

Galatians

BIGGER, BOLDER, BETTER

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Galatians

BIGGER, BOLDER, B

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This study guide and group discussions were written by Andy Clark, Northside's Life Groups Minister. The Family Conversations were written by Michael Watson.

WELCOME TO GALATIANS: BIGGER, BOLDER, BETTER!

The book of Galatians is explosive in its heart to bring joy, freedom, identity, and purpose into our lives. But, how can this short letter consisting of a little over 3,000 words be so dynamic? **The answer: it brings us face to face with the Gospel.**

The Gospel or “good news” is the single most important thing any of us will ever encounter. It is the sum total of the saving Truth about Jesus. Through Jesus, we can have a right standing and relationship with God. This is not because of anything we have done or could do, but what Jesus did once and for all on the cross. The Gospel is not an invitation for us to do anything, but a declaration of what God has done! When it is received through faith, we discover salvation, identity, gratitude, purpose, and a new way of living. **The Gospel is life changing, because it is Bigger, Bolder, and Better than we could ever imagine.**

For the next six weeks, we want to invite you on a journey of Gospel discovery.

The Gospel is Bigger ... because nothing can be added to it in order to earn it.

The Gospel is Bolder ... because it is a message for all people and all time!

The Gospel is Better ... because it transforms our lives and calls us to share it.

If we are not careful, just like the Galatians, we risk missing the Gospel. This is the heart of Paul’s letter to these First Century believers. He wants to remind them and us that **the Gospel isn’t just “good news”; it is the BEST NEWS you will ever hear.**





ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

For the next six weeks, this guide is your map for the journey through the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study. Below you will find all the components you need for the adventure ahead.

1. **VIDEO TEACHING:** Each week, there is a short video unpacking the big ideas for each session. We recommend groups watch this video during or in preparation for your group time. Use the provided space in the guide to write down notes and thoughts. The videos for this study can be found at mynorthside.com/galatians.
2. **DAILY STUDY GUIDE:** This is a weekly 5-day guide to help you better study Galatians. We recommend scheduling 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don't think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Remember, God will work through you to help others grow spiritually in your group. Spend time with Him through the daily study guide and come ready to discuss at your group. For more guidance on the daily study guide, read *How To Use The Galatians Daily Study Guide* (pg. 6).
3. **GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE:** Each session is broken down into four sections:
 - **GET STARTED:** Get to know each other and start discussing.
 - **TAKE IT IN:** Watch the teaching video and discuss what you are learning.
 - **TALK IT OVER:** Discussion to engage with the Bible and session teaching.
 - **LIVE IT OUT:** Practical ways to live out what groups are learning.
4. **FAMILY CONVERSATIONS:** These are weekly devotions and conversation starters to bring the biblical truths of the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study into your home. For more guidance, see the *Family Conversations Guide* (pg 28).

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR GROUP



Whether you have been in a life group for years or this is your first experience in a group, the following tips are to help you anticipate what will happen in your group setting as you prepare to participate over the next six weeks.

What kind of commitment is expected of me for the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study?

- You've said yes to a 6-week study. We'd love to see you consistently engaging with the study guide and your group during this time. Just show up and be yourself!
- You will have an opportunity to continue as a group upon the conclusion of the study.

How should I prepare/participate each week?

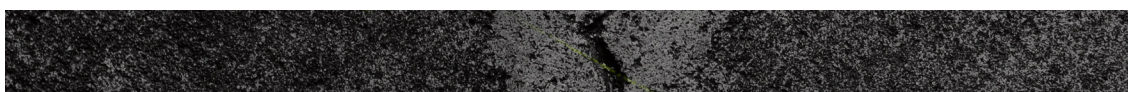
- **Materials:** We recommend every group member have a copy of the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study guide (digital or print). The *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study guide is available for download at mynorthside.com/galatians.
- **Prepare:** We recommend diving into the daily study guide (30 minutes) and taking a moment to review the group discussion guide.
- **The study guide may be modified:** By design, there is more content in the study guide than you will probably discuss. Expect modifications to fit the dynamics of your group.

What if I don't have all the answers?

- Everybody is on a journey, but nobody has arrived yet. Feel free to speak honestly and openly, but expertise is not an expectation.
- Hebrews 10:24 says, "*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*" In other words, God wants to use other people to help you grow. At the same time, God wants to use you to help others grow. Whether you are prepared or not, please show up anyway. The group will still learn with/from you. You bring value to the group.

What if I want to continue in a group?

- Towards the end of the study, your group will begin talking about how to continue on in community. This could be continuing with your existing group or joining a new group. While we'd love to see each person have a lifestyle of being in a life group, not every group is a lifelong fit! The goal is to keep growing through the life-changing relationships of a group.



HOW TO USE THE GALATIANS DAILY STUDY GUIDE

No other habit can do more to transform your life and make you more like Jesus than studying and living out God's Word. Let that statement sink in for just a second.

For this reason, we have created a daily guide throughout the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* group study. The goal of this guide is to help you:

- *Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly.*
– **Colossians 3:16 (ESV)**
- *Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*
– **Romans 12:2b (ESV)**
- *Be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
– **2 Timothy 3:17 (NIV)**

Our encouragement and challenge for you throughout the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study is to saturate yourself with Scripture. The amazing thing about being saturated with Scripture is that it naturally begins to overflow into all areas of our lives. Dallas Willard writes, “To dribble a few verses or chapters of scripture on oneself through the week, in church or out, will not reorder one’s mind and spirit—just as one drop of water every five minutes will not get you a shower, no matter how long you keep it up. You need a lot of water at once and for a sufficiently long time. Similarly for the written Word.”¹ The question we have to ask is, “How am I going to saturate myself with Scripture throughout the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study?”

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (HarperOne, 1998), 356.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE USING POST²

Prefer a video? Watch *How To Study The Bible Using POST* at
mynorthside.com/galatians

The answer to “How” comes in the form of a Bible study method called POST. Before we unpack this tool, let’s talk about a few important things to keep in mind when studying the Bible.

- **Be Intentional:** For this daily study, we are encouraging you to give God 2% of your day (30 minutes). Intentionally set aside this time in your schedule. You may need to get up early, watch less TV, limit social media, or rearrange something to create this space.
- **Be Flexible:** You will miss a day or two along the way. The good news is that this is a 5-day study guide. That means there are 2 days of grace to help you get back on track. If you miss a day, just pick back up where you left off.
- **Be Persistent:** Just like exercising, this may seem a little bit overwhelming at first. You may even feel a little pain from stretching spiritual muscles that haven’t been used in a while. **Stick with it.** With practice and persistence, studying the Bible will become more comfortable, and you will grow as a disciple of Jesus.

Studying the Bible is not meant to just inform you, but to transform you. The Holy Spirit lives in you! He wants to transform you as a disciple of Jesus to bear fruit (godly character) in your life. It all comes down to, “are you willing to let Him?” If so, then we need to be intentional about creating an environment in our spiritual lives where growth happens. This environment is a moment to listen, learn, and apply God’s Word. To help create this environment, we want to introduce a Bible study method called POST. This method breaks down into four steps:

P - Prayer & Prepare

O - Observe

S - Seek Out

T - Take Actions

² Adapted From Traders Point Christian Church’s *Micro Group Guide*, 5-8.



STEP 1: PRAY AND PREPARE

Before you begin, pray. Busy schedules, to-do lists, and our own agendas are often major distractions to hearing God speak through His Word. Prayer refocuses our hearts and minds on God. Remember, this is not just pursuing knowledge, but pursuing God Himself. Ask Him to help you hear what He wants to say.

Before you jump into a book of the Bible, prepare. The Bible is a book about God and tells one unified story of His rescuing work of humanity. This is called the metanarrative of Scripture, where each of the 66 books contributes to an overarching story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Knowing how a particular book of the Bible fits into this overarching story is important to keep in mind. Also, the Bible is a library of books written to specific peoples over 2,000 years ago by men who were inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we need to seek out and find the original author's intent for the original audience. Start each new book of the Bible looking for the genre (literary style) of the book, author, date, purpose in writing, and key themes. If you have a study Bible, you will often find this background information at the beginning of the book of the Bible you are studying. Also, we highly recommend watching the Bible Project's *Galatians* video to help you prepare for the journey ahead. See *Galatians Background* (pg. 120) and our further resources (pg. 124) of this guide for guidance as you prepare.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Observing begins by reading the passage of Scripture. As you read, begin taking notes on your observations within the passage. We recommend using the designated space in this guide or a personal journal. For now, avoid looking at other translations, study Bible notes, or commentaries. Just focus on your own observations and letting the Holy Spirit guide. Resist the temptation to rush or skip this step. Without it, you will risk misinterpreting the passage and missing out on what God wants to show you. Below are suggestions for making good observations within a passage of Scripture.

Think of this as your observation toolbox. It's not a checklist to complete, but various options for potential use. Choose the ones that work best for you.

OBSERVATION TOOLBOX

Outline: The section titles and paragraph breaks you see in your Bible weren't part of the original manuscripts. They were added by publishers to help readers, and they may vary between Bible translations. For this step, read an entire chapter or section and break it down into an outline that makes the most sense to you. This process will help you see some observations you may otherwise miss.

Pay Attention To Details: Sometimes we read too fast and miss important details that can help us better understand the passage. Here are some details to pay attention to:

- Look for repeated words and phrases. Circle/underline them, because repetition is usually an indicator of something important.
- Look for connection/transition words like “but,” “if,” or “therefore.” These will help you notice important comparisons, contrasts, and connections.
- Look for answers to the questions of who, what, where, when, and why. Your background information on the book you are studying will help.
- Look for answers to these questions: What does this passage say about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, humanity, sin, or Satan?
- Look for cultural and historical ideas. These will help you discern the meaning of the passage at the time it was written.

Speak Out: Sometimes, hearing the words of Scripture can lead us to new observations. Read the passage out loud or listen to it using one of the recommended Bible apps (pg. 124).

Paraphrase/Summarize: Sometimes, new observations are revealed when you put something into your own words. Think of it as listening to and retelling a conversation. After hearing/reading the passage, summarize the big ideas of what is happening or what the passage is saying.

Write Down Questions: Along the way, you will make observations that raise questions. Write these questions down as you study.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

With your observations written down, it's now time to seek out and dig a little further. Read through the passage again using other Bible translations. We recommend reading the passages in two or three different translations—ESV, NIV, or NLT. If you are using a study Bible, pay attention to the notes in the margins that reference the passage you are reading. If you are using a commentary alongside your study, read the sections connecting to the passage. These are great tools to seek out answers to questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights to your notes.

Remember to complete the Observe step first, and then Seek Out using resources. Study Bible notes and commentaries are great resources, but are still written by humans (even though they are well educated). Listening to the Holy Spirit as you read is more important. You can find suggestions on Bible translations, study tools, and commentaries in the resource section (pg. 124).

