

GALATIANS: FREEDOM IN CHRIST

A 6-WEEK SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Welcome to our small group Bible study on the book of Galatians! We are excited to embark on this journey of exploration and discovery together. The book of Galatians, written by the Apostle Paul, is a powerful letter that addresses significant theological and practical issues for believers in Christ.

Galatians is a letter of freedom, grace, and the sufficiency of faith in Christ for salvation. In this short yet profound book, Paul passionately defends the Gospel of Jesus Christ and emphasizes that we are justified by faith alone, not by observing the law or any works of our own. Throughout this letter, Paul confronts the dangers of legalism and urges the Galatian believers, as well as us today, to stand firm in the freedom we have in Christ.

As we delve into Galatians, we will explore the transformative power of the Gospel and its implications for our daily lives. We will witness Paul's deep love and concern for the Galatian believers as he warns them against falling into the trap of adding human effort to God's saving work. Instead, he urges them to embrace the grace of Christ and live by faith in the Spirit.

During our study, we will encounter essential themes such as the nature of faith, the role of the law, freedom in Christ, the fruit of the Spirit, and our identity as children of God. We will also learn from the example of the Apostle Paul as he challenges us to live a life pleasing to God, guided by the Spirit, and grounded in the truth of the Gospel.

As we gather together, let us approach this study with open hearts, ready to learn, grow, and be transformed by God's Word. May we be encouraged to walk in the freedom, grace, and truth of the Gospel, and may our lives reflect the love and righteousness of Christ in all that we do.

Let's pray for God's guidance and illumination as we begin this study. May His Word strengthen our faith, deepen our understanding, and empower us to live as faithful followers of Christ in our daily lives.

GALATIANS: FREEDOM IN CHRIST

A 6-WEEK STUDY GUIDE

Instructions for Using the Small Group Bible Study Curriculum:

Introduction and Prayer

Begin each session by welcoming the participants and opening in prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your study and discussion.

Passage Reading

Read the designated Bible passage together as a group. You can assign different verses to different group members.

Study Guide and Discussion

Work through the study guide. You can assign different individuals read and answer the specific questions. Encourage open and respectful discussion among the group members. Allow everyone to share their thoughts, insights, and personal reflections on the passage. Respect and value each person's contribution, regardless of their level of biblical knowledge or experience.

Key Takeaways

Summarize the key takeaway from the passage and the discussion. Ensure that everyone understands the main point. You will find the key takeaway in the shaded box under the session introduction.

Application

Encourage participants to reflect on how the key takeaways apply to their lives personally. Discuss practical ways to implement the lessons learned from the study.

Prayer and Accountability

Conclude the session with a time of prayer. Pray for one another, asking God to help everyone apply the truths learned and grow in their faith. Encourage accountability within the group to support one another in living out the biblical principles discussed.

Action Steps

At the end of each session, assign action steps to the group members. These could be specific challenges or commitments related to the study that participants can take with them throughout the week.

Review and Preparation

Before the next session, review the previous study's key takeaways and action steps. Prepare for the upcoming session by reading and familiarizing yourself with the next passage or topic.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST — GALATIANS 1:6-24

SESSION 1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, we will explore the theme salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul wrote this letter to address the issue of legalism and to defend the true Gospel from distortion. Let's dive into the text and discover the timeless truths that still apply to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: Any attempt to add works to the Gospel undermines the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and robs believers of the freedom found in God's grace.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians.

Read Passage: Galatians 1:6-24

Discussion Questions:

1. In verses 6-9, Paul expresses his astonishment at the Galatians for turning away from the true Gospel. What do you think might have caused the Galatians to abandon the Gospel of grace?
2. What does Paul mean when he says, "even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed"? Why is it crucial to safeguard the purity of the Gospel message?
3. In verse 10, Paul contrasts seeking the approval of man with serving Christ. How can seeking human approval hinder our relationship with God? How can we shift our focus to please God rather than people?
4. Paul emphasizes that the Gospel he preached was not man's gospel, but a revelation from Jesus Christ. How does the source of the Gospel's message impact its authority and truthfulness?
5. In verses 13-14, Paul shares his past life as a persecutor of the church. How does his testimony of transformation highlight the power of God's grace in a person's life?

FREEDOM IN CHRIST — GALATIANS 1:6-24

SESSION 1 CONTINUE...

6. In verses 15-17, Paul recounts his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. How did this encounter change the course of Paul's life and ministry?

7. Paul's conversion led him to spend time away from other apostles and the early church. Why do you think he chose to do so? What can we learn from this period of solitude and learning?

8. In verse 24, we see the impact of Paul's conversion on the churches in Judea. How can our transformed lives and testimonies bring glory to God and impact those around us?

