

## Galatians Notes

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### Introduction:

Backdrop of the letter to the Galatians: Acts 13:14-14:23. Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were some of the cities of Galatia (in modern-day Turkey).

- The letter was likely written before the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).

### Chapter 1:

1:1 – “an apostle” – Paul’s ordination and authority come from God alone.

- The false teachers would continually follow Paul around and discredit his ministry to win Paul’s converts to themselves. Therefore, Paul seeks first to establish his call in ministry.

1:2 – “churches” – This is a cyclical letter written to multiple churches.

- It doesn’t deal with specific situations like the letters to the Corinthians did.
- There is an advantage to speaking to a larger group. It allows you to lay out a position without having to deal with all of the specific applications.
- “Galatia” – The area of modern-day Turkey. It was a predominantly Gentile region.

1:3 – “Grace...and peace” – It always comes in that order.

1:4 – “who gave Himself for our sins” – Jesus as the substitutionary sacrifice. (Matt. 1:21)

- “our” – Paul includes himself.
- “deliver” – He rescues us from the power of this age, but not from the presence of its evil. (John 17:15)
- “evil” – (Greek “poneros”) Lit. “pernicious.” This is an aggressive evil. (Eph. 2:2; 6:12)
- “the will of God” – We are not saved because we are worthy, but because it is the will of God to redeem fallen humanity.

1:5 – “to whom be glory” – The gospel is the only way for God to get all the glory He deserves. If any part of our salvation is accomplished by us, then we get some of the credit and glory for our efforts.

- It blesses God when people believe in Him.

1:6 – “I marvel” – This is the only church that does not receive thanks from Paul in his initial letter.

- “are turning away” – They are currently in the process of turning away; defecting or deserting.
- “called” – Lit. “to select, choose.” It implies a calling for a specific purpose.
- “in the grace of Christ” – They are turning to a works-based religious salvation from a grace-based relationship through faith.
- “from Him...to a different gospel” – Departing from the true gospel is a departing from the Lord Himself.
  - To make it “Jesus and...” is to make Jesus null and void altogether. (Gal. 2:21)
  - What do we trust for our salvation? What do we trust to make us right with God? If it is anything other than Jesus and His work on our behalf, then we are turning away from God to a different gospel altogether.
- “different” – (Greek “heteros”) Lit. “another of a different kind.”

- 1:7 – “another” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another of the same kind.”
- “some who trouble you” – This false teaching was brought into Galatia by Judiazers who wanted to add the Jewish Law to the Gospel taught by Paul. (Rom. 2:17-3:8; Phil. 1:14-18; 3:1-8)
    - Judaizers taught that, to be saved, Christians were required to adhere to circumcision, the Mosaic Law, and the Feasts.
  - “trouble” – Lit. “to disrupt the peace.”
  - “pervert” – Lit. “to turn, to reverse.” (Acts 2:20; James 4:9)
    - All heresy is a distortion of the truth. It is not something entirely different, but instead it redefines the Biblical words and turns them into something else.
- 1:8 – “accursed” – (Greek “anathema”) Lit. “eternally damned.”
- 1:9 – “any other gospel” – We need to evaluate the message based on the content and not based on the hype of the messenger or the beauty of the delivery.
- 1:10 – “do I seek to please men?” – Religion is often approved by other people.
- The nicest little old lady trusting her religion is as hateful to God as any of the most evil men who have ever walked this earth.
  - “bondservant of Christ” – Paul was a willful slave in serving Christ.
- 1:11 – “not according to man” – The Gospel did not have its origins in man.
- 1:12 – “neither received it from man” – The Judaizers (as the Pharisees with Jesus and the Sanhedrin with the disciples) placed great weight on who delivered the education.
- “revelation of Jesus Christ” – A knowledge of God and His will must be revealed. Humans could never figure it out for on their own.
    - Paul only taught what he received from God. (1 Cor. 11:23)
- 1:13 – “destroy” – Lit. “to tear it down.” (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1)
- 1:14 – “traditions” – Paul, at one time, believed and acted on the traditions of man as if they were the commandments of God. (Matt. 15:2-3; Mark 7:6-13)
- Paul was doing the same thing these religious Judaizers were currently doing. (Phil. 3:6)
- 1:15 – “His grace” – God’s work in Paul’s life is despite his efforts in the Jewish religion, not because of it.
- Some have to get saved out of religion. It is not Christianity, but Christ.
- 1:16 – “to reveal His Son in me” – This is a new birth.
- Jesus is to be revealed to us, in us, and through us.
  - “did not immediately confer” – God’s desert training of Paul in the Gospel establishes Paul in the purity of the Gospel.

