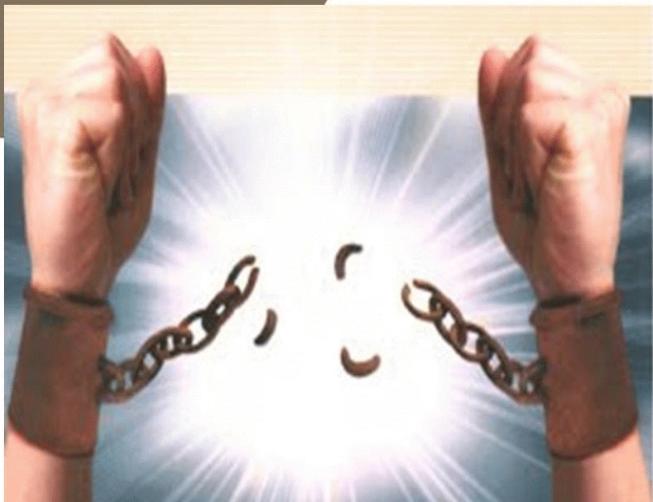


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 1

Day 1

Study: Galatians 1:1-7

Reading: Matthew 7:15-20, Jude 1-7

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

In one of the churches I pastored, I was told about a previous situation in which a young couple started attending the church, but didn't want to become members. This couple started a Bible study in their home in which many of the young couples in church attended. Before long, the man started saying some things in their Bible study that didn't sound right. This caused some of the couples to search out what the Bible really said about certain matters. The couples who studied realized that this man wasn't teaching the whole truth of the Word of God. The reason he hadn't joined the church is because he never intended to be part of it. His whole intentions were to draw people away from the truth of the Word of God and get them to follow him. The man accomplished some of his goals and was able to draw some people away from the church. Today, we are going to see that false teachers are nothing new to the church but have been used by Satan since the church began.

What Does the Bible Say?

When Paul wrote the book of Galatians, he wasn't writing to just one church. The book was most likely meant for the province of Galatia, specifically the four churches that he had been involved with on his first missionary journey. These churches were in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe and were all in the southern province of Galatia. This is the only one of Paul's letters where he doesn't commend any of the churches for something they had been doing right. The main reason for this is because he wrote the other churches to encourage them to live out the Gospel properly. In Galatians, he wrote to correct the false doctrine of legalism that had crept into the church.

Paul began the letter by greeting the Galatians and reminding them that God had called him to the ministry. He wanted them to know that he wasn't writing them his opinion but was writing God's truth to them (vs 1-2). Issuing a greeting of "grace and peace" was a characteristic of early Christianity. Grace reminded the believers how they could do nothing to

earn their salvation but it was given by God. Peace reminded them of the great inner peace that God gave to those who trusted in Him. In his greeting, Paul also emphasized the fact that it was God's will for Jesus Christ to die on the cross so that all men could be saved from their sin. He wanted to emphasize that no man should get the glory by earning their own salvation, but God should get all the glory for what the Gospel had accomplished (vs 3-5).

Paul doesn't take much time in getting to the point of his letter. He wanted the Galatians to understand that the false doctrines they had been falling into was a very serious matter. He told the Galatians that he was amazed at how quickly they deserted the Gospel which he had shared with them. The false teaching involved men who had come into the church and began to teach that a person must do works as well as believe in Christ in order to be saved. Paul stated that the teachers didn't present a new doctrine, but they were trying to distort the doctrine that he had given them (vs 6-7).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Why do you believe what you believe about the Bible? Do you really know what you believe or do you just go with the flow? Have you ever questioned why you go to church and believe the Bible? There have been trends in Christianity that say it is wrong to question what you believe and what your authorities told you about the Bible. I think it is good to question what you believe and what you have been taught. When you begin to ask yourself questions about God and the Bible, it will often lead you to begin to study things out for yourself. The more you study and seek the truth, the stronger your faith will be. Jesus often approached his disciples with questions because he wanted them to think about what He was saying and who He was. He wanted them to have a personal knowledge of God and a relationship with Him. Jesus didn't want them to continually rely upon His earthly presence for everything. Study God's Word for yourself and find out what it really says.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to give you wisdom as you study His Word.*
- * *Thank God for giving you the Word of God.*

Day 2

Study: Galatians 1:8-10

Reading: II John 1-13, Matthew 6:24-33

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

What Does the Bible Say?

As we saw yesterday, Paul didn't beat around the bush in his letter to the Galatians. He immediately addressed the false teaching that had been occurring in the Galatian churches. We saw yesterday how Paul was concerned about teachers who were teaching the people something different than he had taught them. He continued his thoughts in verse eight with some strong comments about false teaching. Paul said that false teachers should be accursed. "Accursed" translates "anathema," which refers to that which is devoted to destruction. The book of II John tells us that we should have nothing to do with false teachers.