Application

1. Reflect on the Gospel message and its significance in your life. Are there any areas where you might be tempted to add human efforts or legalistic practices to gain favor with God? How can you fully embrace the Gospel of grace through faith alone?

2. Take a moment to share your personal testimony with the group. How has encountering Jesus transformed your life and led you to serve Him?

Closing With Prayer: Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives.

Action Steps:

Examine Your Beliefs: Take time to examine your beliefs and convictions. Reflect on whether you have embraced the true Gospel of Christ or if you have been influenced by false teachings or human traditions.

Seek Discernment: Pray for discernment and wisdom to recognize and avoid false teachings or distortions of the Gospel. Be cautious about being swayed by popular opinions or teachings that deviate from biblical truth.

Share the True Gospel: Be intentional about sharing the true Gospel with others. Look for opportunities to explain the message of salvation through faith in Christ alone, and invite others to experience the grace and freedom found in Him.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST — GALATIANS 2:1-21

SESSION 2 INTRODUCTION

SESSION 2

In this study, Paul recounts his encounter with the apostles in Jerusalem and addresses the issue of the Gospel's purity. Let's delve into the text and uncover the timeless truths applicable to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: Justification and salvation come solely through faith in Christ, apart from any works of the law or human efforts.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians 2:1-21.

Read Passage: Galatians 2:1-21

Discussion Questions:

1. In verses 1-10, Paul shares his visit to Jerusalem and his meeting with the apostles. Why was it important for him to confirm that his preaching among the Gentiles was in line with the Gospel?
2. What challenges did Paul face from the false brothers who infiltrated the church in Jerusalem, and why was it crucial for him not to yield to their demands?
3. In verses 11-14, Paul recounts the confrontation with Peter (Cephas) in Antioch. What was the issue at hand, and why did Paul oppose Peter's actions?
4. How can we avoid hypocrisy in our lives, especially in situations where we might feel pressured to compromise our convictions?
5. In verses 15-16, Paul reiterates the foundational truth of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, not by works of the law. Why is this distinction vital for our understanding of salvation?

FREEDOM IN CHRIST — GALATIANS 2:1-21

SESSION 2 CONTINUE...

6. In verse 20, Paul talks about being crucified with Christ and Christ living in him. practically for Paul's life, and how can we apply this concept to our own lives?

7. Paul emphasizes that righteousness does not come through the law, nullifying the grace of God. How can we guard against legalism and rely solely on God's grace for salvation and sanctification?

Application:

1. Take a moment to examine your life and identify any areas where you might be tempted to seek approval through external actions or adherence to rules. How can you refocus on the sufficiency of Christ's grace for your justification and righteousness?

2. Reflect on a time when you faced pressure to compromise your faith or convictions due to external influences. How did you handle the situation, and what lessons can you learn from Paul's confrontation with Peter?

Closing Prayer: Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives. Pray for one another, asking God to strengthen your understanding of His grace and the freedom you have in Christ.

Action Steps:

Deepen Your Understanding of the Gospel: Take time to study and reflect on the Gospel message of justification by faith. Read other biblical passages that affirm this truth and explore the implications of being justified through Christ's work on the cross.

Seek Unity with Other Believers: Pursue unity with fellow believers, just as Paul sought unity with the Jerusalem apostles. Look for opportunities to collaborate with others in advancing the Gospel and supporting one another in faith.

Support Mission and Evangelism: Engage in supporting mission work and evangelism efforts, both locally and globally. Participate in sharing the Gospel with those who have not yet heard of Christ's redemptive work.

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH — GALATIANS 3:1-4:7

SESSION 3 INTRODUCTION

SESSION 3

In this section, Paul passionately reminds the Galatian believers that they were justified by faith in Christ, not by their works of the law. Let's delve into the text and uncover the timeless truths that apply to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: Justification and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are gifts of God's grace through faith in Christ, not through any works of the law.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians 3:1-4:7.

Passage: Galatians 3:1-4:7

Discussion Questions

1. In Galatians 3:1-9, Paul reminds the Galatians that they received the Spirit and experienced God's miracles through faith, not by observing the law. How does this truth apply to us today? How can we live by faith and experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
2. In Galatians 3:10-14, Paul discusses the curse of the law and how Christ redeemed us from it. How does the understanding of Christ's redemptive work change our perspective on the law and the righteousness we have through faith?
3. Galatians 3:15-29 emphasizes the promises made to Abraham and how they find fulfillment in Christ. What does it mean for us to be children of God through faith in Christ? How does this truth shape our identity and relationships with others?
4. In Galatians 4:1-7, Paul uses the analogy of a child and an heir to describe our relationship with God. How does adoption as sons and daughters of God change our perception of our worth and value in His eyes?