- 1:17 – “to Arabia” – He was alone there for about 3 years.
- Paul was trained by the Lord for about 14 years...mostly in isolation.
    - Paul converted on the way to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-19)
    - Paul spent about 3 years in Arabia. (Galatians 1:17-18)
    - Paul went back to Damascus and shared Jesus there for about 3 years. (Acts 9:20-25; Galatians 1:18)
    - Paul visited Jerusalem. (Galatians 1:18-20; Acts 9:26-29)
    - Paul is sent to Tarsus, Syria and Cilicia for about 8 years. (Acts 9:30; Galatians 1:21)
    - Barnabas finds Paul in Tarsus and brings him to minister at Antioch. (Acts 11:25-26)
  - “again to Damascus” – This time to build up the church rather than to tear it down.
- 1:18 – “to see Peter” – Paul didn’t reject the Church leadership entirely. He submitted to it while still maintaining the purity of his message and the knowledge that he was primarily accountable to God alone. (Gal. 2:9)
- 1:19 – “James, the Lord’s brother” – He came to be a follower of Jesus after His resurrection. (Matt. 13:55; Luke 8:19; 1 Cor. 15:7)
- 1:21 – “Syria and Cilicia” – Areas around Paul’s hometown of Tarsus. (Acts 9:30)
- 1:24 – “they glorified God in me” – Because of the change God produced in Paul’s life. (Matt. 5:16)
- The best way to encourage another in the faith is to be living in faith oneself.
  - It is not in doing great things for God that brings Him glory, but in allowing Him to do great things in and through us as we surrender to His will.

## **Chapter 2:**

- 2:1 – “Barnabas” – He was a well-respected travel companion of Paul. (Acts 4:36-37; 11:22; 13:1-14:28)
- “Titus” – He was an uncircumcised Greek, but a believer in Jesus Christ.
- 2:2 – “privately” – “Being right doesn’t give you the privilege of being rude” – David Guzik.
- “in vain” – Paul recognizes that this is a crucial time in the development of the church and in the proclamation of the Gospel. His efforts could be lost if the Judaizers had their way.
- 2:3 – “Titus” – He was a Gentile.
- “not even Titus...was compelled to be circumcised” – Becoming all things to all men does not mean we are to appear as something that we are not. That is not a call to cater to the religious legalists who would distort the Gospel.
    - Timothy was circumcised by Paul because his mother was a Jewess and Paul wanted Timothy to be accepted by the non-believing Jewish people. (Acts 16:3)
  - “compelled” – The text clearly indicates that strong pressure was brought to bear upon the Jerusalem church to impose circumcision upon Gentile converts, Titus being the individual around whom the controversy was raging.
- 2:4 – “false brethren” – They are not true believers, but have gotten the ears of the leaders of the church.
- “liberty” – The words “liberty, free, freedom” are used 11 times in Galatians.
  - “bondage” – Lit. “complete enslavement.”

2:5 – “the truth” – Paul is making a stand for the truth and paying a personal price for it.

2:6 – “personal favoritism” – Lit. “to look on the face.” It implies judging by outward appearances. (Acts 10:34)

- “those who seemed to be something” – Jesus taught that the greatest are to be servants. The Church has a tendency to run as a hierarchy, but Jesus did not work that way.
- “added nothing to me” – Paul had an accurate and complete Gospel.
  - What Paul heard directly from Jesus Himself was confirmed by those in Church leadership. (Gal. 1:12)

2:7 – “the gospel” – It is the same message of salvation delivered to different kinds of people.

- “uncircumcised” – The Gentiles were Paul’s primary field of ministry.
- “circumcised” – The Jews were Peter’s primary field of ministry.
  - Unity in the body of Christ is not in getting everyone to do the same thing, but in seeing everyone independently following Jesus.
  - A good church is made up of those who minister inside (discipleship) and those who minister outside (evangelism). Both are necessary for a healthy church.
    - Those who minister inside often lean toward structure and organization while those who minister outside often lean toward freedom and simplicity. Without lots of grace, these two things can grind each other.
- “Peter” – He had first taken the gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 10)

2:9 – “right hand of fellowship” – They decide to work together in fellowship.

2:10 – “the poor” – The poor believers of Jerusalem. (Rom. 15:26-27)

2:11 – “Antioch” – Located in Syria, the church at Antioch became the second headquarters of the early church from which the Church extended into the greater Roman Empire and rest of the world.

- The church at Antioch was Paul’s home church. (Acts 11:25-26; 13:1-3)
- “he was to be blamed” – Peter was wrong.
  - There is a difference between being wrong and being bad. We all make mistakes.