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

You have prayed, observed, and sought out, and now it is time to take action. All throughout the Bible there is an importance placed on knowing and doing. James 1:22 says, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* Jesus says, *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock”* (Matthew 7:24). There is no point in studying the Bible if we are not going to allow it to change our lives. This step is so important that we have included four Take Action questions into every day of the guide.

- 1. What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?**
- 2. What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?**
- 3. Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?**
- 4. What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.**

Before you ask, yes we actually want you to make a commitment statement based on what you heard God say through your prayer and Bible study time. It's through obedience that God develops His character in our lives. Since this might be a new practice, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Your commitment statement doesn't have to be new every day. It might be something that you sense God is leading you to from the previous day or week. It could even build upon and expand a previous statement.
- Your commitment statement doesn't have to always tie directly into the Scripture you are reading. The most important thing is listening to what God is saying to you and putting it into practice.
- To help these statements be tangible and practical, we recommend starting it with the phrase "I will" and giving it a time frame if applicable. Here are some examples: "I will ask forgiveness of a person I've wronged," "I will spend one hour this Wednesday morning in prayer," or "I will memorize Galatians 2:20."

LIFE CHANGE HAPPENS TOGETHER


As you use the POST Bible study method, don't forget that your group will be there to walk alongside you. Together you can hold each other accountable and encourage one another as you take action steps. Also, your daily Bible study time will help fuel your group discussion. God wants to work through you to help others take next steps. Make sure you come ready to share what God is teaching you. Hebrews 10:24 (NIV) says it best, *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."* In other words, life change happens together!

The best way to end is the same way we began. **No other habit can do more to transform your life and make you more like Jesus than studying and living out God's Word.** We pray that this guide helps you build a habit of transformational listening and obeying God's Word. In doing so, our hope is that we become more like Jesus to better fulfill His Great Commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

Session I

**GOSPEL
ALIGNMENT -
NO OTHER GOSPEL**

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In aviation, there is the 1 in 60 rule. This states that after 60 miles a one degree error in heading will result in straying off course by one mile. This error could mean the lake you planned to fly over is now a mountain. Course alignment is essential. Chapter 1 of Galatians is filled with urgency, because the Galatians were one degree off of the Gospel. If they continued on this course, they would arrive at the wrong destination. Paul wastes no time by saying, *“I am astonished”* (Galatians 1:6a).

The Gospel is built upon free, underserved grace. Paul passionately believed that no one could ever earn the love of God. The Gospel is not what we could do for ourselves, but what God has done for us. If you accept this truth through faith, then the only response to God’s grace and mercy is a life of gratitude in pursuit of Him. Paul, more than most, understood the life-changing power of God’s grace. He had spent his life following the Old Testament law to the point that he orchestrated the deaths of Christians. That was until he met Jesus. Galatians 1:23 sums up Paul’s life: *“The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”* Paul knew what it was like to be off course, and he did not want to see the Galatians do the same.

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 1:6 – Most of Paul’s letters follow a similar format with an introduction and thanksgiving prayer (1 Corinthians 1:4-9, Philippians 1:3-8, Colossians 1:3-8). His immediate accusation against the Galatians and bypass of the normal standard reinforces the importance of his words.³

Galatians 1:10 – Paul’s opponents, the Judaizers accused him of making following Jesus too easy in order to earn the favor of the Gentiles. His response is that through grace God approves him, and that is all that matters. God’s approval is both a powerful assurance and motivation.

Galatians 1:12 – Paul uses His conversion story to reinforce his title as an Apostle. His message should be trusted, because it came directly from the source in Jesus (Acts 9:1-30).

Galatians 1:23-24 – Paul’s turn from a known enemy of the Church to an advocate for the Gospel is a testament to the love and grace of God. His passion for the Old Testament Law was unmatched (Philippians 3:4-6), but his own actions/achievements still could not bring salvation.

³ Timothy Keller, *Galatians For You* (The Good Book Company, 2013), 13.

Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia:

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! 10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

11 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. 17 I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. 20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. 21 Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. 22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they praised God because of me.

– Galatians 1:1-24



Day 1: Galatians 1:1-10

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 2: Galatians 1:11-24

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.



STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: Acts 9:1-19

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Acts 9:20-31



STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 5: Galatians 1:1-24

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.

SESSION 1 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOSPEL ALIGNMENT – NO OTHER GOSPEL

GET STARTED

- **What is the most recent piece of good news that you have received? Who shared it with you and why? What made this news good?**
- If you do a quick Google search, you will learn that the average person sees 3,000-10,000 ads a day. Whether we read, watch, or listen, we are bombarded with an overwhelming amount of information. **What makes something “good news” in contrast to advertising or information?**

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 1: Gospel Alignment at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 1:1-10

- In just a few brief verses (v.3-5) Pauls packs in an enormous amount about the Gospel. **What do you learn about the Gospel from these verses? Of the truths Paul mentions, which are the most meaningful and encouraging (“Good News”) to you? Why?**
- The Judaizers taught that the Gentiles had to convert to Judaism and follow the Old Testament Law on top of placing their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. In verses 6-9, this is the “other” gospel Paul is referring to. **How does he describe this “other” gospel? Why do you think he chooses these strong words?**
- The Gospel is Jesus + nothing. It is the free undeserved grace given to us by God through faith in what Jesus Christ has done. A false gospel is anything that adds something to this Gospel. Here are 4 examples of false gospels.⁴
 1. We make something else besides faith in Christ necessary for salvation.
 2. We assume that it doesn’t matter what you believe so long as you are a sincere, loving, and good person.
 3. We try to grow ourselves spiritually through self-effort.
 4. We think we can produce spiritual change in other people.

⁴ Greear, J.D. (2012, Nov. 17), *Which of These False Gospels Do You Believe?*, www.jdgreear.com/.

Why are these false gospels not truly “good news”? What false gospels, bad teaching, or misconceptions about God have you believed? How did you come to understand and believe the truth about Jesus?

Read Galatians 1:11-24

- Paul shares his story of how he came to faith, and it is filled with course-correcting and alignment with the Gospel. **What do you learn about God working in Paul’s life before, during, and after encountering Jesus Christ? Knowing Paul’s story, what do you learn about grace, and in what ways can you relate?**
- Reflect back on your own story. **In a sentence or two, how would you describe your life before faith in Jesus Christ? In a sentence or two, how have you changed as a result of knowing Christ?**
- The first chapter of Galatians is a passionate plea from Paul to stay rooted in and aligned with the Gospel. **If someone asked you what the Gospel is, or what you believe, what would you say?**
- Verses 23-34 ends this chapter with people praising God over the Gospel impact in Paul’s life. **What are some practical ways you can live out the Gospel in your life so that people will praise God more?**

LIVE IT OUT

Think about the people in your life. Who do you know that struggles with the Gospel? Who might believe that God could never love them or that they’re too far gone? Will you commit to praying for this person? Pray that God will open their eyes to the truth of the Gospel and that they see Christ at work in and through you.

Daily Bible Study: Take 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don’t think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Your time with God will transform you and help encourage others. Come ready to discuss what you are learning at the next group session.

Memorize: *Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

– Galatians 1:3-5

FAMILY CONVERSATIONS GUIDE



These Family Conversations are designed to help you create moments to talk about God and faith in your family. We want to encourage you to carve out a moment each week to read and discuss each Family Conversation. This could be over the dinner table, before bedtime, or whenever works best for your family. In each Family Conversation, you will find 4 parts.

Scripture: Read the passage out loud, or encourage a family member to read.

Devotion: Read this to your family.

Conversation: Pick and choose what questions are best for your family to discuss.

Prayer: Pray for your family, or encourage a family member to pray.

Just as a heads-up, things probably won't go as planned with your Family

Conversations. Your family may interrupt, someone probably won't pay attention, and there may not be any grand spiritual moments. What matters most is that you are seeking God as a family. Faith in your family is more often caught than taught. Your family will most likely forget these devotions, but they will remember the intentionality and time together. That will set the stage for you to model faith and continue building a spiritual legacy in your family.

FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 1

GOSPEL ALIGNMENT – NO OTHER GOSPEL

SCRIPTURE

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel- which is really no gospel at all.

– Galatians 1:6-7a

DEVOTION

Being on a team means you are aligned and working toward a certain goal. Think about a team that you are on. Maybe it's a sports team, a band, even your family resembles a team! It can take a lot of coordination to make sure that everyone is on the same page and working toward the same goal. Whether that is wearing the same jersey, practicing your part in band or the choices you make as a family; all of it is to assist the team in accomplishing its goal. But what if someone on your team is confused or unsure of what they are supposed to do?

In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul is concerned that the Galatians were being given the wrong information on how they were supposed to follow Jesus. He had visited them earlier and shared the gospel – the story of Jesus coming to earth, dying for our sins and then being raised from the dead. This good news about Jesus had changed everything! Not only was God welcoming EVERYONE into his family, they no longer had to follow all the old rituals and practices that used to be required to be on the team. He wanted them in his family just the way they were! But there were some people in the church – the Judaizers – who had been in God’s family for a long time, that thought the old ways that God required still belonged in Jesus’ new Church. Paul reminds them that the true Gospel is Jesus + nothing. It is through believing in who Jesus is, His death and resurrection that we are extended grace and welcomed into His family.