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH — GALATIANS 3:1-4:7

SESSION 3 CONTINUE...

Application:

1. Reflect on your understanding of justification by faith in Christ. Are there any areas where you might be tempted to rely on your own efforts or works to gain favor with God? How can you embrace the truth that you are justified by faith alone in Christ?
2. Consider the privileges of being children of God and heirs of His promises. How can you live in light of this truth, demonstrating love and unity in your interactions with others?
3. Think about how the Holy Spirit indwells believers and enables them to cry out "Abba! Father!" How can you cultivate a deeper relationship with God and experience the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in your daily life?

Closing Prayer: Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives. Pray for one another, asking God to reinforce the truth of justification by faith and the reality of being children of God through faith in Christ. Pray for a deeper reliance on the Holy Spirit's leading and a greater understanding of the inheritance and promises God has provided for His children.

Action Steps:

Guard Against Spiritual Drifting: Be vigilant in guarding against any form of false teaching or distortion of the Gospel. Ground yourself firmly in the truth of God's Word and be wary of any attempts to add human effort to God's saving work.

Lean on the Holy Spirit: Rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance, understanding, and transformation. Seek His leading in your daily life and decision-making, trusting that He will empower you to live in alignment with God's will.

Pray for Understanding: Pray for a deeper understanding of God's Word and the truths presented in Galatians. Ask God to open your eyes to the riches of His grace and the depth of His love for you.

SLAVERY TO FREEDOM — GALATIANS 4:8-31

SESSION 4 INTRODUCTION

SESSION 4

In this section, Paul uses an allegory involving Hagar and Sarah to illustrate the contrast between living under the law and living in the freedom of God's promise. Let's delve into the text and uncover the timeless truths that apply to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: Believers are no longer slaves to the law but have been adopted as God's children through faith in Christ.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians 4:8-31.

Passage: Galatians 4:8-31

Discussion Questions:

1. In verses 8-11, Paul reminds the Galatians of their former state of slavery to false gods and the emptiness of religious rituals. How might the desire to return to legalistic practices be detrimental to a believer's faith in Christ? What are some modern-day examples of legalism that we might face?
2. Paul expresses his concern for the Galatians in verses 12-20. What evidence of genuine love and care does Paul show towards the Galatian believers? How can we demonstrate genuine concern for our fellow believers in our community?
3. In verses 21-27, Paul uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah to contrast the covenants of law and promise. How do the stories of Hagar and Sarah reflect the contrast between bondage and freedom? How does this allegory help us understand the difference between living by the law and living by faith in Christ?
4. According to verses 28-31, what does it mean to be children of promise, like Isaac? How does this concept impact our identity as believers in Christ?

SLAVERY TO FREEDOM — GALATIANS 4:8-31

SESSION 4 CONTINUE...

Application:

1. Reflect on your own faith journey. Are there any aspects of your life where you might be tempted to rely on legalism or religious rituals rather than fully trusting in God's promises through faith? How can you align your life more closely with the freedom found in Christ?
2. Consider any believers in your community who might be struggling with legalism or a return to former ways of bondage. How can you support and encourage them to embrace the freedom and grace of Christ?
3. Think about the ways you interact with non-believers. How can the concept of being children of promise impact your witness and sharing the Gospel with others?

Closing Prayer: Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives. Pray for one another, asking God to grant you the wisdom and discernment to walk in the freedom and promises of Christ.

Action Steps:

Embrace Your Identity as a Child of God: Meditate on the truth that through faith in Christ, you have become a child of God and an heir of His promises. Let this identity shape your self-perception and actions.

Foster a Relationship with God as Father: Cultivate a personal relationship with God as your Father. Spend time in prayer and worship, acknowledging His love, provision, and guidance in your life.

Avoid Legalism and Works-based Righteousness: Guard against any tendencies towards legalism or seeking favor with God through religious rituals or human effort. Rest in the grace of Christ and His finished work on the cross.

Lean on the Holy Spirit: Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you in living out your sonship in Christ. Allow the Spirit to shape your character and empower you to live a life that reflects the love and grace of God.

FREEDOM IN THE SPIRIT — GALATIANS 5:1-26

SESSION 5 INTRODUCTION

In this section, Paul urges the Galatian believers to stand firm in their freedom and walk in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Let's dive into the text and uncover the timeless truths that apply to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: We are to stand firm in the freedom that Christ has secured for us and to live a life led by the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians 5:1-26.