2:12 – “he would eat with the Gentiles” – God told him to do so in a vision. (Acts 10:9-34)

- For the Jew, eating the meal was to find fellowship with another because both were partaking of the same food.
- How many times did Peter eat with the tax collectors and prostitutes when Jesus was here?
- “withdrew” – The tense is imperfect and seems to imply a gradual, secret removal.
- “fearing” – This was Peter’s motivation that caused him to hedge on God’s grace. (Prov. 29:25)
  - This is following Pentecost and the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Peter’s life, but still Peter reverts back to the sins of his past by refusing obedience to God as a result of fear. The baptism of the Spirit does not remove our flesh, it merely causes it to be seen less.
- “fearing those who were of the circumcision” – What could these Judaizers do to hurt Peter? It seems they could have stained his reputation to the leaders in Jerusalem and possibly have him removed from his position of leadership in the church at Jerusalem.

- 2:13 – “even Barnabas” – Barnabas’ stepping away from the Gentiles demonstrates the power of the influence of the legalizers.
- “hypocrisy” – Peter made it look like he was following the Jewish Law when, in fact, he was not. He only ate this way for appearance’s sake.
- 2:14 – “straightforward” – (Greek “orthopedeo”) Lit. “to walk with straight feet, or walk a straight course.”
- Peter’s willingness to give into this legalism made his walk inconsistent.
  - “the truth of the gospel” – The gospel is the truth, or the standard; not our freedom or our legalism.
  - “before them all” – Paul confronted Peter publicly, because his offense was public. Paul was preserving the church at large.
    - Legalism can hurt those around us as much as backsliding can.
    - “The only way any church can get a blessing is to lay aside all difference, all criticism, all coldness and party feeling, and come to the Lord as one man; and when the church lives in the power of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, I am sure that many will be added daily to the flock of God.” – D.L. Moody quoted in “They Found the Secret.”
- 2:16 – “even we” – Paul is speaking of the Jews.
- “justified” – Lit. “brought into a right standing before God.”
  - “justified by faith” – Faith is the means by which justification is received, not its basis.
    - OT saints were saved the same way as we are, by trusting in the death of an innocent substitute.
- 2:17 – “Christ therefore a minister of sin?” – When Christians sin it is not a reflection on Jesus, it is a testimony of the sinfulness of our hearts.
- Legalism does not keep people from sinning. Grace is the greatest motivation to live a transformed life.
- 2:18 – “I make myself a transgressor” – This is the great tragedy of legalism. In trying to be more right with God, legalists end up being less right with God. (James 2:20)
- 2:19 – “I through the law died” – The Law was given to reveal sin. It wasn’t given to impart life; it was given to reveal death. (Rom. 7:7; Gal. 3:24; 1 Tim. 1:8)
- “live to God” – Paul’s refusal to live according to the Jewish Law was not a rejection of God Himself.
- 2:20 – “crucified” – The Greek tense is “once and for all.”
- “crucified with Christ” – Paul’s death to the Law came with Jesus’ death to the Law on the cross.
    - We don’t struggle to keep the Law or live better lives; our only struggle is to surrender.
  - “no longer I” – Our self-centeredness is done away with in Christ.
    - Backgrounds and dysfunctions have nothing to do with our new life in Christ. We are not expected to restore the old man. Instead, we let him die so we can enjoy the resurrected life of Christ.
  - “I live by faith” – The trusting, love relationship God desires for all of us.
    - “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” (Col. 2:6; see also John 3:7; 6:29; Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Eph. 2:8; Col. 2:20)

- 2:21 – “then Christ died in vain” – If following the Law could save us, then Christ died needlessly. (Matt. 26:39,42)
- Those who try to earn God’s favor by their own effort only scorn and mock the cross of Christ.
  - “in vain” – (Greek “dorean”) Lit. “without a cause, for no reason.”

### **Chapter 3:**

The word “faith” is used 12 times in this chapter alone.

