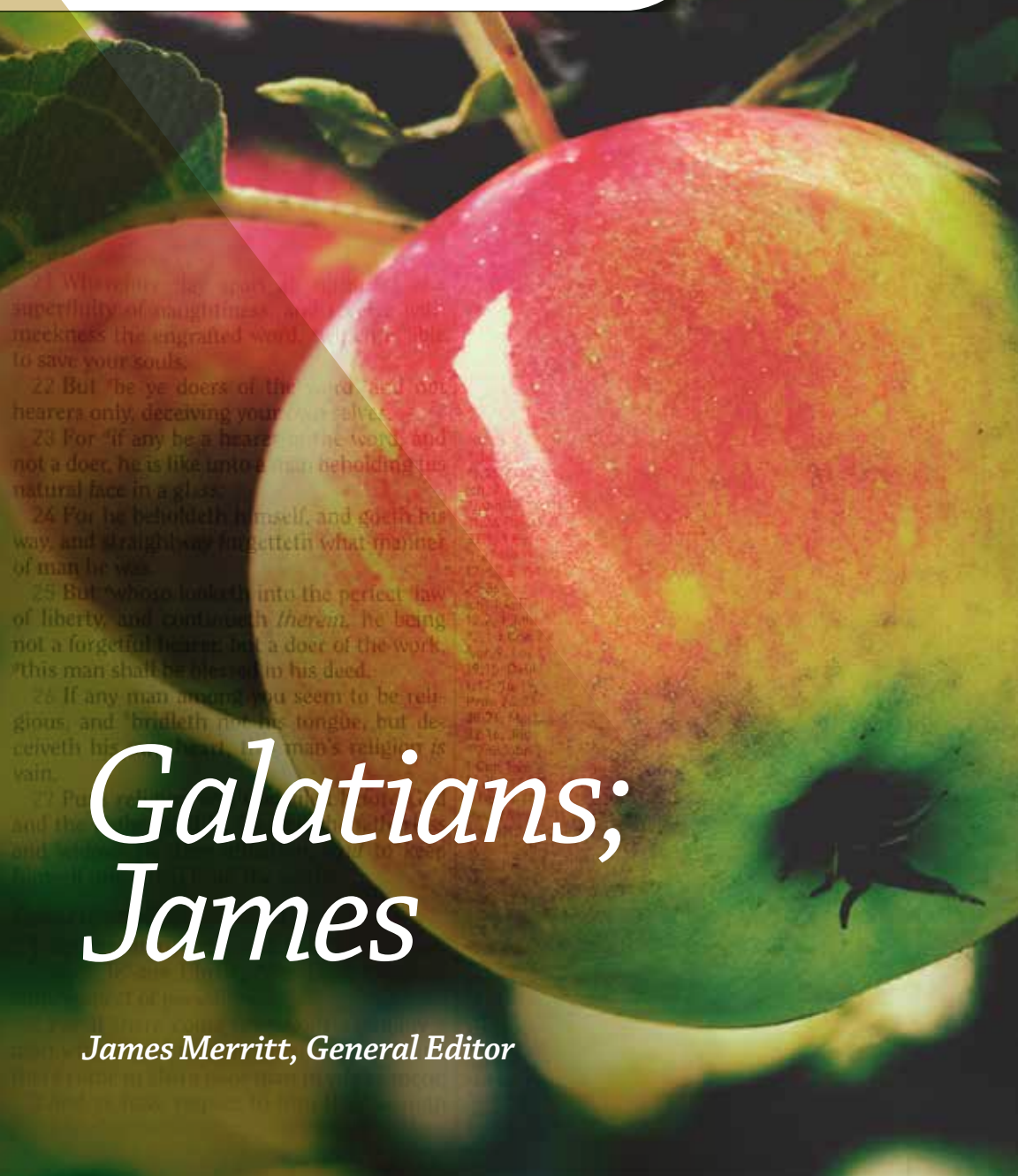




DEAF PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE



Galatians; James

James Merritt, General Editor

A large, dark cross stands on a hill against a sunset sky with orange and yellow hues. The foreground is dark and silhouetted.

JESUS

Is Jesus enough?

Paul wrote to the Galatians to answer this question: Is Jesus enough? Some teachers in Galatia were implying He was not. They didn't claim Jesus was unnecessary. But to be saved, they taught, one had to submit to certain Old Testament laws and rituals. In other words, faith plus works were required for a right relationship with God.

