try to please man by changing the message of the Gospel?

- It's unpopular to believe the truth (as you'll see in Gal. 2.11-14)
- They don't like the truth (see 2 Tim. 4.4-5)

Have there been times when you have suffered mocking or suffering at the hands of unbelievers or even believers for talking about the true Gospel?

Supporting Scripture on keeping the true message:

- 2 Cor. 11.1-14
- 1 Tim. 4.16

Gal. 1.11-24

Opening Question:

(Gal. 1.11) What does Paul mean when he says that the Gospel he proclaims is not man's gospel?

From the last 2 weeks we see that God is the author and finisher of our salvation (Heb. 12.2). Even though it is told to us by people, it is God that gives it to us.

Why do you believe in the first place?

- 1 Cor. 12.3 – The Spirit causes us to believe
- Jn. 3.5-8 – The Spirit has a will to do what He pleases- we don't know what He will do

What should keep us strong in our faith?

(Hebrews 12.1-2, also, consider using vs. 3-17)

- We have the Holy Scriptures to teach us (Heb. 4.12-13; 2 Tim. 3.16)
- The Holy Spirit that Jesus sends sustains us (John 14.26)
- We are surrounded by others in the family of God (v. 1)
- Jesus endured the cross that we might continue in faith (v. 2)
- A quest for true and lasting joy (v.2)

Read: Gal. 1.22-24; 1 Cor. 10.31; Gal. 5.18-26.

What does it look like to continue in the faith daily?

- Have a changed heart
- Glorify God in your actions
- Flee the works of the flesh
- Long for the Fruit of the Spirit

Thought/ discussion provoking question:

First Corinthians 1.18-25 tells us that the Gospel is foolish and a stumbling block to those outside of the faith. Jesus tells us that men will hate us and persecute us for the message we bring (Jn. 15. 18-21). Paul also says that he is not seeking man's approval (Gal. 1.10). However, Peter tells us that we should be righteous so that those who slander us may be put to shame (1 Pt. 3. 13-17).

How are we supposed to be righteous and treat others well when we bring an offensive Gospel message?

ans. The Gospel is offensive enough, we don't need to make it more so by being cruel and inconsiderate. We cannot stray from the truth and love of the Gospel. The truth is offensive and necessary for salvation. The love is caring, and necessary for witnessing. Pay closer attention to 1 Pt. 3.13-17

Gal. 2.1-10

Opening Question:

Why do you think the Law so important to the Jews?

The Law:

- It was all they knew of salvation
- They thought that if they followed it they were right with God
- By it they were set apart and through it they were justified (made right)

Read Gal. 2.1-3 (read 1 Tim. 3.16 for the message he proclaimed)

Why would his message have been in vain?

Ans: If Paul's message was not matching up with that of the other apostles- then his missions would have been purposeless.

Gal. 2.6-8 (See also: Jas. 2.1-7)

What is partiality?

- Essentially Favoritism
- Making choices about people based off of their nationality, grades, gender, etc. (outward appearance)

God does not save people because they are of a certain ethnicity or people group- see John 3.5-8 | The Spirit is the one that does the work- He goes where ever he wills to go- no work that we can do will cause Him to save us. He has His own free will from the Father to save those who the Father has willed to save.

According to this section of Scripture- The Spirit abides in every true believer. He also enables all ministries that are of God.

How did the Jews (who followed the Law) practice this favoritism?

By not sharing their message with the Gentiles, they were basically saying that God loved the Jews more than others. But God saves from many different backgrounds, not just one.

Then whose ministry was more important? Peter's to the Jews or Paul's to the Gentiles?

(Neither was more important | That is the beauty of the Gospel- it calls people from all different backgrounds and God grants them the Spirit to do work where they have been called. See 1 Cor. 12.12-30)

Gal. 2.11-14

Continuing on Partiality:

- We are not supposed to allow ethnic, racial, or gender differences remove true community from our churches
- That is what Peter was doing

Why did Peter only eat with the Gentiles when the Jewish Christians weren't around? (This is different from his actions in Acts 11.1-3)

He didn't want shame to come to him because as a Jew, eating with non-Jews was unclean.

Why was it wrong of him to do so?

Jesus had told him that those clean/unclean distinctions were to be done with (see Acts 10.9-35)

Are people really required to follow the Law of the Old Testament in order to be believers?

No. (yeah, it's that simple)

What is actually required for salvation?

(go back and look at the true Gospel- week one)

How can we apply what Paul says in Gal. 2.14 to our lives as believers today?

As believers, we are to be living holy lives to glorify Christ in all things (1 Cor. 10.31). But we cannot hold those who are unchanged by the grace of God up to the same standards we hold ourselves and other believers. So, one might be able to say to believers, "How can you force unbelievers to follow Christian morals?"

Gal. 2.15-21

Opening Question:

Why can we not pay our way into heaven with a close following of the law?

- Gal. 2.15-16, 3.21; Titus 3.5
- We are unable to follow the law even if we want to (Rom. 3.10-23)
- Our inability proves our need of a savior

If we were saved by following the Law, then would we need Jesus? (Gal. 2.21)

Paul says that the death of Christ was meaningless if we could save ourselves. But what does Paul say about Christ in 1 Corinthians 15.1-11 and how important He is?