CONVERSATION

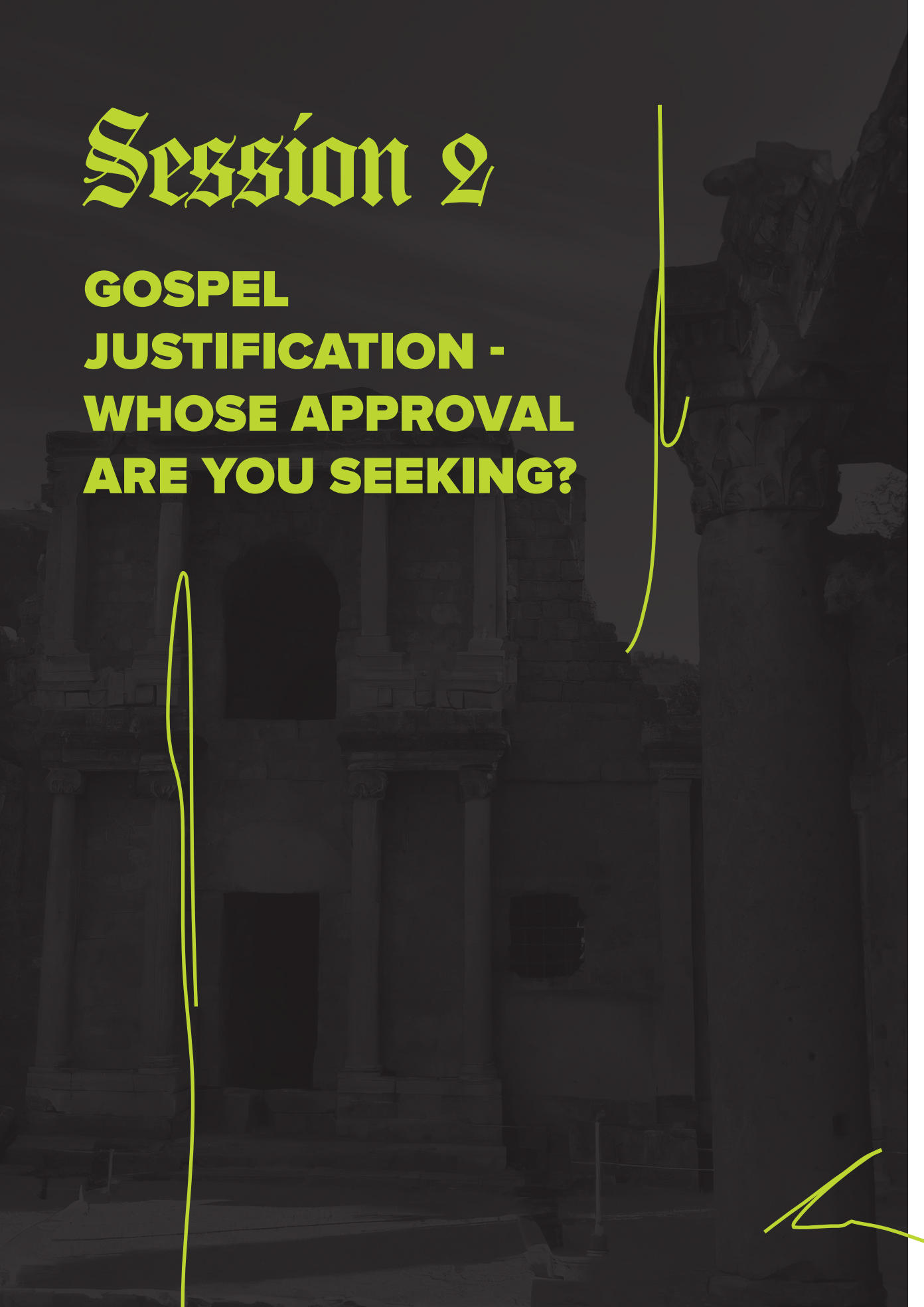
- Think about a team that you have been a part of. Name some things that help identify you as part of your team. Was there anything specific you had to do to be on the team?
- What are some ways that we make the good news of Jesus more complicated? Have you ever felt like there were extra things you needed to do to follow Jesus?
- What are some ways that our family can stay aligned with the Gospel? How can our family help each other if we ever start to stray away from it?
- If your family has never talked through the Gospel before – Jesus coming to earth, his ministry, death, burial, and resurrection – now is a great time!

PRAYER

Together as a family, thank God for the good news of Jesus and the grace we have been extended by being welcomed into His family., being welcomed into his family. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and give you wisdom as your family lives aligned to the Gospel.

Session 2

**GOSPEL
JUSTIFICATION -
WHOSE APPROVAL
ARE YOU SEEKING?**



We have all experienced peer pressure and the tension to compromise who we are to feel accepted. If we are honest, these moments are fueled by fear. If we aren't rooted in the Gospel, this same fear will creep into our relationship with God. This could result in trying to earn God's love, keeping control, or trying to please people/ourselves over living for God. This brings up an important question: "Whose approval are we seeking?" The answer says everything about who we are and the paths we choose. Paul was willing to risk his life, reputation, and even the approval of others to live out the Gospel of grace given to him by Jesus. Galatians 2 tells the story of two visits filled with the pressure to compromise the Gospel.

The First Visit: Paul returned to Jerusalem for a private meeting with some of the Apostles. He was not doubting the Gospel he had been teaching. Instead, he wanted to speak to the dangerous influence of the Judaizers. If they aren't unified now, the early church could fall apart. The acceptance of Titus reinforced that it's the Gospel alone, and God's Kingdom is for everyone!⁵

The Second Visit: Peter spent time eating with Gentile Christians while in Antioch of Syria. After a delegation of Judaizers showed up, he decided to separate himself from the Gentiles. This was not based on any theological principle, but fear of this delegation (v.12). Even worse, this decision began to lead others towards their false gospel (v.13). Paul calls Peter out, saying if we truly believe the Gospel, our fear should be of God over people. God is the one who declares who has the right standing with Him.⁶

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 2:5-6 – Paul reveals that the Apostles did not change his message, directly counteracting the claims he was teaching a watered-down version of the Gospel.

Galatians 2:8-9 – Paul's ministry and teaching were theologically, verbally, and publicly approved.

Galatians 2:16 – Paul reminds Peter of the Gospel that unified them. If God does not require circumcision to accept the Gentiles, then how can Peter reject them? We are justified by faith and nothing else.

Galatians 2:21 – There are two foundations of Christianity—the death/resurrection of Jesus and the free gift of grace to those who believe in Him. Any work added to the Gospel nullifies grace, because it's based on our own works to bring salvation. If we can save ourselves by our own works, then Jesus died for nothing.

⁵ John R. Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, (InterVarsity, 2010), 25-32

⁶ Ibid, 33-41

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2 I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

6 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

Paul Opposes Cephas⁷

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

15 “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 16 know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

17 “But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn’t that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker. 19 “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

– Galatians 1:1-24

⁷ After meeting Jesus, Simon was given the nickname Cephas/Peter (John 1:40-42). Cephas (Aramaic) and Petros/Peter (Greek) are the same word in two languages meaning rock.



Day 1: Galatians 2:1-10

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 2: Galatians 2:11-21

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.



STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: Acts 11:1-18

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Romans 3:21-31

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 5: Galatians 2:1-21

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.

SESSION 2 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION – WHOSE APPROVAL ARE YOU SEEKING?

GET STARTED

- What's the funniest or most embarrassing moment when you have forgotten something? What happened as a result? How did you realize your mistake?
- Who or what is most likely to influence you? Examples: TV, social media, internet, family, friends, the Bible, spouse, news, celebrity.

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 2: Gospel Justification at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 2:1-10

- The Judaizers were claiming that Paul didn't have authority and that the Gospel he was preaching was insufficient. Paul knew his Gospel was from Jesus and seeks unity with the Apostles to counteract these false teachers. **If the Apostles had agreed with the Judaizers and made the opposite decision, how would the truth of the Gospel have been lost?**
- From this meeting, Paul and the Apostles are unified on two important things: the Gospel and taking care of the poor. **How are these two things related? What is one next step you need to take to intentionally serve others in need?**

Read Galatians 2:11-21

- This was not a case of separation of believers and unbelievers. Both the Judaizers and Gentile Christians believed in Jesus. The separation came from Judaizers adding Jewish customs on top of faith to truly be saved. **Today, what nonessential customs do Christians sometimes force on each other? Why is it wrong to make such customs a basis for fellowship/community?**

- Out of fear of losing the approval of the Judaizers, Peter forgot the heart of the Gospel that had changed his life. **What are some of the pressures you face that distract you from following through with what you believe God wants you to do? In what areas of life do you try to earn the approval of yourself, other people, or even God in your own effort?**
- Reflect back on the influence Peter had on others (vv.12-13). **How does it encourage or challenge you that your relationship with God can help others draw near or move away from Jesus? How can you be more intentional with your faith and the influence you have on others in your life (family, friends, co-workers, etc.)?**
- We all need someone like Paul in our lives who is willing to speak truth and encourage us in our relationship with God. **Do you have someone like that in your life? If so, share a story of how they have helped you grow in your faith. If not, how can you seek out or what is hindering you from developing this type of relationship?**
- When Paul realized Peter was acting out of line with the Gospel, he began to unpack justification by faith (vv.15-20). **Based on the passage and your daily reading, what does it mean to be justified by faith? How would you explain “justification by faith” in your own words to someone else?**
- Reread Galatians 2:20. Paul’s life was so completely changed by the Gospel that he could write these words. **How have you experienced “Christ living in you” influencing your actions and thoughts? Practically, what does it look like to live out Galatians 2:20 in your life this week?**

LIVE IT OUT

Paul lived by and under the Gospel. What does it look like to bring every aspect of your life under the Gospel (mind, emotions, actions, etc.)? Are you aware of and making the decision to bring the Gospel into your life daily? This week, take a moment each morning to reflect on the coming day. How will the Gospel impact what you do and how you do it?

Daily Bible Study: Take 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don’t think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Your time with God will transform you and help encourage others. Come ready to discuss what you are learning at the next group session.

Memorize: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

– Galatians 2:20



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 2

GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION – WHOSE APPROVAL ARE YOU SEEKING?

To refresh on “How To”, check out the Family Conversations Guide (pg. 28).

SCRIPTURE

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

– **Galatians 2:21**

DEVOTION

There are lots of things in our lives that have to be earned. Whether that is putting in time studying to earn good grades, completing certain chores at home to earn an allowance, or taking the time to practice driving so you can earn your license. There are certain things that will require work on our part to accomplish a desired goal or to be rewarded for our efforts. However, there are some things in life that we receive without having to do any work at all! Think about your birthday. You get an entire day where people celebrate you just for being you! No strings attached! Now, imagine that your birthday depended on your behavior throughout the year. If you are good enough, then you get a birthday! If you are not so good, well, better luck next year.

In chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul points out to one of his friends, Peter, that he has taken a step backwards in his faith. Out of fear of what some people might think of him, Peter made the decision to separate himself from the Gentiles (people that believed in Jesus but did not follow the old Jewish rules). Paul tells him that his actions are not lining up with the Gospel that he is preaching. His actions were saying that more is required of these new Jesus followers, and that simply believing in Jesus was not enough. Peter was communicating that until you begin to live like us, I can't hang out with you. Paul reminds Peter that the work it takes to follow the law (Old Testament rules) can never earn him the grace that Jesus gives us for free!

CONVERSATION

- How would you feel if your birthday depended on your behavior throughout the year?
- What does it mean to earn something? Can we earn God's love and forgiveness? Why or why not?
- Have you ever made a decision that you shouldn't have because other people were watching you? How did that go? As a family, talk through some wise decision-making around peer pressure.
- Why do you think Paul says that if, "Righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing"? What does this tell us about the importance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross?


PRAYER

Together as a family, thank God for the incredible gift of His grace. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify moments where you may be trying to earn God's love and forgiveness. Pray that you would encourage one another and stand strong in your faith.

Session 3

GOSPEL FREEDOM - THE WEIGHT OF OUR SIN





Have you ever heard the phrase, “If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is”? You may have said it in regard to a deal on a purchase or when a gift is offered. Many times, this cautionary phrase helps us avoid being manipulated. In Galatians 3, this phrase was being applied to the Gospel. The Galatians had started with grace, but were influenced to believe that receiving the Gospel required extra efforts. In the case of the Gospel, it is something that is both true and too good. We just have to receive it through faith.

Paul spends most of this chapter in the Old Testament. He proves that Abraham’s faith was credited as righteous before the Old Testament Law existed. If it’s the Gospel alone that saves, then why did the Old Testament Law exist? This was the question the Judaizers and the Galatians were wrestling with. The purpose of the Law was to increase the weight of sin and point to a Savior. There are two responses to this truth. Either I attempt to save myself, trying to balance the weight of sin by being a good person. Or, I despair in my sin and cry out to a Savior to deal with my sin problem. The first doesn’t resolve sin and imprisons us in a never-ending cycle of effort and guilt. The second sets us free from sin to live in gratitude for what Jesus has done for us.

