

Galatians 1:1-10

Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to answer the many people who added their own twist to the gospel. Paul warns, we must be on our guard against those who would try to change or confuse the gospel message found in the Bible. Today we find that people not only want to take away from the gospel message but there are some who want to add to it as well.

1. If you were able, how would you like to change the ending to any well-known story or movie? What is the danger in changing the ending?

2. According to the opening verses, what are the essential elements of the gospel?

3. Who does Paul say chose him and the Galatians to serve God?

4. How does Paul describe the motives of those who were falsely teaching the gospel message? What does Paul prescribe for anyone who dared to change the gospel message?

4b. Why do you think Paul is so passionate about this? How might we learn from Paul?

5. How did Paul receive the Good News?

6. What does it mean to be a "servant of Christ" rather than trying to "please man"?

7. What "additions" are often tacked on to the Gospel message? What are some things that people like to take away from the gospel message?

8. How might we, in our thinking and actions, be guilty of 'changing' the gospel?

9. Why is the concept of earning salvation from doing good so popular and so hard to move away from?

10. How can we ensure we don't fall into this trap?

Galatians 1:11-2:10

Why does Paul take the time to explain to us where the gospel came to him?

What does vv13-17 tell us about Paul's past and the passion he lived with?

How does this show it isn't about how much faith or passion you have, but all to do with who you have your faith in?

How does the divine inspiration of Scripture distinguish it from human philosophies or ideas?

Why is it important that we see that all scripture is God breathed?

What does Paul tell us was the thing that changed him? (V15-17)

Chapter 2 Paul continues to talk about life being all about the gospel. How is it that we might fall into the trap of the false brothers in 2:2-4?

What is it that leads to change in our lives? What mistakes do people make when looking for what might change them and their thinking and life?

What action can we take to ensure we are sticking with the gospel and trusting in Jesus and not ourselves and our lives?

Galatians 2:11-21

Paul's mission was to spread the gospel to those who were not Jews. Peter, on the other hand, was called to work with the Jews. Conflict came between the two apostles over whether non-Jews had to observe Jewish traditions in order to be saved. Paul confronted Peter when Peter began to support those who forced Jewish traditions on believers. This confrontation, which Paul highlighted in this passage, emphasises an individual's need for faith in Christ, not works, in order to be saved.

1. What two people would you like to see in a public debate and on what issue?
2. On what grounds does Paul take Peter to task?
3. Who was the messenger to the Jews? Who was the messenger to those who were not Jews?
4. How did Peter first interact with non-Jews?
5. How did Peter's behaviour change? Why did it change?
6. Is Paul right in confronting Peter the way he did? Why? Why not?
7. How does Paul say a person is made right with God?
8. In what ways do people try to earn good standing with God?
9. How would you explain to a non believer the foolishness of trying to earn one's salvation?
10. In what ways are you, like Peter, tempted to allow others to negatively influence your beliefs?
11. In what areas of your life are you tempted to be legalistic?
12. What are some of the legalistic pressures our society puts on people?
13. What is the problem with legalism?
14. How do/will you confront the areas of potential legalism you identified in your own life?
15. How might you confront other people's legalistic views?

Galatians 3:1-26

In this passage, Paul explained the relationship between law and faith. The law given by God is unable to save anyone because no one can perfectly follow it. It points out our sinfulness and our need for a Saviour. Only Jesus, our Saviour, can deliver us from our awful predicament. Only he can clothe us in his righteousness and make us right before a Holy God.

1. What would life be like if you never made any mistakes?
2. How were the Galatians attempting to live out the Christian life?
3. What is the curse on those who depend on making rules and adhering to rules to make them right?
4. What important element is missing in the law?
5. What did Christ do in response to the law's curse?
6. What is the role of the law?
7. In what ways do believers try to live the Christian life in their own strength?
8. When have you felt most successful in living the way Christ desires Christians to live?
9. How does it make you feel when you really blow it in your faith?
10. What hope is there when we blow it in our faith if we are depending on the law? Or Grace?
11. What contrasts can you be drawn between rule-keeping and a relationship as a basis for spiritual living?
12. How would you change your life to make your actions consistent with the belief that you cannot earn a good standing before God?