Can we trust in the law to change us while we are supposed to be living for Christ?

No!- Why not?

Romans 6.2, 6; Gal. 5.24; Gal. 1.10

The Law was fulfilled in Christ (John 19.30) so we don't have to follow it for salvation any more. But, Jesus living in us changes us to want to live holy lives.

What does Paul mean by dying with Christ? (Gal. 2.19-21)

He means that our old (sinful nature) died with Christ on the Cross and we now live in Him new lives (2 Cor. 5.17)

Gal. 3.1-9

Opening Question:

How are believers considered to be descendants of Abraham if we are not of Jewish descent?

To understand this passage, we need to go way back in Israel's history.

Gen. 15.5-6 | Gal. 3.7 | 1 Tim. 5.1-2

Who are Abraham's descendants? Who is in that family?

Those who believe in Christ and His fulfillment of the Law are part of the promised descendants of Abraham.

What is it that keeps this family of believers together?

The Spirit of God which is the deposit that Christ gives us until He returns. This Spirit causes us to cry out: "Abba Father" and show our dependence on Christ for salvation.

Look at what Paul says here about the Spirit (Gal. 3.1-6). What is His role?

How does He come to the believer?

The Spirit comes into the life of a believer by grace through faith alone. It stays by grace through faith alone. Just as we can't do anything to gain the Spirit- we can't do anything to keep it.

What is our job as believers then? Can we slack off and just expect the Spirit to do all the work for us?

NO!

- Phil. 1.6- The Spirit perfects us
- He enables us to do good works that have been planned out for us (Eph. 2.10)
- These works keep us headed forward- but they are of the Spirit
- Thus- we have involvement- we cannot continue in sin, but must do good works to show our faith (Rom. 6; Jas. 3.14-26)

(Question for reflection) Are you trusting in the Spirit for your growth in Christ? What happens if you are not trusting in the Spirit?

You believe and suffer in vain: 1 Cor. 15.2; Gal. 3.4

Gal. 3.10-14

(Most of these are more discussion based questions- give time to answer and talk about)

Opening Question:

Gal. 3.10; Rom. 4.15

What happens when you try to be a good person? Do you always succeed?

Trying to be a good person only sometime works- and only for a while. But it cannot bring salvation- in the end it makes you realize that you are truly not a good person. If God never established the law - we would not know what it meant to be in sin. But God gave us the Law so that we would seek Him.

Gal. 3.11-12

Here we are told that no one can be saved from sin by following the law.

(Gal. 2.16)

Grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone saves us- following rules has nothing to do with gaining salvation. Those who live by the law will die by it.

So what does James mean when he says that “a person is justified by works and not by faith alone?” (James 2.24)

When you are saved, God does not leave you where you are. (read Ezek. 36.22-27). We see that God saves a person, they are born again, and as a result of God's Spirit being in them- they change and do good works. So we can know who is saved by the works that they do. Those who are truly born again do their good works in faith- thus, they are not living by the law, but by faith. (Rom. 1.17)

What is the blessing of Abraham that is spoken of in Gal. 3.13, 14?

(Look back to last week)

Abraham was promised many descendants – Gen. 15.5, 6 – we are now considered his true descendants if we are believers in Christ and the curse has been removed.

How did Christ take away the curse of sin?

We are told “cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” – Heb. 4.15 – Christ was sinless – Is. 53.3-5 – He was considered cursed on our behalf that we might receive His blessing and that of Abraham- the promised Spirit and eternal life – Jn. 3.15-17. 2 Corinthians 5.19 tells us that for our sake Christ was made sin so that we might receive His righteousness. We don't have to suffer for our sin!

Gal. 3.15-29

Opening Question:

What is the promise that Paul is talking about here?

(The promise is that of Gen. 15.5-6 where God tells Abraham that he will be the father of many)

This promise that God gave to Abraham now counts for everyone who is a believer in Christ (Read Gal. 3.28 again) Here you can see that everyone who is in Christ is part of Christ- there are no longer any distinctions. We are one in the Spirit.

What effect does the Old Testament Law have on the promise of Salvation?

(Read Gen. 15.17-18; Ezek.36.22-32)

First- Abraham was promised the land God had set aside for his descendants. Then- God promises His Spirit to His people (us).

In each case, the law is given to those who have been chosen- they don't depend on it for salvation, but it is a mark of their salvation. So the Law does not change the promise of God. And sin does not stop us from receiving God's promise. (Read - Jas. 3.2; Rom. 3.23 - all sin. Psalm 103.8-13; Is. 53.5-6 - believers never receive the punishment for our sin)

So why should we follow the law if it does not bring salvation?

To answer this, we need to understand the point of the law.

(Gal. 3.23-24; Rom. 7.7-12 - The law was put in place to show us our need for a savior. Without it, there is no knowledge of sin, and no reason to hope in Christ.) We are to follow what Christ commands us because we are under grace and slaves to righteousness (Rom. 6.15-19).

If sinning does not bring punishment (from God) to the believers- then does doing good bring more blessings?

Yes and no - Yes we receive the joy of the Lord in the doing of good, but we do not lose the promise of salvation just because we sin. (Ez. 36.27)

So what are blessings that we receive from doing good?

Pleasing Jesus, leading others to Christ, building up the Church. Etc.