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 3:6 – Paul references Genesis 15:6 to emphasize that Abraham was justified by faith and not his works (law-keeping).

Galatians 3:7-9 – Abraham was the father of the Jewish people, and all Jews considered themselves his descendants. Paul references Genesis 12:1-3 when God promises to bless all people through Abraham, foreshadowing the Gospel. Through faith, Jew and Gentile become spiritual descendants of Abraham to share in the promises given to him.

Galatians 3:19 – Paul shows that the Old Testament Law was given to reveal sin (Romans 3:20, 5:20-21) and not attended to achieve righteousness. Its purpose is to reveal our need for a Savior.

Galatians 3:23-25 – The Old Testament Law was given to teach us about sin. It revealed our diagnosis but couldn’t resolve it. As a result, we are prisoners to the guilt and shame of sin, because we can never live up to its standard. Only Jesus could live up to it and take on our sin through the cross to set us free.

Faith or Works of the Law

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? 4 Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? 5 So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

6 So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The Law and the Promise

15 Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed, meaning one person, who is Christ. 17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. 19 Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. 20 A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one. 21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Children of God

23 Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. 24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

– Galatians 3:1-25



Day 1: Galatians 3:1-14

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

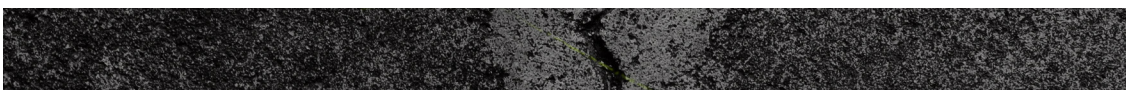
STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.





Day 2: Galatians 3:15-25

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

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STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: Genesis 12:1-5 & 15:1-6

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

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STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Romans 4:9-25

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 5: Galatians 3:1-25

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.

SESSION 3 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOSPEL FREEDOM – THE WEIGHT OF OUR SIN

GET STARTED

- Growing up, who was the disciplinarian in your family? When you broke the rules, what was the worst form of punishment you could receive (more chores, no TV, no phone, no friends, no car, no activities, etc.)? How were grace and forgiveness offered in your family?
- Do you ever have a hard time accepting gifts? Do you feel like you have to reciprocate the gift or need to have earned it in order to receive it? What might condition us to be this way?

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 3: Gospel Freedom at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 3:1-5

- Sometimes, the Gospel just sounds too good to be true. **What has been your experience with Christianity? Did you initially understand it as something based on faith or on rules? How has your perspective changed over the years?**
- In verse 3, Paul asks the Galatians if they are trying to attain their goal by human effort? This question points out that they were raising personal accomplishment and relying on religious legalism over the Gospel. **What happens when you try to follow God by your own religious or moral effort? How do you recognize when you're living by human effort rather than the Spirit?**

Read Galatians 3:6-14

- Paul uses four words several times in a few verses—"bless," "righteous," "curse," and "law." **What do you notice about these words in the passage? Lately, have you been feeling more blessed or cursed?**
- Paul turned to the Old Testament as evidence that we are justified by faith alone. **Think about how this truth might have sounded to the Jews trying to earn salvation through the Old Testament Law. How would it make you feel to discover that everything you had ever worked for was now available for free?**

- **Read James 2:14-26.** Faith and works interact differently in the context of salvation and Gospel living. While Paul and James both discuss faith and works, Paul focuses on coming to Christ, while James emphasizes living in Christ. **What insights can be drawn from these passages regarding the roles of faith and living out the Gospel?**

Read Galatians 3:19-25

- Look back over the passage. **How does the Law prepare us for grace? What difference does it make when you base your relationship with God on how well you keep a list of rules, rather than living so that God accepts you through faith? When are you most tempted to look to your own efforts to make yourself acceptable to God?**
- Faith sets us free from the imprisonment of sin. **What are some of the changes that have occurred in your life since embracing the freedom of the Gospel?**
- Even though we are free in Christ, the journey of faith can still be filled with struggles, as evident in Galatians. It's common for us to fall back into our former way of life, even though it was a prison. Thankfully, Christ offers us daily doses of grace, freedom, and guidance. **Is there a specific aspect of Gospel freedom that you're finding challenging in your life right now? How can we, as a group, support and pray for each other in overcoming these challenges?**

LIVE IT OUT

How have you experienced freedom in Christ since becoming a Christian? This week, take some time to compile a list of all of these experiences. Afterwards, spend some time thanking God for setting you free. In response to your freedom, consider sharing your list and thankfulness with a friend.

Daily Bible Study: Take 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don't think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Your time with God will transform you and help encourage others. Come ready to discuss what you are learning at the next group session.

Memorize: *But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.*

– **Galatians 3:22**



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 3

GOSPEL FREEDOM – THE WEIGHT OF OUR SIN

To refresh on “How To”, check out the Family Conversations Guide (pg. 28).

SCRIPTURE

So the law was our guardian until Christ came so that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

– **Galatians 3:24-25**

DEVOTION

When was the last time your parent(s) went out to dinner, a weekend away, or even just to run some errands? They probably had someone stay with you while they were gone. A babysitter, a grandparent, or maybe even an older sibling was placed in charge to watch over you. This guardian was given the responsibility to care for you, protect you, and make sure that you behaved in a manner that would honor your parent(s). They had been given a job to do—to guide and direct you in the way of your parents until they return.

In Galatians chapter 3, Paul uses a similar illustration to help people understand the relationships between the Old Testament Law and this newfound freedom through Jesus. Paul compares the Old Testament Law to a Greek/Roman babysitter. They were a member of the household who was entrusted with caring for and protecting the children from age 6 until 18. They disciplined, taught them morals, and corrected them when they misbehaved. Once the children were old enough, they no longer had a need for this guardian. Paul's comparison suggests that God's Law provided protection and discipline in the Old Testament until the time was right for Jesus to come. The Law could not save us and make us right with God, but Jesus could!

CONVERSATION

- A lot of times, those entrusted with our care can have a lasting impact. Who was or is your favorite babysitter? What makes them your favorite? Make sure your parent(s) think back and answer these questions too!
- Sometimes it can seem like our behavior is what God cares about most. Have you ever felt this way? Why?
- What if God only cared about our behavior? Describe how a relationship with that kind of god would look.
- Does God's free gift of grace encourage you to be obedient to him? Why or why not?

PRAYER

As a family, ask God to help you remember that your relationship with Him is not based on your performance, but on your faith in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to rely on grace and live in a way that honors God.

Session 4

GOSPEL IDENTITY - FINDING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A decorative yellow line that starts with a horizontal stroke and ends with a small, elegant curve.

Who do you see when you look into the mirror? Do you see insecurities surrounding appearance, significance, or acceptance? Do you see race, occupation, social status, or family? Do you see guilt, shame, addiction, or denial? All these things might describe something about us, but they don't define who we are at our core. In Galatians, everything has been leading to this moment. When we are aligned, justified, and freed by the Gospel, we are given a new identity as adopted sons and daughters in God's family. We are heirs with an inheritance that promises a relationship with God, a spirit-filled life, and an eternity in Heaven. This one truth defines, redefines, and redeems everything in our lives, because that is what happens when Christ is formed in us. This is what the Gospel does in our lives. It changes the person we see in the mirror, because our identity is found in nothing else but the love of God as His son or daughter.

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 3:26-27 – Baptism, Greek *baptizo* meaning to immerse, is a symbol of identification with Christ. Baptism is the outward sign of an inward change. The natural response of being united with Christ in faith (salvation) is to be united with Him through baptism (obedience). Baptism is a picture of being fully immersed into the life of Christ.

Galatians 3:28 – As sons and daughters, we are united in Christ. There is no distinction of race, social status, or gender. We are equal in our need for salvation, inability to earn it, and longing to be set free. This does not mean that these distinctions no longer exist, but that our value and fellowship is found in Christ.⁸

Galatians 4:6 – Justification says that we are made right before God. Adoption says that we are loved by God and invited into a relationship with Him.

Galatians 4:19 – Paul is not just satisfied with Christ dwelling in them; he wants them to be shaped into His likeness.

Galatians: 4:21-31 – Abraham had two sons. Ishmael was born to Hagar when Abraham was unwilling to wait for God's promise and took matters into his own hands (Genesis 16). Issac was born as the child promised to Abraham (Genesis 12, 15). Just as in Galatians 3, Paul is illustrating how the Law cannot bring about salvation. The person who makes the Law the principle of their life will be a slave to it. The person who makes the Gospel/grace the principle of their life will be set free. The true descendents of Abraham are not physical, but spiritual.⁹

⁸ John R. W. Stott, *The Message Of Galatians*, (InterVarsity, 2020), 74.

⁹ William Barclay, *The Letters To The Galatians And Ephesians*, (St. Andrew, 1958), 43-46.

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

12 I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, 14 and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15 Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. 18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. 19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

24 These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: "Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

28 Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30 But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." 31 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

– Galatians 3:26-4:31



Day 1: Galatians 3:26-4:7

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

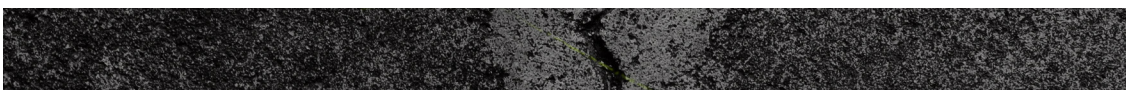
STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.





Day 2: Galatians 4:8-20

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

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STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: Romans 6:1-14

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Colossians 3:12-17

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment "I will" statements.



Day 5: Galatians 3:26-4:31

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.

SESSION 4 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOSPEL IDENTITY – FINDING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

GET STARTED

- In your family, how far back can you trace your spiritual roots?
- Have you ever received an interesting or valuable inheritance? Do you have some items that you would like to hand down to future generations in your family?

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 4: Gospel Identity at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**
- We're at the halfway point of the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study! Reflect back over what you have learned in the past 3 sessions. **What has been the most impactful thing so far? Why does that stand out to you?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 3:26-4:7

- Look back over the passage, paying attention to the references to Jesus. **What are all the things that happen in, with, and through Jesus?**
- J. I. Packer writes, "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all."¹⁰ **How does it make you feel that you are a beloved son or daughter of God? How does this truth impact the way you view yourself? How does this impact the way you view God?**
- Through faith, we are not just adopted into the family. We are given a new identity filled with the Holy Spirit and an inheritance of eternity with God. Read through the *Identity as an Adopted Child of God* resource (pg. 125). **Of all these characteristics and promises, which encourage and stand out to you? Why?**
- Verse 28 reminds us that God loves us unconditionally, regardless of race, social status, or gender. **What difference does it make in a relationship when love or approval is conditional? What difference does it make when you know that you are loved unconditionally?**

¹⁰ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (InterVarsity, 1973), 201.