Paul argued that salvation is unearned and undeserved. Salvation is solely by God's grace through His Son Jesus, and is received by faith alone.

Jesus is sufficient for our salvation. He was with God the Father before the world was created. He became human and lived among us. He lived a sinless life. He died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins. God raised Him from the dead.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He is waiting for you now.

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus Christ as God's Son and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

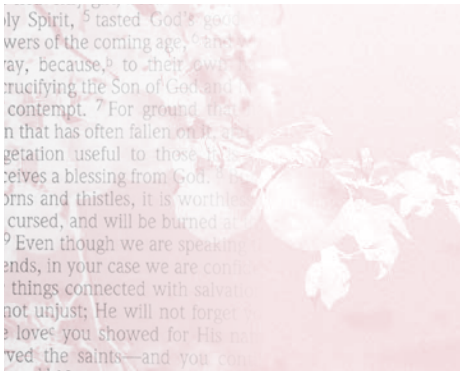
You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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>> MEET THE WRITER



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A WORD FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR



Someone has well said that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross so Christianity could become only a hobby that we practice one day a week. Real Christianity is for all of life and affects every part of life. That is why this study of Galatians and James is going to be so revealing, re-energizing, and may even be revitalizing to your walk with God.

On the one hand, the Christian life is a life of faith that leads to freedom. Once and for all we now know that rules and rituals have been replaced by grace and faith. The Book of Galatians makes it plain that the way to the Lord is not by keeping God's law, but by trusting a loving God. In a real sense, the Book of Galatians is the Emancipation Proclamation for every child of God.

On the other hand, the freedom that we enjoy through faith in Christ does not mean that we are free to do whatever we want to do. Rather, we are free to do what we ought to do. A real tree bears real fruit. We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. Faith confesses Christ as Lord and faith shows our commitment to the Lord. Inward profession should produce outward practice. That is the theme of the Book of James.

Galatians says we are justified before God by faith. James says faith without works is dead. Paul and James were the best of friends and were two sides of the same coin as you will see in this fantastic study.

James Merritt

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INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS AND JAMES

GALATIANS

Paul, the apostle, wrote the book of Galatians as a letter to churches he had started. Paul had traveled to Galatia, a Roman province, which is in Turkey today. Paul had taught the Galatians the good news that he had received from Jesus. Paul taught the Galatians that a person was saved through faith in Jesus Christ. No one was saved by obeying the Old Testament law. The Galatians responded to Paul's teaching and became Christians. After Paul left, a group of people known as the Judaizers went to these churches. They told the new Christians that Paul did not get his message from God, that Paul's good news was wrong, and that Paul did not teach them everything they needed to know. The Judaizers changed the good news into something that was completely different. The Judaizers told the Galatians that they needed to obey the Jewish commandments, too. The new Christians were confused and started to follow this false teaching. Paul wrote this letter to these new Christians to tell them to get back to the true good news. They were Christians by faith alone; they did not become Christians by obeying God's law.

JAMES

James, author of the book of James, is believed by most people to be Jesus' half-brother. James did not believe in Jesus until after Jesus' death on the cross. James later became a leader in the Church in Jerusalem and had a strong influence in the early Church. James wrote this letter for Jewish Christians who did not live in Israel but were scattered abroad. They were facing persecution as Christians. The Church was still young and was struggling to work out problems between Judaism and Christianity. These young Jewish Christians were trying to figure out which part of Judaism they were to still follow and at the same time what new ways of life they should follow as Christians. James wrote this letter to these young believers to help them with how to face their many challenges. James gave them practical advice as to how to live as Christians. Because of all the advice James gave, the book of James is sometimes called the "Proverbs of the New Testament." James told them how to control what they said and how they could pray the prayer of faith like Elijah. James told them how to support one another, pray for the sick, look for Jesus' return, and help anyone who had sinned to come back to the right path of following God. Basically, James told these Jewish Christians how they could become mature Christians and grow in their faith.