Paul told the people that if he came to them teaching something different than the Gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, then they should reject him as well. He also hypothetically referred to the thought that even if an angel told them something different, they should not believe the angel. Paul could have confidence in saying that because God doesn't change His mind. If an angel were sent by God, he would preach the same message that Paul was preaching (vs 8). This matter had become such a problem in the churches that Paul wanted to emphasize what he had just said and repeated himself in verse 9.

The false teachers that Paul was talking about was a group that has come to be known as the Judaizers. This group of Jews went to the churches after Paul had ministered there and told the people that they had to obey the Jewish law in order to be saved. They wanted both Jews and Gentiles to follow the Old Testament law. This meant that Gentiles would have to be circumcised and also meant that they would have to make sacrifices along with many other legalistic requirements that the Jews had made up. By doing this, they stirred up controversy and used their influence to try to discredit Paul. Apparently, the Judaizers had accused Paul of seeking some sort of fame and popularity. Paul defended himself by telling the Galatians that he wasn't concerned about pleasing

men, but he was concerned about pleasing God. He used his life as a proof of that fact by calling himself a “bondservant.” Paul suffered many things for the sake of the Gospel. In fact, he was even stoned in Lystra because he preached Christ (Acts 14:9). If Paul was trying to promote himself, he wouldn’t have been willing to suffer as he did. He did it because his main goal in life was to serve God (vs 10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you willing to suffer for the cause of Christ? Is your goal in life to please yourself or to please God? When your goal in life is to please God, you will live differently from the world. You won’t live for work, sports or possessions, but you will live for God. All the things the world has to offer will just be tools that we can use to glorify Christ. For instance, a job or a sport should not hurt your spiritual life, but it should be a tool for you to share the Gospel. When you work or play sports instead of regularly meeting with the believers for worship, you are putting those things ahead of God. If you have a job or play in sports, and you have a choice between church or one of those, you can be an excellent witness for Christ by taking a stand and putting God first. You can tell your boss or your coach that God is more important to you than anything. Most of the time, they will honor your choice, but if they don’t and fire you or cut you, that means that God didn’t want those things in your life. God will bless you when you take a stand for Him! If God wants you to have a job, He will give you a job where you don’t have to work during church. If God wants you to play sports, He will let you be on a team where practices and games don’t interfere with church. You need to remember that you are not on earth to make money or have fun, you are here to love and serve God. When you do that, you will have fun and all your needs will be met.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for providing for your needs and cares.
- * Ask God to help you put Him first.
- * Praise God for working all things out for your good.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 1:1-2

Reading: Acts 13:13-52

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

Take a moment to look at some of the other epistles Paul wrote. (He wrote 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.) How does Galatians begin differently than many of the other letters Paul wrote?

Why do you think Paul started Galatians in a different way (vs 1-2)?

****As you read the book, you will realize that the people who had come into the Galatian churches strongly questioned the authority of Paul and accused Paul of being in the ministry for selfish gain.*

What does Paul emphasize in verses 1-2 about his authority as an apostle?

Where is Galatia?



Acts 13:13-52

Acts 13 records the first missionary journey Paul took with Barnabas. They left from Antioch in Syria and traveled to Cyprus (13:1-12). From there they traveled to Antioch Pisidia, the territory of Galatia.

Where did Paul and Barnabas go on the Sabbath day (vs 14)?

Why would Paul and Barnabas have been asked to share in the synagogue (vs 15)?

****It was common for guests who came from the land of Israel to be asked to share in the congregation. Israel and specifically Jerusalem was revered by the Jews. Paul also had been well taught since he was young in Jewish ways and traditions.*

How did Paul start his message to the people (vs 16-22)?

What was Paul's point in reviewing the history of Israel (vs 23-25)?

What message did Paul share with the Galatians (vs 26-41)?

How did the people respond to the message that Paul delivered (vs 42-43)?

What happened to cause the Jewish leaders to become jealous (vs 44-45)?

Why did Paul say they were sharing the message with the Gentiles (vs 46-47?) - Paul quoted from Isaiah 49:6

What different responses did the Jews and Gentiles give to the message of Paul (vs 48-52)?

Practical Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply this to your daily life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 1:3-5

Reading: Acts 14:1-23

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

Why do you think "grace" and "peace" were common greetings among early believers (vs 3)?

What did Christ do for you (vs 4)?

How did Paul describe the world we live in (vs 4)? What do you think he meant by this?

Who did Paul want to get the glory for everything (vs 5)? What does this mean?

****The simple understanding of glorifying God is to make Him look bigger in the eyes of others.*

Acts 14:1-7

What Galatian city did Paul and Barnabas travel to after they left Antioch (vs 1)? - See Map from yesterday.

What was the result of their preaching (vs 1)?

Who started to stir up trouble (vs 2)?