Read Galatians 4:8-20

- Through this letter, Paul is passionately trying to course-correct and realign the Galatians with the Gospel. **Have you ever witnessed someone drift away from the truth of Jesus Christ over time? How did it make you feel? What kind of response did it prompt in you?**
- Think about the family and friends entrusted to you. **How deeply do you care about the spiritual welfare of those around you (v.19)? How can you be more intentional about caring for the spiritual growth of others?**
- Godly character and identity comes from God. The only way that we receive it is by listening, learning, and spending time with our Heavenly Father. **What are some of the obstacles that keep you from spending time with God and depending on Him? What can you do this week to grow in deepening your relationship with God? As a group, how can we help?**

Read Galatians 4:21-31

- Paul again reminds the Galatians that it is through God's promises that we receive salvation and not upon our own efforts. It is interesting to note that the persecution of believers born by God's promise is not from unbelievers (v.29). It is coming from believers relying on religious practices and legalism. **Within God's family, how do we often tear each other down? How should we build each other up? As a group, how can we intentionally deepen our community to help each other grow as followers of Jesus?**

LIVE IT OUT

In what ways do you struggle to live in your identity as a son or daughter of God? Reflect back over the *Identity as an Adopted Child of God* resource (pg. 125). Is there an area God is calling you to purposefully live out as His child. With these truths in mind, who do you need to remind of their status as a child of God?

Daily Bible Study: Take 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don't think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Your time with God will transform you and help encourage others. Come ready to discuss what you are learning at the next group session.

The Fruit Of The Spirit: In preparation for Session 5, complete the *Fruit Of The Spirit In Our Lives* exercise (pg. 126-133).

Memorize: *So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.*

– Galatians 4:7



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 4

GOSPEL IDENTITY – FINDING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

To refresh on “How To”, check out the Family Conversations Guide (pg. 28).

SCRIPTURE

Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

– **Galatians 4:6-7**

DEVOTION

We can place a lot of value on the things that we are good at (i.e. sports, art, music, school, etc.). But, we also tend to take away value because of the things we are not good at. We may see someone who is gifted at a sport and think less of ourselves because we can’t compete at the same level. Thankfully, God does not measure us the same way we measure ourselves! God’s love is unconditional, and there is nothing we can accomplish to make Him love us more, and there is nothing we may fail at to make Him love us less. We were created by Him to reflect His image, and He loves us simply for being His.

In chapter 4, Paul is reminding the Galatians of their new identity. They are no longer outside of God’s family, but have been adopted as sons and daughters! Not only that, they are given the Holy Spirit, a new Guardian and Guide to help them grow in their love for God. Some people in the church tried to convince them that following the old law/rules was the true evidence of their love and devotion to God. But, the Law can never produce obedience; only love can do that!

CONVERSATION

- What is something that you are good at? What is something that you are not so good at? Have you ever felt that people treat you differently based on your abilities?
- Have you ever felt that God's love for you was conditional? When do you feel like God loves you more or less?
- What are some practical ways we as a family can remind one another of our identity in Christ when we face challenges or difficult situations?
- Take some time to talk through the roles the Holy Spirit plays in our lives as sons and daughters of God. How have you seen the Spirit do these things in your own life and the life of your family?
 - Teaches and reminds (John 14:26)
 - Convicts us of sin (John 16:7-8)
 - Helps us discern truth (John 16:13-15)
 - Promises eternal life (Romans 8:10-11)
 - Helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26-27)
 - Gives godly wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
 - Gives us unique giftings (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
 - Helps us be obedient (Galatians 5:16-22)
 - Reminds us that Jesus is coming back (Ephesians 1:13)

PRAYER

As a family, thank God for his unconditional love. Ask Him to remind you of your identity as His beloved sons and daughters. Pray that you would learn to rely on the Holy Spirit's direction and leading in your life.

Session 5

**GOSPEL CHARACTER -
WHO IS PRODUCING
FRUIT?**



Have you ever attempted to grow and cultivate a garden from seeds? Whether it's vegetables or flowers, it takes time, care, sun, watering, fertilizer, and the occasional protection from animals. This is what Paul has been doing in the life of the Galatians for the past 4 chapters. He has been reminding them of the Gospel seed that was planted, and he wants them to know what God wants to produce in their lives.

Galatians 5:5-6b says, *“For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ... The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”* In the Christian life, we are set free by the Gospel work of Jesus Christ. It is through the Holy Spirit that we live by faith in hopeful anticipation of Heaven. It is through the Spirit that our faith produces Fruit and good works. These are not to earn acceptance of God, but they are in response to being accepted by God. The primary role of the Holy Spirit is to transform us into the image of Jesus. The problem is that we have an ongoing conflict between the Spirit and our sinful nature. The good news is that we have grace and a Holy Spirit willing to spend our lifetime cultivating the garden of our soul. Whether it's ripe or rotten, fruit will be produced by the desires we pursue in our lives. It's just a matter of who is producing the fruit?

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 5:1 – One of the most essential verses in the whole book of Galatians. Literally translated, it says, “For freedom Christ freed you.” It refers to a single action that has been completed.¹¹

Galatians 5:13 – Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. Using our freedom as a license to sin separates us from the very Spirit that set us free. The reason Christ sets us free is so we can love and serve others. Verses 19-23 compares and contrasts our sinful natures and loving others.¹²

Galatians 5:22-23 – See *The Fruit Of The Spirit In Our Lives* (pg. 126).

Galatians 5:25 – The Greek word translated as “live by” is used of a farmer herding cattle and wind driving a ship. The Greek word translated “keep in step” literally refers to people lining up behind a leader. The Spirit will lead, and we are called to keep in step.¹³

¹¹ Timothy Keller, *Galatians For You* (The Good Book Company, 2013) 131.

¹² John R. W. Stott, *The Message Of Galatians*, (InterVarsity, 2020), 109-111.

¹³ Ibid, 119-120.

Freedom in Christ

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. 7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." 10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. 11 Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. 12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

– Galatians 5:1-26



Day 1: Galatians 5:1-15

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

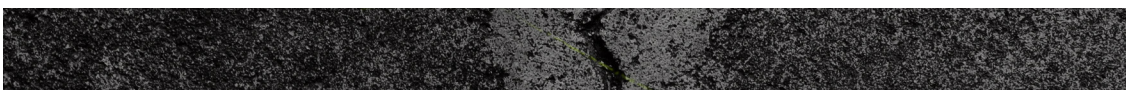
STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.





Day 2: Galatians 5:16-26

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

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STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

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What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: John 15:1-17

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

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STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Romans 8:1-17



STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 5: Galatians 5:1-26

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



SESSION 5 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOSPEL CHARACTER – WHO IS PRODUCING FRUIT?

GET STARTED

- Have you ever planted and grown something from seed? If so, how did the process go? What did you learn along the way?
- What is your favorite form of competition (sport, TV show, game, debate, etc.)? What about it makes it so compelling for you?

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 5: Gospel Character at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 5:1-12

- Verse 1 is a key verse to the entire letter to the Galatians. **How do you define freedom? When in your life have you felt the most free?**
- The Gospel set the Galatians free from sin, but, like all of us, they were struggling with the truth that God accepted them. **What is the freedom that is found in the grace of God? How is it similar to or different from other types of freedom?**
- Paul expands the idea of freedom and instructs us to use our freedom to serve others (vv.6,13-14). **What would motivate Paul to instruct us to use our freedom in that way? How does the Gospel truly free us to love God and others?**
- Paul uses one of his go-to metaphors about running a race to describe faith and following Jesus (v.7). **When have you been running a good race in your faith, but something hindered your progress or caused you to stumble? What role does hope (v.5) play in helping us get back to running the good race?**

Read Galatians 5:16-26

- Reflect back over the *Recognizing the Fruit of the Spirit* exercise you completed this week (pg. 131).
 - **What did you learn about the fruit of the Spirit?**
 - **Which characteristics come most easily for you? Which are the least natural for you?**
 - **Which of the fruit of the Spirit do you need to ask God to cultivate more in your life?**
 - **What is one next step you can take to allow God to better cultivate this fruit in your life?**
- Galatians 5:16-26 sets up a conflict between our sinful nature and the fruit the Holy Spirit wants to produce in our lives. **What do you learn about our sinful nature and how it works? In our culture, how do you see the characteristics of our sinful nature celebrated or promoted? What negative effects do these have on society, even if people care nothing about God?**
- Paul reminds us that there is a spiritual battle going on within us (v.17). It is a matter of who is producing fruit in our lives: the desires of our sinful nature or the desires of the Holy Spirit. **In your own life, how do you feel the tension with this inner spiritual battle? As you get older do you find this battle easier, harder, or different?**
- Our freedom in Christ sets the stage for us to live life by the Spirit. **How can you actively and practically “keep in step with the Spirit” in your daily life (5:25)? As a group, how can we pray for each other and the fruit that the Holy Spirit wants to produce in our lives?**

LIVE IT OUT

Do you often follow your own course, or do you lean on God to guide you? Being led by and keeping in step with the Holy Spirit is a lifelong grace-filled journey. Look back over the next steps in *How Do I Cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit* (pg. 132). Which do you need to pursue? At the same time, the fruit of the Spirit is cultivated in relationships. This is one of the many reasons Paul tells us to use our freedom in Christ to love and serve others (vv.5:6,13-14). What is a specific way you can use your freedom in Christ to serve someone else this week? The answers to these questions may just allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate and produce more fruit in your life.

Daily Bible Study: Take 30 minutes each day to complete the daily study guide. Don't think of it as homework, but relational time growing alongside your Heavenly Father. Your time with God will transform you and help encourage others. Come ready to discuss what you are learning at the next group session.

Memorize: *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

– Galatians 5:25



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 5

GOSPEL CHARACTER – WHO IS PRODUCING FRUIT?

To refresh on “How To”, check out the Family Conversations Guide (pg. 28).

SCRIPTURE

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

– **Galatians 5:24-25**

DEVOTION

Have you ever grown a garden from seed? Or maybe a flower in a pot? There’s some preparation required. You need to find a suitable spot and create the right soil. Next, there are some ongoing tasks to ensure the plant has the right environment to grow, like sunlight, water, and/or pulling weeds. The interesting thing is, even with all that preparation and work, we can’t make the seed grow. We can do everything in our power to create the best environment for the plant to thrive, but after that it is out of our hands.

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is similar. Our responsibility is to create an environment in our lives where the fruit of the Spirit has the ability to grow and thrive. This involves Bible reading, prayer, worship, and spending time with other people who love Jesus. It also includes listening to and following the Spirit’s leading in our lives. This helps us pull some “spiritual weeds” and remove sin that we can get tangled up in. When we cultivate the soil and allow the Spirit to work, He produces fruit in our lives.

One important thing to remember is that the fruit the Spirit produces in our life is not for us! This fruit is not to be put on display, because it is given as a blessing to those who are in need of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and all the other graces of the Spirit. In this way, we acknowledge that it is the Spirit at work in our life and brings glory to God.