Passage: Galatians 5:1-26

Discussion Questions:

1. In verses 1-6, Paul emphasizes the importance of standing firm in the freedom Christ has given us. How can we guard against the temptation to return to legalistic practices or rely on our own efforts for righteousness?
2. In verse 13, Paul addresses the balance between freedom and responsibility. How can we use our freedom in Christ to serve one another in love without falling into the trap of indulging in sinful desires?
3. In verses 16-21, Paul contrasts walking by the Spirit with gratifying the desires of the flesh. What are some practical ways we can actively walk by the Spirit and resist the desires of the flesh in our daily lives?
4. According to verses 22-23, the fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How can we cultivate these fruits in our lives and demonstrate them to those around us?

FREEDOM IN THE SPIRIT — GALATIANS 5:1-26

SESSION 5 CONTINUE...

Application:

1. Reflect on your own life and faith journey. Are there any areas where you might be struggling with the desires of the flesh or returning to legalistic practices? How can you surrender those areas to the Holy Spirit and walk in the freedom Christ has provided?
2. Consider the relationships within your church community. Are there any ways you can actively serve and love one another to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit?
3. Think about the challenges you face in living by the Spirit. How can you depend more on the Holy Spirit's guidance and power to overcome those challenges and live a life that honors God?

Closing Prayer: Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives. Pray for one another, asking God to empower you to walk by the Spirit and display the fruit of the Spirit in your daily interactions and relationships.

Action Steps

Crucify the Flesh Daily: Identify areas of your life where the desires of the flesh are still active. Pray and seek God's help in crucifying those desires daily, inviting the Holy Spirit to empower you in overcoming sinful tendencies.

Fruit of the Spirit Evaluation: Regularly evaluate the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control evident in your character and actions? Pray for growth in these areas.

Serve One Another: Look for opportunities to serve and support others in your church or community. Show love, kindness, and compassion in practical ways, following the example of Christ's selfless love.

Accountability Partner: Find an accountability partner within your small group or church who can help you stay on track in walking in the Spirit. Regularly share your challenges, victories, and prayer requests, supporting one another in spiritual growth.

SOWING IN THE SPIRIT — GALATIANS 6:1-18

SESSION 6

INTRODUCTION

In this section, Paul gives practical instructions on how to restore fallen believers, bear one another's burdens, and sow in the Spirit. Let's delve into the text and uncover the timeless truths that apply to our lives today.

Key Takeaway: Let us invest in sowing in the Spirit, doing good to all, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our interactions with others.

Opening Prayer: Begin the session with a prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to His Word and grant us understanding and wisdom as we study Galatians 6:1-18.

Passage: Galatians 6:1-18

Discussion Questions:

1. In verses 1-5, Paul instructs believers on how to restore those who have fallen into sin. How can we approach this process with gentleness and grace while also being mindful of our own vulnerabilities to temptation?
2. According to verse 2, how can we practically bear one another's burdens? Why is this an essential aspect of living in Christian community?
3. In verses 6-10, Paul discusses sowing and reaping. What does it mean to sow to the flesh, and how does that contrast with sowing to the Spirit? How can we ensure that we are sowing in the Spirit?
4. In verse 14, Paul emphasizes boasting only in the cross of Christ. How can we guard against seeking approval or recognition from others and instead find our identity and confidence in Christ alone?

SOWING IN THE SPIRIT — GALATIANS 6:1-18

SESSION 6 CONTINUE...

Application:

1. Reflect on your own response to believers who have fallen into sin. How can you actively engage in restoring them with gentleness and grace, while also being vigilant about your own spiritual walk?
2. Consider the needs of those in your church community. How can you practically bear their burdens and provide support and encouragement to one another?
3. Think about your daily actions and decisions. How can you intentionally sow in the Spirit, seeking to live a life that honors God and produces fruit that will reap eternal rewards?

Closing Prayer:

Close the study with a prayer, thanking God for His Word and asking for His guidance as you continue to grow in faith and live out the truth of the Gospel in your lives. Pray for one another, asking God to fill you with His Spirit and enable you to walk in grace, bearing one another's burdens, and sowing in the Spirit to bring honor and glory to His name.

Action Steps

Reach Out to Others: Reach out to someone in your small group or church community who might be going through a difficult time. Send them a message, give them a call, or meet up for a coffee. Express your care and willingness to listen without judgment.

Offer a Helping Hand: If you notice someone struggling practically, offer to help lighten their load. It could be running errands for them, assisting with a task, or simply lending a listening ear.

Lead with Grace: When someone has fallen into sin, follow the biblical instruction in this passage and approach them with a spirit of gentleness and restoration. Help them find their way back to Christ and to the community of believers.

Pray with and for Them: Offer to pray with the person you're supporting. Ask them specifically how you can pray for them and then follow up on those prayer requests consistently.