What did God give them the ability to do to prove that what Paul and Barnabas were saying was real (vs 3)?

What was the result of the message of the Gospel and the hard hearts of the religious Jews (vs 4)?

What did the religious leaders stir up enough people in the city to do (vs 5)?

Where did Paul and Barnabas go to next (vs 6-7)?

Acts 14:8-23

What was Paul able to do at Lystra (vs 8-10)?

What response did this cause among the people (vs 11-12)?

****Most major Roman cities had temples to different dieties that were worshiped by the people.*

What did the priests of Zeus want to do (vs 13)?

How did Paul and Barnabas respond to this attention (vs 14-15)?

What does this show about their humility?

How had the living God of Israel revealed Himself to the people before Paul and Barnabas arrived with the message of the Gospel (vs 16-17)?

What turned the affections of the people of Lystra from Paul and Barnabas (vs 19)?

What does this reveal about human nature?

How did God protect Paul and Barnabas (vs 19-20)?

What did Paul and Barnabas do after they preached in Derbe (vs 20-21)?

What was their message to the believers (vs 22)?

What did they do in the newly started churches (vs 23)?

Practical Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply this to your daily life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 1:6-9

Reading: II Corinthians 11:1-15

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

What was Paul “shocked” (NLT) by (vs 6)?

How has God called all believers (vs 6)?

What did Paul mean when he said the Galatians were following a “different gospel” (vs 6-7)?

****Paul clarified that there was only one true gospel, but the Galatians were following a distorted version of the gospel he had first delivered to them.*

What bold statement did Paul make in verse 8?

How does this help us in our faith when “new revelations” are made about the Bible?

****In recent years, there have been supposed archeological discoveries that people say contradict the traditional Gospel. Many of these are just theories, but gain a wide following through the media. There are books like “The Lost Gospel” or “The Gospel of Thomas” and movies like “The Divinci Code” which all seem to attempt to cast doubts on the biblical Gospel that has been passed down through centuries.*

What strong language does Paul use to refer to those who preach a different Gospel (vs 9)?

Why do you think Paul is so emphatic about this?

II Corinthians 11:1-15

How did Paul introduce this section of his teaching (vs 1)?

Why was Paul jealous for the followers in Corinth (vs 2)?

What was Paul afraid of for the people of Corinth (vs 3)?

What does the enemy attempt to do to draw people away from the truth (vs 4)?

What point was Paul trying to get across in verses 5-6?

****Some false teachers are very eloquent and some sound extremely logical and sophisticated. Paul was declaring that a person's mental or physical abilities did not make them the source of truth. Even though others may have been more eloquent and sophisticated than he was, that did not make them right.*

What was a characteristic of Paul's lifestyle that helped prove the authenticity of his message (vs 7-9)?

What attitude did Paul have when he ministered (vs 10-11)?

****Paul did what he did out of love. The ministry of Paul often brought him pain and humiliation. False teachers, on the other hand, were normally seeking some type of financial benefit or, what they did was done for selfish gain.*

How were false teachers described (vs 13)?

Who was their leader (vs 14)?

What should come as no surprise (vs 15)?

****Many false teachers don't know they are false teachers. They genuinely seek to share their message but are deceived by Satan.*

Practical Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply this to your daily life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 1:10

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8, 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, Matthew 23:1-12, 10:28-33

Memory: Proverbs 3:4

What was Paul seeking in his life and ministry (vs 10)?

What are you not doing when you are seeking the approval of men?

How can you know if you are seeking the approval of God or the approval of men?

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Was the mission of Paul easy (vs 1-2)? Explain.

What did the message of Paul not come from (vs 3)?

What did Paul desire (vs 4)?

What was not part of Paul's ministry (vs 5)?

What did Paul not seek (vs 6)?

How did Paul treat the believers (vs 7)?

What was Paul willing to do (vs 8)?

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

What are you to do in everything that you do (vs 31)?

Why should we try to please everyone in everything we do (vs 32-33)?

What do you think this means?

What examples should you follow (11:1)?

Memory Verses

Bible Memory

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.

Matthew 23:1-12

What did Jesus say about following the Pharisees (vs 1-3)?

What did the Pharisees do for their followers (vs 4)?

Why did the Pharisees do what they did (vs 5)?

What did the Pharisees love (vs 6-7)?

What should you not strive for (vs 8-10)? Why not?

What is the key to greatness (vs 11)?

How can you practically put verse 12 into practice?

Matthew 10:28-33

Who are you not to fear (vs 26)?

What does God know (vs 27)?

Who are you to fear (vs 28)?

What does God care for (vs 29)?

What point is Jesus making in verse 30?

How can you live without fear (vs 31)?

What does God want you to do for others (vs 32-33)?

Practical Application

What can you learn about God from this passage?

How can you apply this to your daily life?