OUTLINES OF GALATIANS; JAMES

GALATIANS

- I. Introduction (1:1-10)
- II. The Gospel Revealed (1:11–2:21)
- III. The Gospel Explained (3:1–4:31)
- IV. The Gospel Lived (5:1–6:10)
- V. Conclusion (6:11-18)

JAMES

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. Genuine Tests (1:2-18)
- III. Genuine Faith (1:19–2:26)
- IV. Genuine Maturity (3:1–4:17)
- V. Genuine Discipline (5:1-20)

WORD LIST

Abba [AH buh]—Aramaic word for “father”; a term associated with intimacy; the term used by Jesus to speak of His relationship with God (Mark 14:36)

Accountable—to be responsible for what you do, to answer someone else about our actions

Anticipation—expecting, knowing something will happen

Antioch [AN tih ahk]—name of two New Testament cities, Antioch of Syria and Antioch of Pisidia; Antioch of Pisidia was located in Galatia; Antioch of Syria was where believers were first called Christians (11:26), where Paul and Barnabas were set apart as missionaries (13:1-3), and where Paul opposed Peter over his separating himself from the Gentiles (Gal. 2:11)

Apostle—one who was sent on behalf of another; a divinely appointed messenger, envoy, or ambassador

Attributes—the various parts of one’s character such as goodness or strength

Benefactor—someone who does a good or generous action to another person

Cephas [SEE fuhs]—Aramaic form of the name Peter, means “rock”

Circumcision—ritual performed by Jews on the eighth day after birth; became a source of controversy in the early church because some legalists insisted Gentile converts be made circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:1)

Condemned—found guilty and sentenced to be punished

Deceived—believed something that was not true

Discernment—understanding the difference between right and wrong, good and bad

Exalt—to lift up high with praise

Galatia [guh LAY shuh]—geographical area in central Asia Minor; Roman province; included Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, cities visited by Paul on his first missionary journey

Gospel—the message of God’s saving activity through the life, ministry,

death, and resurrection of Jesus; literally means “good news”

Grace—something good given to us that we do not deserve like the salvation we have from God

Guardian (Schoolmaster)—a servant charged with the rearing and discipline of children until late adolescence; supervised and protected those under his care. The Greek word is paidagogos, from which the English word pedagogue (teacher) is derived; the law was the guardian for people of faith until Christ came (Gal. 3:24)

Harlot—an old word for a prostitute

Hypocritical—a person who pretends to believe certain things, but acts in a different way

Illustrations—an example or story that is used to make something easier to understand

Judaizers—a group of people teaching a false doctrine of faith plus works

Justified—to be declared righteous; a work of God based on what Christ accomplished on the cross

Mental assent—to agree with something but only privately in one’s mind

Racial bias—to have prejudice against someone because of their race

Redeem—to pay a price for the release of something or someone; to liberate or to ransom

Righteousness—a right standing with God credited to man on the basis of faith in Jesus’ substitutionary death on the cross

Reaping—harvesting the crop

Sidetracked—changed the direction, did something different or less important

Sowing—planting seeds

Submission—to humbly accept the decision or leadership of another person

Substitute—someone who takes the place of another, like a substitute teacher

Traitor—a person who is not loyal to his or her own country

Trustee (Governor, Manager)—a steward who had charge of the child’s inheritance until that child came of age (Gal. 4:2)

Vulnerable—open to attack or harm; easily hurt

BIBLE READING PLAN

MONTH 1

- ☐ 1. Galatians 1:1-5
- ☐ 2. Galatians 1:6-7
- ☐ 3. Galatians 1:8-9
- ☐ 4. Galatians 1:10
- ☐ 5. Galatians 1:11-12
- ☐ 6. Galatians 1:13-14
- ☐ 7. Galatians 1:15-17
- ☐ 8. Galatians 1:18-20
- ☐ 9. Galatians 1:21-24
- ☐ 10. Galatians 2:1-2
- ☐ 11. Galatians 2:3-5
- ☐ 12. Galatians 2:6-8
- ☐ 13. Galatians 2:9-10
- ☐ 14. Galatians 2:11-12
- ☐ 15. Galatians 2:13-14
- ☐ 16. Galatians 2:15-18
- ☐ 17. Galatians 2:19-21
- ☐ 18. Galatians 3:1-4
- ☐ 19. Galatians 3:5-6
- ☐ 20. Galatians 3:7-9
- ☐ 21. Galatians 3:10-12
- ☐ 22. Galatians 3:13-14
- ☐ 23. Galatians 3:15-18
- ☐ 24. Galatians 3:19-20
- ☐ 25. Galatians 3:21-23
- ☐ 26. Galatians 3:24-26
- ☐ 27. Galatians 3:27-29
- ☐ 28. Galatians 4:1-3
- ☐ 29. Galatians 4:4-7
- ☐ 30. Galatians 4:8-11