- Paul refers to the Holy Spirit 16 times in Galatians 3-6.
- 3:1 – “foolish” – Lit. “empty-headed.”
- “not obey the truth” – Moving to legalism is disobedience of the Lord.
  - “portrayed” – Lit. “displayed on a billboard.”
  - “crucified” – The substitutionary atonement of Christ.
- 3:2 – “receive the Spirit” – Referring to the indwelling of the Spirit at salvation.
- 3:3 – “made perfect by the flesh” – We cannot complete our salvation any more than we could begin it. (Col. 2:6)
- 3:4 – “suffered so many things” – Paul was stoned and left for dead in the region of Galatia. (Acts 14)
- The greatest persecution of genuine faith has come from religious extremists. (Heb. 10:32-39)
- 3:5 – “supplies” – Lit. “abundantly supplies.”
- “works miracles” – Those who work miracles, yet struggle with sin in their own lives, have learned that the power to work miracles is not based on our goodness, righteousness, devotion, or purity. These things are only due to our faith in the Lord.
  - “the hearing of faith” – This is how the work of Jesus is applied to an individual human life.
- 3:6 – “Abraham believed God” – This was 400 years before the Law was given. (Gen. 15:6)
- 3:7 – “sons of Abraham” – The entire household of faith. (Matt. 3:9)
- 3:8 – “the Gentiles” – They are justified without having to become Jews.
- 3:9 – “believing Abraham” – Abraham’s belief was confirmed by his actions, but it was his belief that God looked to. (Rom. 4:3,9-10,22; Heb. 11:8-19)
- 3:2,5,9 – “faith” – This is how we are to respond.
- Do you trust Jesus more today than ever before? He is giving us plenty of opportunities to trust Him. If we are not trusting Jesus, then we are trusting idols or trusting ourselves. And any self-trust or faith in idols is a scorning of the cross of Jesus Christ.
  - Faith applies the work of Christ to our lives. The shed blood must be applied.
- 3:10 – “the works of the law” – This stands in opposition to living by faith.
- Those who are trusting their own works and goodness are under the curse.
  - “all things...to do them” – Perfection is the righteous requirement of the Law. (Rom. 3:23)
  - “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)

- 3:11 – “the just shall live by faith” – This is an Old Testament concept. (Hab. 2:4)
- Faith in what? Works, religion, a prayer...or the person of Jesus Christ.
- 3:12 – “the man who does them shall live by them” – But none can do it perfectly. (Lev. 18:5)
- The Law could not bring life due to the weakness of the people trying to follow the Law.
- 3:13 – “redeemed” – This means “to buy a slave and set them free.”
- “become a curse” – He didn’t just carry the curse, He became it. (2 Cor. 5:21)
  - “for us” – Lit. “instead of, in the place of.” This is substitutionary atonement.
- 3:14 – “the blessing of Abraham” – Genesis 12:3.
- “the promise of the Spirit” – The Spirit replaces the Law in our lives. God Himself is now our Law, in a sense. He is our guide, our teacher, and our leader. He also empowers us to fulfill His direction and desires for our lives.
  - “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2)
  - Relationship is a greater law than any Law could ever be. My example of my relationship with my dad.
- 3:15 – “a man’s covenant” – This is the idea of a will or testament.
- “no one annuls or adds to it” – Wills can only be annulled or amended by the parties making the will.
  - The Jews taught that Moses’ covenant overrode Abraham’s covenant. It does not seem consistent with the nature and knowledge of God to replace previous promises as much as expand and build upon them.
  - “annuls” – Works added to faith would annul the entire covenant, since any dependence upon works means that it is necessary to abandon faith.
- 3:16 – “your Seed, who is Christ” – The OT saints were saved by looking to the substitutionary atonement to come. They looked to Christ before He was born.
- This means that we don’t have to be Jewish to be saved, for they were saved in the same way we are.
- 3:18 – “by promise” – Blessing comes by faith, not by law.
- 3:19 – “What purpose then does the Law serve?” – Paul gives two purposes for the Law in this section: to maintain order (v. 23) and to lead us to Christ (v. 24).
- Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” (Matt. 5:17)
  - “But we know that the law is good if ones uses it lawfully.” (1 Tim. 1:8)
  - “because of transgressions” – The primary purpose of the Law is to make sin known. (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:7)
  - The Law is like a thermometer; it can tell you when you have a fever, but it can’t take away the fever.
  - “mediator” – Moses was the mediator of the OT Law.
- 3:20 – “mediator” – “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5)