CONVERSATION

- Has your family ever attempted to grow anything? What was the work involved? How did the plant(s) do?
- Read through the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. For more insight, read through the definitions and Scripture for the fruit of the Spirit (pg. 127-130). Together, discuss how well you see the fruits of the Spirit on display in the life of your family. Which fruit comes naturally for your family? What fruit do you see in one another? Which fruit needs some intentional cultivation?
- What are some practical steps our family can take to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit? How can we create a home environment that fosters the fruit of the Spirit?

PRAYER

Together as a family, thank God for the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit and that you would be able to cultivate a life where the Spirit can thrive. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of any areas in your life or family that needs to be addressed to create more room for growth. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue his work of cultivating fruit in your life and family.

Session 6

**THE GOSPEL & OTHERS -
FINDING LIFE-CHANGING
COMMUNITY**

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Evidence is something that is presented in support of the truth or to bring accuracy to a claim. Galatians 6 is a direct follow-up to the claims of Galatians 5. What does it mean to live by and keep in step with the Spirit? John Stott writes, “The first and great evidence of our living by the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit is not some private mystical experience of our own, but our practical relationships of love with other people. And this is only logical, since the first fruit of the Spirit is love.”¹⁴

The Spirit-filled life was not meant to be lived out in isolation. In chapter 6 of Galatians, Paul calls us to live out our faith in biblical community. This type of community is a place defined by cultivation of the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23), restoration (6:1), carrying burdens (6:2), humility (6:3), building one another up (6:6), personal growth (6:7-8), and serving others and doing good (6:9-10). To see the evidence of the Spirit working in our lives, we need to live it out in relationships with others. The questions we have to ask are, “How are we living out the work of the Spirit, and are we pursuing a life-changing community?”

IMPORTANT VERSES

Galatians 6:1 – The Greek for “caught in sin” refers to a temporary lapse or stumble on a dangerous path. The Greek for “restore” refers to a repair or setting of a broken bone. The verb tense of “restore” implies that this is an ongoing activity in biblical community.¹⁵

Galatians 6:2-5 – We must be humble to help carry the burdens of others and willing to share our own. Burdens and loads are not contradictory. Burdens are a heavy weight that someone cannot carry alone. A load refers to taking responsibility for our own actions. This type of load cannot be shared with others.

Galatians 6:9 – Serving others can be tiring/frustrating, and Paul reminds us to not give up. There is a promise of a harvest at the proper time, whether it’s now or in Heaven.

Galatians 6:11,14 – Paul writes in big and bold letters to emphasize his point, similar to writing in all CAPS. This reinforces the whole point of his letter to the Galatians, to boast in nothing but the Gospel of Jesus Christ. changing community?”

¹⁴ John R. W. Stott, *The Message Of Galatians*, (InterVarsity, 2020), 122

¹⁵ William Barclay, *The Letters To The Galatians And Ephesians*, (St. Andrew, 1958), 58..

Doing Good to All

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load. 6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but the New Creation

11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

12 Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. 16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.

17 From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

– Galatians 6:1-18



Day 1: Galatians 6:1-10

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

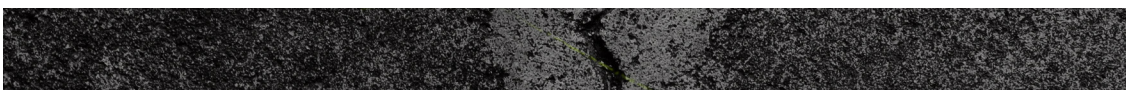
STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.





Day 2: Galatians 6:11-18

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.



STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 3: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 4: Romans 12:9–18

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



Day 5: Galatians 6:1-18

STEP 1: PRAY & PREPARE

Take a moment to pray and invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Ask Him to teach and speak to your heart. Spend time turning over anything that may be distracting you.

STEP 2: OBSERVE

Slowly read the passage of Scripture multiple times. Use some of the suggestions in the Observation Toolbox (pg. 9). Write your observations below.

STEP 3: SEEK OUT

Use other Bible translations, study Bible notes, and commentaries to answer questions, expand connections, and affirm (or correct) your observations from STEP 2. Along the way, continue to add new observations and insights.

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION

What does this passage teach me about God and following Him?

What is God saying to me as I read His Word and listen to His voice?

Who in my life needs to hear this story/passage of Scripture?

What do I need to do to obey Him? Use tangible and practical commitment “I will” statements.



SESSION 6 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE GOSPEL & OTHERS – FINDING LIFE-CHANGING COMMUNITY

GET STARTED

- What are some defining characteristics and/or traditions that are unique to your family? How do these things show that you are a part of your family?
- What is an area of life (career, health, activity/hobby, etc.) where you've grown significantly over time. What did you do to pursue that growth?

TAKE IT IN

- Watch Session 6: The Gospel & Others at mynorthside.com/galatians. **What encouraged or challenged you from the video and/or daily study guide this week?**

TALK IT OVER

Read Galatians 6:1-10

- Paul begins this section with the phrase “brothers and sisters” (v.1) and ends it with “family of believers” (v.10). **How do these phrases shape your understanding of church community and Christian life? How have you experienced the family-like nature of life in Christ? In what ways is this evident in your church?**
- One thing is for certain, we will all stumble and fall as we follow Jesus. The good news—God offers grace. Also, we are called to surround ourselves with believers to help encourage and restore us when we fall down. **Have you ever had someone confront you about something you shouldn't be doing? How did you respond to it? Have you ever confronted someone else? How did it go?**
- Burdens (v.2) can be summed up with the responsibilities, problems, and difficulties life brings. Carrying burdens means supporting, helping carry the weight, and serving one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13-14). **What burdens have others helped you carry, and how did their love/service affect you? As a group, what does it look like to help carry each other's burdens?**

- The implication of verse 3 is that if we are unwilling to carry each other's burdens, then it is because we think we are above it. **How can our own pride and self-importance be the biggest hindrance to a servant's heart?**
- Take another look at Galatians 6:9-10. **What could cause us to become weary of doing good? What encourages you to continue to stay the course and not give up? Looking out into this week, where do you have an opportunity to do good?**

Read Galatians 6:11-18

- Verse 14 might just sum up the whole letter to the Galatians. **What does it mean to boast in the cross? What does this look like every day? How does Paul say the cross should affect your view of the world?**
- Pauls ends his letter to the Galatians having reinforced his apostleship and, more importantly, the Gospel. He has called the Galatians to align with the Gospel, to seek approval only from God, to find freedom in grace, form their identity as sons and daughters, allow the Holy Spirit to produce fruit, and live in community. Finally, he offers thanksgiving and encouragement for the spiritual journey ahead. **What are some specific things you are grateful for in your faith journey?**
- Take a moment to reflect on the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study. **What did you learn about God, the Gospel, humanity, and yourself? What has been your greatest takeaway from this study through Galatians?**

LIVE IT OUT

Community is an essential piece to continue growing in our faith. It's an environment that helps us cultivate the fruit of the Spirit and live it out. How has God worked through community to help you grow in your faith during the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study? What are your next steps to continue growing in the community?

Daily Bible Study: Throughout the *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* study, you have spent 30 minutes each day completing the daily study guide. As this study comes to an end, **how will you continue to make time in God's Word a regular part of your life?** While there are many options to continue this spiritual habit, we recommend selecting another book of the Bible and to continue using the POST Bible study method.

Memorize: *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

– **Galatians 6:14**



FAMILY CONVERSATIONS: SESSION 6

THE GOSPEL & OTHERS – FINDING LIFE-CHANGING COMMUNITY

To refresh on “How To”, check out the Family Conversations Guide (pg 28).

SCRIPTURE

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
– **Galatians 6:2**

DEVOTION

Burdens come in all shapes and sizes. Some of them can easily be seen from the outside, like when your parent(s) come home with a car full of groceries and need help carrying them inside. Sometimes, burdens can be hidden and can only be seen when someone talks about them, like when you are upset because someone said something mean to you. Just like a heavy bag of groceries, sometimes facing something hard or feeling sad can almost feel “heavy”! It weighs you down and makes you feel tired, but when someone helps you through it, you feel light again!

In the last chapter of Paul's letter, he is reminding and encouraging the Galatians to do one of the things that Jesus talked about most, caring for other people! The New Testament is full of “one another” commands. “Love one another;” “Care for one another;” “Serve one another.” You can find over 50 of these one-another phrases! As followers of Jesus, we are called to love God and love people.

CONVERSATION

- Have you ever helped a family member with something that they couldn't do by themselves? What do you remember about that moment?
- Have you ever had any burdens that no one could see? Has there been anything that you have been carrying by yourself that you haven't been sure how to talk about?
- What are some ways that we can better see the burdens of those around us? What are some things that help you identify when someone may be having a difficult time?
- How can we be more attentive to our family's burdens? What are some ways that we can carry each other's burdens?

PRAYER

As a family, thank God for the beautiful gift of community and that we do not have to go through life alone. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see the burdens of those around you and the courage to step up and help.

GALATIANS BACKGROUND



WHO WERE THE GALATIANS?

Galatia was a Roman province extending almost from coast to coast through what is now modern day Turkey. How much of it experienced the Gospel message is unknown. But, Acts 13 and 14 record how Paul founded churches in the southern Galatian cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Acts 16:6 and 18:23 record how Paul made two follow-up visits to the Galatia area. Most likely, the letter to the Galatians was written to the churches established in the southern cities.¹⁷

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTER?

In short, Paul. There has been widespread agreement among Bible scholars throughout history that Paul is the author. The first word of the book is Paul identifying himself as the author (Galatians 1:1).

WHEN WAS THE LETTER WRITTEN?

There is some debate among Bible scholars as to when the letter was written. Most likely, it was written around 48-49 AD making it one of Paul's first letters written to his church plants. This timeframe would place it after Paul planted the churches in Galatia and before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). This council specifically addressed some of the issues Paul is writing about in the letter concerning false teaching. In particular, the false teaching surrounding Gentile believers being required to follow Old Testament laws (i.e., circumcision) on top of faith in Jesus Christ. Several years later in his letter to the Romans, Paul addresses similar issues, but with less consideration. This was probably because of the widespread knowledge of the Jerusalem Council. As a result, Galatians seems to have an earlier date of authorship.¹⁸

WHY DID PAUL WRITE THE LETTER?

Not long after planting the churches in Galatia, Judaizers arrived on the scene. These Jewish Christians believed that the ceremonial practices of the Old Testament still applied to the New Testament church. In other words, you still had to follow Jewish Law (Old Testament) on top of faith in Jesus Christ. Paul had taught the Galatians that repentance and faith were the only requirements needed in order to receive grace, forgiveness, and new life in God (salvation). To make matters worse, these false teachers were claiming that Paul was not an authentic apostle (someone who had seen and been taught by Jesus) and did not have authority to teach. As a result, the Judaizers claimed Paul's message was flawed and that they had the correct teaching. Upon hearing this news, Paul is understandably upset and writes a strongly worded letter to the Galatians. In his letter, Paul reinforces his authority as an apostle. Also, he goes to great lengths to remind the Galatians that salvation is found in Christ alone and that nothing can be added to the Gospel. It is the "Good News," because through Jesus we find the free gift of grace through faith.¹⁹

¹⁶ Map, *Galatians*. www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/galatians-introduction

¹⁷ *Zondervan Handbook To The Bible* (Zondervan, 1999), 711.