MONTH 2

- ☐ 1. Galatians 4:12-14
- ☐ 2. Galatians 4:15-17
- ☐ 3. Galatians 4:18-20
- ☐ 4. Galatians 4:21-27
- ☐ 5. Galatians 4:28-31
- ☐ 6. Galatians 5:1
- ☐ 7. Galatians 5:2-4
- ☐ 8. Galatians 5:5-6
- ☐ 9. Galatians 5:7-10
- ☐ 10. Galatians 5:11-12
- ☐ 11. Galatians 5:13-15
- ☐ 12. Galatians 5:16-18
- ☐ 13. Galatians 5:19-21
- ☐ 14. Galatians 5:22-23
- ☐ 15. Galatians 5:24-26
- ☐ 16. Galatians 6:1-2
- ☐ 17. Galatians 6:3-5
- ☐ 18. Galatians 6:6-8
- ☐ 19. Galatians 6:9-10
- ☐ 20. Galatians 6:11-13
- ☐ 21. Galatians 6:14-16
- ☐ 22. Galatians 6:17-18
- ☐ 23. James 1:1-4
- ☐ 24. James 1:5
- ☐ 25. James 1:6-8
- ☐ 26. James 1:9-11
- ☐ 27. James 1:12
- ☐ 28. James 1:13-15
- ☐ 29. James 1:16-18
- ☐ 30. James 1:19-21
- ☐ 31. James 1:22-25

MONTH 3

- ☐ 1. James 1:26-27
- ☐ 2. James 2:1-4
- ☐ 3. James 2:5-7
- ☐ 4. James 2:8-11
- ☐ 5. James 2:12-13
- ☐ 6. James 2:14-17
- ☐ 7. James 2:18-19
- ☐ 8. James 2:20-26
- ☐ 9. James 3:1-2
- ☐ 10. James 3:3-6
- ☐ 11. James 3:7-12
- ☐ 12. James 3:13-16
- ☐ 13. James 3:17-18
- ☐ 14. James 4:1-3
- ☐ 15. James 4:4-5
- ☐ 16. James 4:6-10
- ☐ 17. James 4:11-12
- ☐ 18. James 4:13-14
- ☐ 19. James 4:15-17
- ☐ 20. James 5:1-3
- ☐ 21. James 5:4-6
- ☐ 22. James 5:7-8
- ☐ 23. James 5:9
- ☐ 24. James 5:10-11
- ☐ 25. James 5:12
- ☐ 26. James 5:13-14
- ☐ 27. James 5:15
- ☐ 28. James 5:16
- ☐ 29. James 5:17-18
- ☐ 30. James 5:19-20



TRUE GOSPEL

Christians should hold to the true Gospel message – Jesus crucified and resurrected.

GALATIANS 1:1-10

A woman wanted to become a better cook so she signed up for a cooking class with a famous chef. She planned a meal for her friends. One of her friends told her she was cooking her meat wrong. Then the friend told her she needed to add different seasonings. What should the woman do? Should she follow what she learned from the famous chef or listen to her friend's advice? The new Christians in Galatia faced a similar decision. They had to decide whether to listen to Paul, the expert in the gospel, or to listen to false teachers.

Paul taught the churches in Galatia the good news that he had learned from Jesus. But after Paul left, a group of people called Judaizers went to these churches and told the new Christians they must obey the Jewish traditions too if they wanted to be saved. The new Christians were confused and started to follow this false teaching. Paul wrote the letter to the Galatian Christians to tell them to go back to the true gospel. They were saved by faith in Christ, not by obeying the law.

GALATIANS 1:1-10

1 From Paul, an **apostle**. **A** I was not chosen to be an apostle **by human beings**, **B** nor was I sent from human beings. I was made an apostle through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead.

2 This letter is also from all those of God's family who are with me. To the churches in

Galatia: **C** **3** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 Jesus gave Himself for our sins to free us from this evil world we live in, as **God the**

Father planned. **D** **5** The glory belongs to God forever and ever. Amen. **6** God, by His

grace through Christ, called you to become His people. So I am amazed that **you are**

turning away so quickly and believing something different than the Good

News. **E** **7** Really, there is no other Good News. But some people are confusing you;

they want to **change** **F** the Good News of Christ. **8** We preached to you the Good News.

So if we ourselves, or even an angel from heaven, should preach to you something

different, we should be judged **guilty!** **G**

9 I said this before, and now I say it again: You have already accepted the Good News.

If anyone is preaching something different to you, let that person be judged guilty!