- 3:21 – “Is the law then against the promises of God?” – The reason the Law is not opposed to the promise is that, although the law in itself cannot save, it serves to reveal sin and shows us the need for the salvation the promise offers.
- “righteousness would have been by the law” – Then Jesus wouldn’t have had to die.
- 3:22 – “confined” – The idea is “imprisoned.”
- “all under sin” – Proven because no one has perfectly kept the Law.
  - “to those who believe” – It is all God’s grace. There is no room for bragging.
- 3:23 – “we were kept under guard by the law” – The idea is “in protective custody.”
- The law can help to maintain order, but it never touches the heart except to reveal what is in the heart. The benefit of the law in society is to maintain order. The fact that the law doesn’t change the heart doesn’t mean that we should go without law.
  - Just as a parent sets more rules for their younger children than for the older ones to keep the young ones safe until they can make decisions and not kill themselves, so also the Law was given to keep us from total wickedness until we could understand the work of Jesus.
- 3:24 – “tutor” – or “schoolmaster.” Lit. “pedagogue, guardian.” In the Roman culture, they would assign a slave to care for and watch over the freeborn children until the children came of age.
- 3:25 – “no longer under a tutor” – We don’t go back into slavery under the Law, for now we are in a relationship with the Father-God. That is a big difference.
- The Law is a slave-driver; the Spirit is a servant-helper.
- 3:26 – “sons” – Children of full-age, able to receive an inheritance. (John 1:12)
- Before coming to Jesus, we were under the Law as young children under the slave-guardian. But when we came to Jesus Christ, we immediately become sons of age that are now masters of the Law.
- 3:27 – “baptized” – Lit. “placed under.” Believers are submitted to and covered by Jesus.
- 3:28 – “Jew nor Greek...slave nor free...male nor female” – The ground is level at the cross.
- This does not mean that we are the same, but we are equal. There are differences in role and in function, but none in standing before God through faith in Jesus.
  - Christian unity is in Christ. “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)
- 3:29 – “you are Abraham’s seed” – The true seed of Abraham are those who believe on Jesus.
- “heirs according to the promise” – We are joint heirs with Jesus.



## Chapter 4:

4:1 – “as long as he is a child” – Before coming to Jesus Christ.

- Unbelievers may be offended at being called a child, but every time someone recognizes that without God they are missing something in their life, they testify to this fact. Before Christ, “we were dead in trespasses.” (Eph. 2:5)
- “does not differ at all from a slave” – The children who are not old enough to receive the inheritance are no different from the servant’s child.
- “Those who have the nature of sons shall have the inheritance of sons.” (Matthew Henry)

4:2 – “guardians and stewards” – He is referring to the Law that “was our tutor to bring us to Christ.” (Gal. 3:24)

4:3 – “we” – Paul includes himself. He is speaking of them before they came to faith in Jesus.

- “bondage” – Lit. “slavery.”
- “the elements of the world” – Lit. “to basic principles of the world, the ABC’s of the universe.” (Col. 2:20)
  - Paul calls these principles “weak and beggarly” in v. 9.
  - A basic principle of “that is stressed in pagan religion just as much as Jewish law, is the principle of cause and effect. One may call it karma or “you get what you deserve” or something else; yet it rules nature and the minds of men. We live under the idea that we get what we deserve; when we are good we deserve to receive good and when we are bad we deserve to receive bad.” (David Guzik)

4:4 – “the fullness of time” – God worked through 4,000 years of human history to bring forth Jesus at just the right time.

4:5 – “redeem” – Lit. “to buy out of the slave market.”

- “under the law” – Submitted to the demands, requirements, and punishment of the Law.
- “adoption” – This refers to our position and identity. He chose us and gave us the rights of sons.
  - The work of Jesus brings us into a personal relationship with the living God...something the Law could never do.
  - We are adopted as children of God, but Jesus was begotten.

4:6 – “crying out” – A cry of deep emotion. (Matt. 27:50)

- “Abba” – Lit. “daddy.” It speaks of the intimacy of a child-father relationship.
  - This is how Jesus referred to God the Father in Mark 14:36. (Rom. 8:15)

4:8 – “served those which by nature are not gods” – The “vacuum of the soul” drives us to desire something for our own personal satisfaction and contentment. (Eccl. 3:11)

- How do you know you are missing something you’ve never had?
- This is the evidence of our immaturity before coming to God.

4:9 – “known by God” – It’s more important that God knows us than that we know Him. (Matt. 7:21-23)

- “known” – (Greek “ginosko”) Lit. “experiential or relational knowledge.”
- “bondage” – Why would one willingly return to slavery?
  - Some turn to drugs, alcohol, immorality, money, or power...others to religion.

- 4:10 – “observe days and months and seasons and years” – One example of slavery. (Col. 2:16-17)
- Anytime we do something to appease God, rather than living out a love-relationship with God, we are functioning in this Law-based mindset.
- 4:11 – “I am afraid for you” – Even Paul wasn’t sure that his effort in ministry would be effective.
- “labored” – Lit. “to labor to the point of exhaustion.”
- 4:12 – “You have not injured me” – Paul is not asking them to be right with the Lord for his sake.
- 4:13 – “physical infirmity” – God used physical difficulty to bring Paul to Galatia.
- Paul doesn’t say that he preached to them “despite” physical infirmity, but “because” of it.
- 4:15 – “the blessing” – Legalism eventually leads to increased pride and decreased joy.
- “eyes” – Whatever the physical infirmity was, it seems to have affected Paul’s eyes.
- 4:16 – “your enemy” – It is amazing how quickly the attitudes of the people can change toward those who are serving them in the Lord.
- “tell you the truth” – Seek out truth-telling relationships.
  - Those who refuse to listen to brutal honesty are vulnerable to any deception.
- 4:17 – “zealously court you” – There may be great zeal where there is little truth.
- “court” – We might say “date.”
  - “zealous for them” – Legalists use the people to get something from them.
  - They are looking for acclaim from the people they are serving.
- 4:19 – “My little children” – Paul speaks to them as to dear children.
- “I labor in birth again” – Paul has paid a great personal price for their freedom.
  - Whatever price Paul paid...Jesus paid more. He purchased our redemption.
  - “formed” – (Greek “morphoo”) Lit. “to give an outward expression of one’s inner nature.”
- 4:20 – “I have doubts about you” – Paul is perplexed and fearful of the Galatians ambivalence on these matters.
- 4:21 – “do you not hear the law” – A simple reading of God’s word with a heart surrendered to His will would clear up much confusion.
- 4:22 – “bondwoman...freewoman” – The mother was to determine the social status.