Galatians 3:27-4:7

Paul uses the illustration of family to demonstrate our new relationship with God through Christ. Every believer is considered to be God's child regardless of background, experience, race, or gender. In this new family, we can rest assured that we belong and will receive blessing upon blessing from God, our heavenly Father.

1. What would a perfect family look like to you?
2. How does someone become God's child?
3. What does it mean to be baptised into Christ?
4. What does not matter among members of God's family?
5. What does this say to us about our attitude towards other members of our family?
6. What illustration does Paul use to describe the before-and-after experience of becoming God's child?
7. What does God promise to give his children?
8. What does it mean to you to belong to God's family?
9. In what specific ways does belonging to God impact your life?
10. How have you experienced blessings as a child of God?
11. How easily do you imitate Christ's acceptance of you when dealing with others in the family of God?
12. How can you be more sensitive to and accepting of other believers who may be different from you in various ways?
13. What steps can you take to experience the freedom of being a son of God?

Galatians 4:8-5:1

When Paul first went to Galatia, the people were living as slaves to religious laws and ceremonies. They were in bondage to the observances of special days, seasons and festivals even as many people today are bound to religious traditions. Paul preached the Gospel of grace to the Galatians with love, compassion, and earnestness. The people's hearts were opened to the glorious message of salvation by grace, and they rejoiced in their freedom from the futile demands of the Law and the traditions of Judaism. However, legalistic teachers soon tried to lead these new Christian converts back to the slavery of the law.

Read Galatians 4:8-5:1

What things are you zealous about?

What things can we tend to have an unhealthy zeal for?

Why were the Galatians losing their zeal for the gospel?

Why do people seem to lose their zeal for the freedom that we have in Christ?

What evidence do you see in this passage of Paul's genuine love for the Galatian believers?

How does the story of Abraham's two sons add to Paul's earlier arguments regarding the nature of the law and of God's grace?

Why might this be especially meaningful to the Galatians?

What does it mean to you to be under the grace of God rather than under law?

What were the certain days and months that were being observed?

What traditional ceremonies are people tied to today? What are the dangers of such ceremonies?

What are the biggest risks to our freedom in Christ?

How can we be sure to avoid these dangers?

Galatians 5:2-26

One of the main themes of Galatians is Christian freedom. Paul encouraged the Galatian believers not to lose their new found freedom in Christ by surrendering to those who were caught up in rules and traditions. He was concerned the Galatians would start depending on tradition for their salvation instead of wholeheartedly depending on Jesus.

1. If the need arose, for what principle would you be willing to risk your life to uphold?
2. Who grants a believer their freedom?
3. How might a person surrender their freedom?
4. What illustration does Paul use to characterise the compromised freedom of the Galatians?
5. What caution does Paul give believers regarding abuse of their freedom?
6. What do you think it means to be free in Christ?
7. When do you feel especially burdened, or enslaved, in your spiritual life?
8. What ways have you surrendered the freedom you can experience through Christ?
(Significant or insignificant)
9. How can your “freedom” become a rationalisation for doing whatever you please?
10. What is your understanding of the freedom you have in Christ? What strategies have you got in place to protect that freedom?

Galatians 6:1-18

Paul concludes his letter to the Galatians with a review of what really matters most in life. He reminded the Galatians that boiling life down to the dryness of rules is really not life at all. Being a new creation, the person God truly desires, is what really matters. He points to the cross of Jesus as the starting point. There, Christ put to death the sins of the old nature. In its place, he brought forth a new, godly creation, founded on his own righteous life.

1. Would the person who knows you best say you “work to live” or that you “live to work”?
2. Who are the “Spiritual” Paul is referring to?
3. What are some practical ways we can carry each others burdens?
4. How might we sow the sinful nature? What is the fruit of this?
5. When is “the proper time” Paul is talking about? (6:9)
6. What is different about these final verses of the letter to the Galatians? Why do you think this is significant? (6:11)
7. What did some of the leaders in Galatia want the new believers to do? How does this go against sowing to please the Spirit?
8. What happened to Paul’s worldly desires? What did Paul consider the most important in life?
9. In what ways have you been crucified to the world? In what ways do you need to sacrifice your own desires even more?
10. How can believers focus more on their relationship with Christ and less on religious rule-keeping?
11. What practical steps can you take this week to make sure you are following Jesus’ perfect example instead of following a set of religious rules?