



FOOTHILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH | LIFE NOTES

GALATIANS: A STORY OF GRACE

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Community Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. The goal of your time is not to answer every question, but to facilitate meaningful and life giving conversation. Some questions might connect with your group more than others, so please focus on the ones pertinent to your group.

SYNOPSIS OF SERIES

The entire purpose of this letter is to make a clear the difference between the gospel of Jesus Christ and false gospels. Galatians attacks two false ideas in particular, legalism and lawlessness. It dismantles the lies of these ideas and paints a true picture of salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul stands firmly in defense of the gospel.

CONTEXT OF GALATIANS

The letter was written by Paul sometime around AD 50. On Paul's first missionary journey, he planted churches in Pisidia Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These were Greek people – Paul's mission was to bring the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. Many people in these areas heard the message of Jesus Christ from Paul and accepted it. The message that Paul preached was a message of God's grace. Specifically, Paul emphasized that a person is saved by his faith in Jesus, not by his works. As Paul opened the door for Gentiles to experience Jesus, there were some Jewish teachers who did not buy this "faith alone" message. They believed that Gentiles Christians, like Jewish Christians, needed to follow the traditional ceremonial customs from the Mosaic law. They taught that these Gentile believers had to observe all dietary laws and be circumcised in order to be fully accepted by God. Some of these Jewish teachers made their way into Galatia and were now teaching Paul's congregations that his message of "faith alone" was inadequate.

DIGGING DEEPER: GALATIANS 1:10-24

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. 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.

How is Paul having to choose whether to win the approval of people or God?

Give an example in your life of a time when you have had to choose between pleasing people or pleasing God.

Would you describe yourself as a conformer? Why or why not?

What does Paul mean when he says that the Gospel he preaches is not of human origin?

As a group, read Acts 9:1-19.

How do you respond when you hear this kind of testimony?

What insights does Paul's testimony give us about God?

Look at verse 15. Thinking about your life, how was God working in your life before you began following him?

How has God shown you grace throughout your life?

MOVING FORWARD

How often do you talk about Jesus with people who are not in your immediate Christian circles?

Do you know how to share your story?

When is the last time you shared your story?

Who is someone you could share your story God's grace with in the near future?

Group Leaders: I think it would be good to consider having people share their testimonies during community group meetings. As the leader, you can model this and then ask your group for feedback. Plan on having one person share each week at the beginning of your time together. Then, encourage one another to share with others who don't know Jesus.

Your testimony is a story of God's grace!