4:24 – “symbolic” – Paul pulls an allegory from the OT to provide an example of God working through the life of a believer.

- When Abraham was about 70 years old, God spoke to him and called him out of Babylon to a country he knew not of; Canaan. About 5 years later, Abraham had only made it half-way to Canaan. He had stopped in Haran for the sake of his father. But God came to him again and called him to Canaan again with the promise of a nation to come. After about 10 years in Canaan, Abraham is 85 and Sarah is 75 years old. Abraham’s wife, Sarah, got the idea for Abraham to try to bear a child with Hagar. This was an accepted and natural means by which to have more children. It looked like Sarah’s plan worked; Hagar bore Ishmael. The only problem was that God wouldn’t recognize him. So when Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 89 years old, God came to them again and reiterated the promise. Though “already dead,” they were going to have a son by a spiritual work of God.
  - Trying to follow the Law is like the Hagar plan...natural. Trying to do God’s things, trying to earn God’s promises, trying to deserve God’s blessing in our own effort.
  - But the life of faith is like the Sarah plan...spiritual. Received, accepted, and blessed by God according to His word.

- “Mount Sinai” – The Law was given from Sinai. (Exod. 20)

4:26 – “the Jerusalem above” – The city Abraham was waiting for was “the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Heb. 11:10)

4:29 – “persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit” – The natural always mocks the spiritual. (Gen. 21:9)

4:30 – “Cast out” – The life of faith requires a turning away from a life of self-effort.

- We cannot function in the natural and in the spiritual at the same time.
- After the crowd ridiculed Jesus for claiming that Jairus’ daughter was not really dead, he put the mocking crowd outside before raising the girl from the dead. (Matt. 9:24-25)

## **Chapter 5:**

5:1 – “Stand fast” – This is a command.

- “liberty” – The Spirit of the Lord give us to freedom to behold the glory of God. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
- “Christ has made us free” – “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)
- “do not be entangled” – Part of the responsibility we have as we walk in faith is to keep anything from our lives that will bring us into bondage, and that includes religion.
  - We cannot treat God as a religion and as in a relationship at the same time.
  - “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” (Col. 2:6)
- “yoke of bondage” – Peter called the Law a “yoke” in Acts 15:10.
  - Jesus called us to take his yoke upon us for it is easy and light. (Matt. 11:29-30)

5:2 – “Christ will profit you nothing” – A return to religion is evidence that one is not really trusting Jesus.

- Our salvation cannot be the result of a mixture of Christ’s work and our work. It is all one or the other.