¹⁸ *Zondervan Handbook To The Bible* (Zondervan, 1999), 711.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 711.



IMPORTANT WORDS IN GALATIANS

Apostle: In general, it means to send one on a mission. Specifically, this title was given to the 12 disciples and Paul. The disciples were personally called by Jesus, observed all that He taught, and were witnesses to the resurrection (except for Judas). Paul was also unique in encountering the resurrected Jesus and receiving a personal calling to teach. The title of Apostle gave them authority in the early church and is unparalleled today. A major theme of Galatians surrounds a group of false teachers (known as the Judaizers) questioning Paul's authority as an Apostle.²⁰

Circumcision: This is exactly what you think it is, but carries a deeper meaning and symbolism within the Jewish faith. The act symbolized submission to God through the Old Testament Law and belief in His covenant promise to bless all people through the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17). As a result, many Jewish Christians thought that you had to become a Jew (symbolized by circumcision) along with faith in Jesus to be saved. They missed the truth that Jesus fulfilled both the Law and the Old Testament, opening the door for all people to have a relationship with God. Through the Gospel, it is not about an outward change, but an inward one (heart). Paul writes about this in Philippians 3:3 (NLT), *"For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort."*²¹

The Flesh (Sinful Nature): Refers to our inner sinful desires and moral inadequacy. This sinful nature is in direct conflict with the wisdom, understanding, and plan of God. Our sinful nature rules unopposed, imprisoning us to face an inevitable spiritual death. The only way to overcome and break free is by faith in what Jesus did on the cross. He took on our sin and death to set us free. Upon this decision, the Holy Spirit steps into this inner battle to begin a process of renewal. Ephesians 4:22-24 refers to this as throwing off the old nature and putting on a new nature. This is a lifelong process of grace. While we will still battle our sinful nature, the ground it tries to take has already been claimed by the victory of the cross.²²

Gentile: Refers to a person who is not a Jew. Since Gentiles did not follow Old Testament Law, they were considered ceremonially unclean. Contact with a Gentile would, in turn, make a Jew ceremonially unclean. The Gospel says that Jew and Gentile are united under one banner in Jesus Christ, because the Kingdom of God is for all people (Galatians 3:26-29).²³

²⁰ Lawrence Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Biblical Words* (Zondervan, 1991), 59-60.

²¹ Ibid, 167-168.

²² Ibid, 282-285.

²³ Ibid, 303.

Gospel: Often referred to as “Good News.” This is the sum total of the saving truth about Jesus Christ as it is communicated to lost humanity. Our sin separates us from God and imprisons us to face a spiritual death. Jesus went to the cross, taking on our sin and dying in our place. Being the perfect Sacrifice, He is the only one qualified to take our place and the only one who could overcome death through His resurrection. Through faith in Jesus, the invitation is given to accept the free gift of grace/forgiveness. There is nothing we can do (good works) to earn this gift, because it is offered freely to everyone. When we accept it, we are forgiven, and our relationship with God is restored. Through our lifelong relationship with God, He works to transform our lives to reflect His image and draw others to the Gospel message.²⁴

Judaizers (False Teachers): In Galatians, these are the false teachers and gospel Paul refers to. This was a specific group of Jews who had accepted Christianity but believed that all of God’s promises were for the Jews alone. In order to receive salvation, Gentiles would need to convert to Judaism (Jewish faith/Old Testament Law) on top of placing their faith in Jesus Christ. Circumcision was a symbol of this conversion. This false teaching directly contradicted the Gospel and the sacrifice of Jesus for all people.²⁵

Justification: Means “to acquit,” “to vindicate,” “to pronounce righteous,” or “to have right standing.” The Gospel says we are justified by God only through faith in what Jesus Christ did on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Right standing is not produced in any way by our own efforts or good works. Justification by faith offers more than a one-time pardon of sin. Through faith, God declares a person righteous in a moment and continues to do so daily as He transforms them into who He declares them to be.²⁶

The Law: This refers to the Old Testament system of commandments and sacrifices surrounding worship and moral living. The Law served as a way to reveal sin but did not resolve it. In fact, the Old Testament Law can only increase sin by showing us how much we fall short of God’s standard. With the insurmountable weight of sin, the law points us to a Savior in Jesus. He was the only one to live a righteous life, fulfilling the Law which allowed Him to be a sacrifice in our place. Through faith in Jesus, we can find rescue and new life. The Law can only produce death (sin). Faith in Jesus creates a new spirit-filled life free from the weight of sin and produces godly character and works.²⁷

²⁴ Lawrence Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Biblical Words* (Zondervan, 1991), 316.

²⁵ William Barclay, *The Letters To The Galatians And Ephesians* (The Westminster Press, 1958), 2-3.

²⁶ Lawrence Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Biblical Words* (Zondervan, 1991), 372-374.

²⁷ Ibid, 389-398.

DAILY STUDY GUIDE RESOURCES

BIBLES

- **We highly recommend a good study Bible.** These Bibles often have introductions to books of the Bible, study notes throughout the margins, and reading/reference guides to help you study. Regarding translations, we recommend the English Standard Version (ESV), New International Version (NIV), or New Living Translation (NLT). The ESV is more of a literal word-for-word translation of Scripture. The NLT is a more of a thought-for-thought translation, focusing on being more accessible by communicating the general thought over literal translation. The NIV is a middle ground of word and thought between the ESV and NLT.

APPS

- **YouVersion Bible App:** This is one of the best free apps that allows you to read, study, and listen to the Bible on your mobile devices.
- **The Dwell Bible App:** This paid subscription app allows you to listen to Scripture in creative ways.

WEBSITES

- **www.bibleproject.com:** Website with study guides and videos on how to read the Bible and specific overviews/introductions to books of the Bible.
- **www.blueletterbible.org:** Access, through website or app, to free biblical reference guides, commentaries, and study tools.
- **www.enduringword.com:** Access, through website or app, to free commentary resources by David Guzik.
- **www.gotquestions.org:** Access, through website or app, to thousands of biblical questions and answers.

COMMENTARIES

- *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* by Craig S. Keener
- *The Bible Speaks Today Commentary Series* edited by J. A. Motyer and John Stott
- *The NIV Application Commentary Series* edited by Terry Muck

JOURNALS

- **ESV Scripture Journal:** This small resource pairs a book of the Bible with journal space. It allows you to record notes, observations, and insights alongside Scripture.
- **NIV Jesus Bible Journal:** This resource pairs a book of the Bible with journal space. Also, it includes study notes and articles from the NIV Jesus Bible.
- **NLT Filament Bible Journal:** This resource pairs a book of the Bible with journal space. Also, you can access the Filament Bible app to connect with study notes, devotionals, interactive maps, informative videos, and worship music.

IDENTITY AS AN ADOPTED CHILD OF GOD²⁸

- God is pleased with how He made me. **(GENESIS 1:31)**
- I am God's masterpiece. **(EPHESIANS 2:10)**
- I am a child of God. **(JOHN 1:12)**
- I am a son of God and an heir. **(GALATIANS 4:7)**
- I have been adopted as God's son. **(EPHESIANS 1:5)**
- I can call Christ brother. **(HEBREWS 2:11)**
- God raised me up with Christ and seated me with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ. **(EPHESIANS 2:6-7)**
- The Spirit of God dwells in me. **(1 CORINTHIANS 3:16)**
- Christ calls me friend. **(JOHN 15:15)**
- I am joined to the Lord, one spirit. **(1 CORINTHIANS 6:17)**
- I am a member of the body of Christ. **(1 CORINTHIANS 12:27)**
- I have been redeemed through God's grace. **(EPHESIANS 1:7)**
- I have been given fullness in Christ. **(COLOSSIANS 2:10)**
- I have received power through the Holy Spirit. **(ACTS 1:8)**
- I work together with Christ. **(2 CORINTHIANS 6:1)**
- I am a new creation in Christ. **(2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)**
- I am a minister of reconciliation. **(2 CORINTHIANS 5:18)**
- I am an ambassador for Christ. **(2 CORINTHIANS 5:20)**
- I am sealed with the Holy Spirit. **(EPHESIANS 1:13)**
- I may approach God with freedom and confidence. **(EPHESIANS 3:12)**
- Christ is the vine, I am a branch. **(JOHN 15:5)**
- I am the salt and light of the earth. **(MATTHEW 5:13-14)**
- The Lord renews my strength. **(ISAIAH 40:29)**
- I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.
- **(2 TIMOTHY 1:7)**
- I am created in Christ Jesus for good works. **(EPHESIANS 2:10)**
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. **(PHILIPPIANS 4:13)**
- Christ is with me always, even to the ends of the earth. **(MATTHEW 28:20)**
- I will have eternal glory. **(2 TIMOTHY 2:10)**

²⁸Adapted from Mariners Church's Rooted Identity Bookmark

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.***

– 1 Corinthians 3:17-18

The fundamental work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to transform us into the image of Jesus! This is the goal that we strive for, to not just know but to be like Jesus (Galatians 2:20). If that is the goal, then what are the characteristics of a person becoming more like Jesus? Galatians 5:22-23 says these are the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

Fruit is a natural product of a tree. If a tree is alive, then it will produce fruit, because that is the nature of a living tree. Christopher J.H. Wright writes, “These are the qualities that God himself will produce in a person’s everyday ordinary human life because the life of God himself is at work within them. The life of God (by his Spirit) will bear fruit in the tree of a person’s life simply because this is what God is like and this is what God produces.”²⁹ In other words, the fruit of the Spirit naturally flows out of those who live by and keep in step with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16,18,25). This is what the Holy Spirit wants to produce in our lives, but are we willing to let Him? We have a responsibility to cultivate it and allow Him to work.

Cultivating the fruit of the Spirit is a process, because godly character takes time. In fact, it takes a lifetime. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:22-24 (NLT), “**Throw off your old sinful nature** and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, **let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.**” This process of throwing off and putting on is a daily decision, often moment by moment. It is less about performance and more about who we are becoming. Cultivation begins with assessing the fruit in your life that the Holy Spirit is producing. This leads to celebration over what has been produced and realization over the areas we need to be more intentional about throwing off and putting on. In response, we continue to cultivate the soil, allowing the Holy Spirit to work (Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13).

Over the next few pages, you will find brief descriptions of the fruit of the Spirit. In each case, you will learn about the new and old nature we are called to put on and throw off. In response, you will be given a moment to assess how each godly character is present in your life. With each rating line, you will be given a fruit of the Spirit and its opposite characteristic. Using the rating line, place an X to indicate where you are in the process of developing each godly character. The closer the X is to the fruit of the Spirit, the more evident this characteristic is in your life.