10 Do you think I am trying to make people accept me? **H** No, God is the One

I am trying to please. Am I trying to please people? If I still wanted to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

a. a person Jesus chose and sent to share His gospel with others

b. Jesus, the Son of God, called Paul directly.

c. A Roman province in modern-day Turkey. Paul established churches in the region on his first missionary journey.

d. God planned our salvation through Jesus' death long before the world began.

e. The Judaizers changed the good news into something that wasn't the good news anymore! Theirs was not a message of freedom but of slavery to the law.

f. In the Greek, "change" can mean to pervert, distort, and twist a thing into something it is not.

g. This is a very strong word in the Greek. It means let that person be accursed or condemned to hell!

h. Writing his letter with these strong words showed Paul was not trying to be popular but trying to be honest.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why is it important for believers to hold faithfully to the true gospel?
2. What did it mean when Paul called himself an apostle?
3. How does God give people grace?
4. What does it mean that Jesus gave Himself for our sins?
5. What calling did the Galatians have?
6. Why did the Galatians turn away so quickly and start believing something different?
7. What did the false teachers do to the good news?
8. What strong warning did Paul have to say about anyone who changes the good news?
9. Was Paul trying to get the Galatians to like him? Why or why not?
10. How was Paul trying to get God's approval?
11. Why do some people today leave the true gospel for a false gospel?

BIBLE SKILL: *Serving God*

Following Jesus means giving up our lives for God. That can mean we serve Christ and do things that please Him. That can also mean we die daily to things we want to do. Write down who gave up their lives for God in the verses below.

Acts 7:54-60 _____

Acts 12:1-2 _____

Romans 16:3-4 _____

Romans 16:12 _____

Colossians 4:12 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God chooses Christians to share His good news.
- Faith in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross gives people true peace.
- Christians must guard their faith and reject those who teach a message not based on faith in Jesus for salvation.

Discuss as a group how we can share the good news with other Deaf people.

What gives you peace? Explain to your group how we can find true peace.

Why should we guard our faith? How do we know if someone tells us a message that is not good news?

MEMORY VERSE

We preached to you the Good News. So if we ourselves, or even an angel from heaven, should preach to you something different, we should be judged guilty! - Galatians 1:8

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 1:1-2, noting how Paul introduced himself.

Paul reminded the Galatians that he was an apostle. An apostle was a person Jesus chose to share His gospel with others. The Judaizers told the Galatians Paul's message was wrong. They said Paul's message wasn't from God and that it was missing some important truths. The Judaizers told the Galatians that salvation included obeying the Jewish commandments. Paul reminded the Galatians that his message came from Jesus Himself. Paul had a special authority from God because he was an apostle. The Galatians needed to listen to him and not to the false teachers.

Paul wrote this letter to all the churches in Galatia that he started. Paul said other Christians with Paul were sending this letter to the Galatians, too. This letter wasn't just from Paul, but was from other Christians who were with Paul. They agreed with what Paul said. Paul's message had more weight and truth than the Judaizer's message.

When we tell the truth of the good news today, what authority do we rely on?

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 1:3-5, highlighting phrases about Jesus.

Paul usually started his letters with the words "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul reminded his readers that grace and peace came from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. What is grace? Grace is something good given to us that we don't deserve. For Christians, grace is God giving us salvation even though we should be punished instead. God does this freely. We do not need to pay for it or do anything in return. Because of God's grace, we have peace with God. Grace always comes before peace.

Paul gave more information on how people get this grace. Jesus died on the cross as our substitute, so we don't have to die for our sins. This is God's grace to us. Jesus died for us so we don't have to suffer in hell forever. We will not be separated from God. God planned this for us because of His love for us. Christ gives us freedom.

Who should we thank for this grace and salvation and freedom? God gave us this gift of salvation. We don't have to earn it. We should thank God and praise God for it.

How would you explain "grace" to someone who doesn't know the Bible? Why does grace come first and then peace?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 1:6-7, looking for what surprised Paul.

Paul said God called him to be an apostle. The Galatians had a call too. The Galatians were called to be Christians, God's people. Paul was shocked, however, because very soon after Paul left the Galatians began to follow false teachers. Paul couldn't believe the Galatians believed a false teaching. Paul said what they were following now was NOT the gospel. It was wrong teaching. The good news had been twisted into something different. It was no longer the good news. Now the Galatians were going the wrong way. They believed a lie. The Galatians did not follow the pure good news Paul had taught them.