- 5:3 – “every man who becomes circumcised” – Paul is referring to circumcision here as a sign of returning to the OT law as a means to secure God’s approval.
- “keep the whole law” – Perfection is required, but impossible. (James 2:10)
- 5:4 – “fallen from grace” – The idea is “fallen away from grace.” This not taking about losing your salvation as a result of sin, but of leaving faith in Jesus in favor of securing salvation by works.
- You cannot stand before God someday in your own righteousness.
- 5:5 – “through the Spirit” – Our salvation is a spiritual work.
- 5:6 – “faith working through love” – This is the measuring stick.
- “love” – (Greek “agape”) Lit. “the self-sacrificial giving of yourself to the benefit of another.”
- 5:7 – “Who hindered you?” – This is the seed sown among thorns. The threat will choke out the life of the seed and make it unfruitful.
- 5:8 – “does not come from Him” – God is not a legalist.
- 5:9 – “leaven” – Jesus warned of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matt. 16:6,12; Luke 13:21)
- The Pharisees added to the Word; the Sadducees took away from the Word.
  - “leavens the whole lump” – Legalism is not content with a small part of a life or of a church.
  - Leaven works by rotting and decaying. Legalism works the same way, by guilt and failure.
- 5:11 – “the offense of the cross” – The cross of Christ is foolishness to the wise/proud, but is a stumbling stone to the religious/legalist. (1 Cor. 1:23)
- The cross says that you cannot be saved on your own.
- 5:12 – “cut themselves off” – Lit. “castrate themselves.” (Phil. 3:2)
- In Galatia, priests of Cybele were castrated in worship of their god.
- 5:13 – “do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh” – Grace is not a license to sin. (Rom. 8:2; James 1:25; 2:12)
- People who truly understand the grace of God have a better chance at overcoming sin than does the legalist. Legalism focuses on the sin, but grace focuses on the Lord. Looking to the Lord is the only way to overcome.
  - Our liberty and God’s grace was purchased at the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
  - “Practical Godliness is the best antidote against the snares of the false teachers” – Matthew Henry.
  - “opportunity” – Lit. “base of operations.”
  - “through love serve one another” – Love that doesn’t benefit the other is not love at all.
  - Love is not an emotion; love is action.
  - Love is not self-focused; love is others-centered.
- 5:14 – “love your neighbor” – Love and legalism do not go together. (John 13:34-35)
- Fulfilling the flesh is selfish. Love is selfless.
- 5:15 – “bite and devour one another” – This is the atmosphere that is created by legalism.

- 5:16 – “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust” – Not the other way around.
- “Walk in the Spirit” – This speaks of our fellowship with God first and then of our behavior in the world.
    - Change doesn’t come by effort, but through relationship.
    - The Holy Spirit will lead us into the nature of Jesus Christ. (John 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:13-15)
- 5:17 – “flesh lusts against the Spirit” – The order is interesting. The flesh is on the attack.
- “lusts” – The tense is “continually lusts.”
  - “against” – Lit. “to hold down, subdue.”
  - “contrary” – Lit. “entrenched.” It is warfare! (1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Tim. 1:18)
- 5:18 – “led by the Spirit” – “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14)
- 5:19-21 – “the works of the flesh” – Interesting in light of Galatians’ topic of grace.
- “evident” – The hidden flesh manifests itself in these actions and traits.
    - Legalism tends to focus on disputable matters while permitting the obvious sins to continue.
  - “adultery” – Sex outside the covenant of marriage.
  - “fornication” – (Greek “porneia”) Lit. “any sexual contact outside the context of marriage.” This is much broader than adultery.
  - “uncleanness” – Without cleanness. The includes all impure speech and action.
  - “lewdness” – Without control. Unfiltered and uncensored. A shameless disregard for propriety.
  - “idolatry” – Anything we serve or worship as more important than God.
  - “sorcery” – (Greek “pharmacia”) Lit. “mind and state-altering drugs.” This includes marijuana and an overuse of prescription drugs.
  - “hatred” – Lit. “enmity.” Living with enemies. The word speaks of motivation.
  - “contentions” – Arguments, strife, and fighting.
  - “jealousies” – (Greek “zelos”) Lit. “zeal.” Getting fired up over topics and issues.
  - “outbursts of wrath” – Sudden flashes of anger.
  - “selfish ambitions” – Where one only works if it benefits them personally.
  - “dissensions” – Lit. “divisions.”
  - “heresies” – Wrongful division over matters of opinion.
  - “envy” – Grief over someone else’s good.
  - “murders” – The unjust taking of a human life.
  - “drunkenness” – Ephesians 5:18.
  - “revelries” – Unrestrained partying.
  - “those who practice such things” – This doesn’t speak of a one-time failure, but of a habitual mark of one’s life. (Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rev. 21:8; 22:15)

- 5:22-23 – “the fruit of the Spirit” – Singular. This is the mark of a believer. (v. 13-14)
- “love” – (Greek “agape”) Lit. “the self-sacrificial giving of yourself to the benefit of another.”
  - “joy” – (Greek “chara”) Lit. “a deep-seated happiness that is not dependent on circumstances.”
  - “peace” – (Greek “eirene”) The tranquility of heart that comes from trusting the Lord.
  - “longsuffering” – To bear up under pressure and not be changed.
  - “kindness” – Looks to bless and edify other people.
  - “goodness” – We might call this “integrity.” It speaks of a generous spirit.
  - “faithfulness” – A steadiness to the task despite surrounding pressures.
  - “gentleness” – or “meekness.” This is power under control. (Bomb or power plant?)
  - “self-control” – The ability to do what is right in all circumstances.
  - “there is no law” – “The kind of conduct that Paul has outlined is that which lawmakers everywhere want to bring about” – Henry Morris.
- 5:24 – “crucified the flesh” – We don’t reform the flesh, we crucify it. (Rom. 8:13-14; Gal. 2:20; 6:14)
- When a body is nailed to the wood of a cross, it is alive and yet powerless. That is how we are to treat the flesh until we get our perfected, resurrection bodies.
- 5:25 – “walk” – Lit. “fall in line.” This is a military term.
- 5:26 – “conceited” – This is the opposite of love. (v. 22)