²⁹ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating The Fruit Of The Spirit* (InterVarsity, 2017), 21-22.

LOVE

Love is not just some sentimental feeling of being nice. It is real, unconditional love that accepts, cares, provides, helps, encourages, and supports others when it costs a lot or hurts to do so. It is sacrificial, expecting nothing in return, and an unwavering commitment toward others. The opposite of the godly character of love is the characteristic of being self-serving in relationships.³⁰

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

– **1 John 4:7-8**

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

– **Mark 12:31**

JOY

God wants all of us to be filled with a joy that goes beyond happiness. This joy is rooted in the enjoyment, satisfaction, and delight of God. It is also fueled by the salvation (grace and hope) found through faith in Jesus Christ. This joy can be found in the midst of difficult circumstances, because it comes from an eternal, present, and faithful God. The opposite of the godly character of joy is the characteristic of being discontented or unsatisfied with God.³¹

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!”

– **John 15:11 (NLT)**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

– **Romans 15:13**

PEACE

This characteristic takes in both the peace of God and pursuing peace with others. The peace of God is confidence and rest in the wisdom and control of God, rather than in your own. The opposite of this peace is a lack of trust in God. When we lack trust, it usually leads us to worry, distress, or despair. Pursuing peace with others means to seek out, encourage, forgive, and humble ourselves (if need be) in an effort to restore a relationship. The opposite of peace with others is a prideful characteristic of an unwillingness to pursue it.³²

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

– **Philippians 4:6-7**

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

– **Romans 12:18**

³⁰ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating The Fruit Of The Spirit* (InterVarsity, 2017), 24.

³¹ Jerry Bridges, *The Fruitful Life* (NavPress, 2006), 61-72.

³² Ibid, 73-84.



PATIENCE

Patience is a godly characteristic of facing trouble or difficult circumstances and preserving without blowing up, getting angry, complaining, retaliating, or growing resentful. It is long-suffering, enduring, and willing to wait by trusting in the faithfulness of God. The opposite of patience is being impatient, resulting in the reaction responses above.³³

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

– **Psalm 40:1-2**

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

– **James 1:19**

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

– **Ephesians 4:2**

KINDNESS

Kindness is the desire for the happiness and care of others. It takes in our awareness of those around us and the thoughtfulness/encouragement we can express to them. Kindness is not an obligation but a choice to serve others. It shifts us from the preoccupation with ourselves to meeting the needs of others. The opposite of kindness is the characteristic of being too busy and unaware.³⁴

I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

– **Isaiah 63:7**

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

– **Ephesians 2:6-7**

³³ Timothy Keller, *Galatians For You* (The Good Book Company, 2013), 154.

³⁴ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating The Fruit Of The Spirit* (InterVarsity, 2017), 83-96.

GOODNESS

Goodness is integrity and being the same person in the ways we think, speak, and act in every situation. It overflows into being expressed through good works, because what we do shows who we are. It is doing good, because it is the right thing to do (even if it is hard). The opposite of goodness is the characteristic of being hypocritical or dishonest.³⁵

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

– **Matthew 5:16**

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

– **Ephesians 2:10**

FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness is being reliable, dependable, trustworthy, and loyal. It is keeping your promise/word with integrity, instead of being dishonest or deceiving. This isn’t confined to a moment in a specific situation but over a long period of time. This includes both your relationship with God and others. The opposite of faithfulness is the characteristic of being unreliable within relationships.³⁶

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

– **Luke 16:10 (ESV)**

He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

– **1 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NLT)**

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

– **Matthew 25:21**

³⁵ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating The Fruit Of The Spirit* (InterVarsity, 2017), 97-112.

³⁶ *ibid*, 113.

GENTLENESS

Gentleness is not weakness; it is power under control. It applies to the care in how we deal with others. A gentle response can still be strong, firm, and clear but without harshness or anger. Being gentle is showing respect to other people's opinions and ideas. It seeks to change minds and hearts through encouragement and consideration as opposed to domination and intimidation. It is quick to listen, understand, and seek wisdom. This is why gentleness and humility are often found together. The opposite of gentleness is the characteristic of being arrogant and harsh within relationships.³⁷

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

– **Matthew 11:28-30**

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

– **Ephesians 4:1b-2**

SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is better explained as surrendering to spirit-directed self-control. It is sound judgment in the healthy regulation of our desires, appetites, and attitudes. With the Spirit's direction and help, we are able to do, think, and say the things that are pleasing to God. At the same time, we can face temptation and spiritual battles and walk in obedience. The opposite of self-control is a characteristic of being undisciplined in surrendering of physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional desires.³⁸

Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

– **Proverbs 25:28**

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

– **1 Corinthians 9:24-25**

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ... We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

– **2 Corinthians 10:4,5b**

³⁷ Jerry Bridges, *The Fruitful Life* (NavPress, 2006), 121-129.

³⁸ Ibid, 131-144.

RECOGNIZING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a moment to pray and ask God for His wisdom and guidance. Ask God to reveal to you what is true about yourself in each of these areas. Make sure you read through each definition of the fruit of the Spirit and rate yourself based on what is true of you at this moment and not what you hope to be. All of these godly characteristics are lived out and experienced through relationships. To get a clearer picture or if you are stuck, it may be helpful to have a close friend or spouse offer insight in a particular area. **REMEMBER**, spiritual fruit in our lives is a lifelong process. Celebrate the fruit the Holy Spirit has produced in you and give thanks that He is not done yet!

Using an X to mark the spot, how would you rate the evidence of each godly character in your life?

LOVE	_____	SELF-SERVING
JOY	_____	DISCONTENT
PEACE OF GOD	_____	LACK OF TRUST
PEACE WITH OTHERS	_____	LACK OF PURSUIT
PATIENCE	_____	IMPATIENCE
KINDNESS	_____	BUSY/UNAWARE
GOODNESS	_____	HYPOCRITE/DISHONEST
FAITHFULNESS	_____	UNRELIABLE
GENTLENESS	_____	ARROGANT
SELF-CONTROL	_____	UNDISCIPLINED



HOW DO I CULTIVATE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

Hopefully you have been able to identify spiritual fruit in your life! You also probably realized that there is still more fruit to be produced. The soil we plant our roots in says everything about the fruit we will produce in our lives. In Galatians 5:13-26, Paul reveals the conflict between the works of the flesh (sinful nature) with the fruit of the Spirit. They are moving in opposite directions, and the fruit from each comes from what we cultivate in our lives. Galatians 5:24 says, *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”* Here again is our responsibility to throw off our flesh (sinful nature) and put on a godly nature (Ephesians 4:22-24). To do this, we must cultivate, work, and water the soil of our lives to allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. The freedom and life change found through the Gospel allows us and the Holy Spirit to accomplish this work. In Philippians 2:12b-13, Paul writes, *“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”* There is an unbelievable, almost unexplainable, truth in this passage. **We work on cultivating soil as God works on producing fruit, but we are only able to do the work, because He is at work in us.** Let that sink in for a moment, and when you are ready, read through some intentional ways below to cultivate the soil of your life.

BE WITH GOD

This is so simple that we often miss the importance of it. In order to develop the character of God, we must spend time with God. Jerry Bridges writes, “So often we try to develop Christian character and conduct without taking the time to develop God-centered devotion. We try to please God without taking the time to walk with Him and develop a relationship with Him. This is impossible to do.”³⁹ When we spend regular, consistent, ongoing time with God, He changes us. Our efforts begin to cease and our attitudes change to express the work of the Holy Spirit within us. How does your regular rhythm of devotion/study/prayer time with God look?

³⁹ Jerry Bridges, *The Fruitful Life* (NavPress, 2006), 18.

ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK

Through this exercise, you have probably revealed a fruit of the Spirit that you want to cultivate in your life. Are you actively asking the Holy Spirit to produce it in your life? Theologian John Stott used to pray this everyday, “Heavenly Father, I pray that this day I may live in your presence and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life.”⁴⁰ What if you chose a fruit of the Spirit and regularly prayed for it to ripen in your life?

WHO GETS THE CREDIT?

Spiritual fruit is a lifetime process. Along the way, you will produce sin instead of fruit. When this happens, do you take the blame, repent, and ask for forgiveness? If so, God offers grace, we get to celebrate, and the Holy Spirit’s work continues. At the same time, when fruit is produced in our lives, do we take the credit for the work of God? Is it “today I was patient,” or “today through the Holy Spirit I was patient”? Whether we are forgiven from our sin or experience spiritual fruit, God should always receive the credit with thankfulness. This small shift will make us more aware of His work in our lives.

Check out these resources for further study on the fruit of the Spirit, practical application, and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

- *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit* by Christopher J. H. Wright
- *The Fruitful Life* by Jerry Bridges
- *Holy Spirit: Filled, Empowered, and Led* by David Young

⁴⁰ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating The Fruit Of The Spirit* (InterVarsity, 2017), 13.



LIFE GROUP NEXT STEPS

During session 5 or 6 of *Galatians: Bigger, Bolder, Better* is a great moment to talk about where your group goes next! Our hope is that your group decides to continue on in community. To help guide this conversation, read through and discuss the following as a group.

Life groups matter because God designed us to grow in relationships. The heart of every group is to create an environment where spiritual growth happens. Read through the best practices of a successful group environment below. **Based on your personality or past group experiences, which stand out to you as being particularly important? Why?**

STUDY God's Word (1 Timothy 3:16)

- **Relevant Studies:** Groups choose engaging studies based on spiritual needs and God's leading to grow together.
- **Join the Discussion:** Group members come ready to join the discussion to share what God is teaching them. As a group, it's not about having all the answers but a willingness to seek them together.

SHARE Your Lives (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

- **Be Real:** The atmosphere should encourage openness and transparency among members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves.
- **Connection & Consistency:** We can't grow spiritually without connecting relationally. Consistency is essential for cultivating relationships with God and one another. Group members attend regularly and connect beyond normal group time.

SUPPORT Each Other (John 13:34-35)

- **Provide Care:** Group members choose to be present, celebrate, pray for, and support one another.
- **Provide Confidentiality:** To build authenticity, members must be able to trust that issues discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

Take Next **STEPS** (Colossians 1:28)

- **Share Ownership:** Group members encourage one another to participate in ownership of the group (snacks, hosting, leading, discussing, praying, etc.).
- **Celebrate Steps:** Group members encourage and challenge each other to take next steps of faith (big or small). As this happens, the group will celebrate every step toward Jesus.

TALK IT OVER:

- **How would it look if we continued intentionally creating an environment of Study, Share, Support, & Steps?**
- **Do we want to continue as a group for another season?**

If so:

- What logistics do we need to discuss (when/where, child care, snacks, etc.)?
- What topics would you like to study next as a group?
- Add your continuing group meetings to your calendar.

If not:

- How can we celebrate the end of this season of grouping (i.e., cookout, desserts, restaurant, etc.)?
- What is your next step to reconnect with a different life group or ongoing community?



NORTHSIDE