Paul said there is only ONE gospel. What Paul taught them was the good news, or the gospel. Paul taught them everything they needed to know about the gospel. Now the Galatians believed the Judaizers who taught lies. The Galatians did not catch the Judaizers' lies. The Judaizers changed the gospel into something different. They were teaching a false gospel.

What groups are like the Judaizers today?

Why might someone try to teach a message different from the true gospel?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 1:8-9, looking for who Paul said will be judged.

Paul emphasized he taught the Galatians the true gospel, or good news. They should believe the gospel. They should not accept different teaching about the salvation given by Christ. They should have recognized the wrong teaching and rejected it. If Paul changed what he taught the Galatians and lied, God would punish him for teaching wrong. Paul used a very strong word here. Paul said he would be accursed or condemned to hell. If an angel came and taught them wrong things, then God would punish the angel in the same way. Paul tried to make the Galatians realize how serious this was. The Galatians needed to be careful and only listen to people teaching the truth. They needed to stop believing false teachers and turn back to following the true good news.

Paul told the Galatians they already knew and accepted the good news that he taught. They should not start believing something different. They needed to stay with the true gospel. Compare the actions of the Galatians to someone driving on a trip. Imagine how a driver follows his GPS. If a friend tells the driver a wrong way to go, the driver should not listen to the wrong directions. The driver should ignore bad directions. The driver should follow his GPS. The Galatians needed to ignore bad teaching. Just as the Galatians needed to ignore false teachings so must we. We must hold tight to the truth.

How can you make sure you stay with the true good news and not get off track on false teaching?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Life Now and Life Later*

One of the key doctrines of Christianity is the temporary nature of this life on earth. Our lives here on earth are for a short time compared to eternity. Our real home is not here on earth. Our real home is in heaven. We have to give up our lives here on earth and live only for Jesus. We will suffer here on earth for Jesus. We must remember our suffering is only for a short time. God will reward us in heaven and we will live there eternally with Him.

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 1:10, underlining who Paul was trying to please.

Paul said he wasn't preaching for himself. Paul didn't care about becoming popular or famous. Paul's goal was to please God. Paul's goal wasn't to make the Galatians happy. Paul wanted to serve Jesus. How did Paul serve Jesus? Paul told people the good news that he learned from Jesus. Paul didn't change the good news to fit what people wanted. Paul served Jesus and told the truth.

Sometimes pleasing God can be hard. We may have to say things like Paul did that will make people upset with us. Are we willing to tell people the truth even if it means they will get mad at us? We may lose friends. It could get so bad that it costs us our job. Are we willing to stand up and be light in a dark world? The President of the United States says in his inauguration oath that he will defend the Constitution of the United States. Do we feel that way about the good news? Do we feel that way about the Bible? Are we willing to defend God's Word with our lives?

What lessons did you learn from what Paul said to the Galatians?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 1. Meet with one or two members of your group and discuss ways to live what you have learned from this lesson.

Tell about the last time you shared the good news with a Deaf friend. Why did you share with that person?

How can we know the difference between truth and error?

Who do we try to please here on earth? Do we try to please our friends, our family, our Deaf community, or do we seek to please God only? Who are you trying to please?



TRUE GRACE

*God doesn't care where you are from or what color your skin is.
God offers His grace freely to all people.*

GALATIANS 2:11-21

Who can be saved and how can people be saved? That is the question Paul wrote about in today's verses. There were Jewish Christians in Galatia who were teaching that only a Jew could be saved, so if Gentiles wanted to be saved then first they must become Jews. Trusting Jesus was not enough, according to the Judaizers.

In today's lesson, Paul confronted this false teaching. God was ready to save anyone who came to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. This was the true gospel Paul preached to the Galatians. The Judaizers made a huge problem. They were teaching ideas that were false. Paul wrote to confront their teaching. Paul explained again what the gospel means. Jesus had to die to save us from our sins. We are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot earn our salvation by keeping the law, or the Ten Commandments. This is the true gospel, and God in His kindness offers salvation to all who will believe this message – Jews, Gentiles, and everyone else.