## **Chapter 6:**

- 6:1 – “overtaken in any trespass” – This is not referring to someone willingly practicing these sins (Gal. 5:21), but to a believer who has fallen into these sins.
- It is unkind and hypocritical to point out failures we will not help them remedy.
  - “restore” – Lit. “mend.” The word spoke of mending nets or setting a broken bone.
    - Restoration is more than forgiveness. Forgiveness is immediate at the point of repentance. Restoration, though, is a process.
    - Restoration takes two. The one restored must be submitted and the one restoring must be gracious.
  - “considering yourself” – Because we are all made of the same stuff.
    - Properly seeing yourself is important when helping others. (Matt. 7:5)
    - How we treat the brother that falls will be greatly impacted by whether we live in grace or in legalism.
- 6:2 – “Bear one another’s burdens” – Lit. “Be consistently bearing.”
- “one another’s burdens” – We all have burdens.
  - “the law of Christ” – Love. (John 13:34-35)
    - The law of Christ stands in contrast to the law of the legalizers.
- 6:3 – “deceives himself” – Pride is self-deception. (1 Cor. 10:12)
- Legalists have a great tendency to pride.
- 6:4 – “examine his own work” – We are not to compare ourselves with others. (2 Cor. 10:12)
- We don’t get rewarded for what others do, but for what we participate in. (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5)
  - Legalists tend to watch everyone else’s business.
  - “not in another” – Either in our boasting in someone else’s work or someone else’s boasting in our work.

- 6:5 – “shall bear” – Likely speaking of our future judgment.
- “his own load” – Lit. “cargo.” We each have a load to carry...others can’t carry them for us.
    - The “burdens” of v. 2 are the crises that supersede the normal weight of life.
- 6:6 – “the word” – Teachers in the Church must be teaching the Word.
- “share in all good things” – (Greek “koinoneo”) Lit. “fellowship.” The most encouraging sharing is when we hear what God is teaching those in our care. (1 Cor. 9:11,14)
- 6:7 – “mocked” – Lit. “to turn your nose up to God.”
- “will also reap” – Three rules of reaping: 1. we reap the same kind that was sown, 2. we reap after it was sown, and 3. we reap more than what was sown.
- 6:8 – “corruption” – That is in contrast to “everlasting life.”
- 6:9 – “doing good” – The greatest argument against a legalist is simply to keep doing good. The life of the Spirit is much more powerful and consistent than the life in the flesh.
- “lose heart” – The idea is “to lose strength.”
    - Don’t stop serving the Lord. The best is still yet to come.
- 6:10 – “opportunity” – Lit. “season.”
- 6:11 – “See” – Paul has thrown his heart and emotion into this letter.
- “large letters” – The script of Paul’s salutation (or maybe even the whole letter) is large, possibly due to his eyesight.
- 6:12 – “compel” – The word means “to apply pressure to make the sale.”
- “persecution for the cross of Christ” – Organized religion has always been the most aggressive enemy of true believers in the history of the Church.
- 6:13 – “not even those who are circumcised keep the law” – Legalists have a tougher time keeping the law than those who are living in God’s grace.
- All show, no go. Christ didn’t have to yell to make a statement. (Matt. 12:15-21)
  - “boast in your flesh” – Winning these people to their side will affirm them.
    - We must strongly resist the desire to win people to our opinion or our church, as if this somehow affirms me and my ministry.
- 6:14 – “the world has been crucified to me” – Paul has been spoiled with Christ.
- The cross is evidence that there is nothing in this world that can make us right with God.
- 6:15 – “a new creation” – A changed life is the best evidence of a changed heart. (2 Cor. 5:17)
- 6:16 – “this rule” – That “circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything.” (v. 15)
- “Israel” – means “governed by God.”
    - Paul is not teaching replacement theology. God still has a plan for the nation of Israel (Rom. 9-11). This is just speaking of the Church’s relationship to God; making it clear that the Church isn’t to go back under Judaistic legalism.

6:17 – “bear” – This is the same Greek word as used in 6:2 – “Bear one another’s burdens.”

- “marks” – (Greek “stigmata”) These are the physical scars from his persecution.
  - Paul was nearly stoned to death by these Judaistic legalizers at Lystra in the region of Galatia. (Acts 14)

6:18 – “grace” – Paul ends this letter with grace.