GALATIANS 2:11-21

11 When Peter came to **Antioch**, **A** I challenged him to his face, because he was wrong. **12 Peter ate with the non-Jewish people** **B** until some Jewish people sent from James came to Antioch. When they arrived, **Peter stopped eating with those who weren't Jewish, and he separated himself from them.** **C**

He was afraid of the Jews. **13** So Peter was a hypocrite, as were the other Jewish believers who joined with him. Even Barnabas was influenced by what these Jewish believers did. **14** When I saw they were not following the **truth of the Good News**, **D** I spoke to Peter in front of them all. I said, "Peter, you are a Jew, but you are not living like a Jew. You are living like those who are not Jewish. So why do you now try to force those who are not Jewish to live like Jews?"

15 We were not born as non-Jewish "sinners," but as Jews. **16** Yet we know that a person is made right with God not by following the law, but by trusting in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus, that we might be made right with God because we trusted in Christ. It is not because we followed the law, because no one can be made right with God by following the law. **17** We Jews came to Christ, trying to be made right with God, and it became clear that we are sinners, too. Does this mean that **Christ encourages sin? No!** **E** **18** But I would really be wrong to begin teaching again **those things that I gave up.**

F **19** It was **the law that put me to death**, **G** and I died to the law so that I can now live for God. **20** I was put to death on the cross with Christ, and I do not live anymore—it is Christ who lives in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself to save me. **21** By saying these things I am not going against God's grace. Just the opposite, if the law could make us right with God, then **Christ's death would be useless.** **H**

- a. Today Antioch is called Antakya, and is in south-central Turkey.
- b. Jews did not eat pork or other unclean animals. Gentiles ate any kind of meat, including meat offered to idols.
- c. Because of the differences in eating, the Gentiles and the Jews ate at separate tables. Peter ate at the Gentile table, but then moved to the Jewish table.
- d. The truth of the good news was people did not have to keep the law anymore to be saved.
- e. Now that we know we can't be saved by keeping the law, is it okay to keep sinning? No!
- f. Paul gave up following rules of the law that were no longer necessary, such as circumcision or not eating pork.
- g. The law shows a person is guilty as a sinner. We cannot obey all the law; therefore, the punishment is death.
- h. If obeying the law could save a person then there was no need for Jesus to die. The death of Jesus was necessary because no one could obey the law.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What does it mean that God offers salvation freely to everyone?
2. Why did Peter stop eating with the non-Jewish people?
3. Who was Peter afraid of?
4. Why did Paul confront Peter?
5. How do people become right with God?
6. How would you explain to a Deaf friend what it means to trust in Christ?
7. Do we become Christians by keeping the Law (or Ten Commandments)? Why or why not?
8. How did Jesus die? Why was this death necessary?
9. How do we now live as Christians?
10. How should we handle conflicts in the church today? What can we learn from Paul?

BIBLE SKILL: *Challenges of the Early Church in Jerusalem*

Read the verses listed below. What problems did the early Jewish believers face? How did they solve their problems?

Acts 6:1-6 _____

Acts 12:1-17 _____

Acts 15:1-14,19-31 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- We as Christians should keep our minds open when we meet people different from us. We should desire to share the good news with all people, regardless of our opinions, likes or dislikes.
- A person is saved only through faith in Jesus Christ.
- People will find true life and purpose for living when they become Christians.

Discuss as a group how we should present the good news to someone from a different culture. Are we adding American culture, Deaf culture, or opinions to our presentation of the good news?

Discuss with each other how a person is saved. Practice sharing the good news with each other like you would if you met a stranger.

How does a person's life change when they become a Christian? What changes took place in your life?

MEMORY VERSE

I do not live anymore—it is Christ who lives in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself to save me. – Galatians 2:19b-20

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 2:11-12, looking for what Peter did wrong.

Remember Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians. When you see “I,” that is Paul talking. Paul started off by writing blunt words. He told the Galatians, in a very straight-forward manner, that Peter was wrong. Paul did not talk about Peter behind his back, nor did he go tell other people about Peter’s mistake. Instead, Paul confronted Peter. Paul went straight to Peter and told him he (Peter) was wrong. Then Paul told the Galatians what Peter did wrong.

Paul explained that Peter accepted the Gentiles. He was willing to eat with them. Do you remember the story in Acts 10 about Peter having a dream with a white sheet and animals in the sheet? God taught Peter a lesson that he, as a Jew, should accept Gentiles and not reject them. In this story with Paul at Antioch, Peter accepted the Gentiles and ate with them. Peter was doing great. Why was Paul upset with him?

Peter did right until some Jews showed up. These Jews obviously did not accept Gentiles. They made Peter nervous. Peter actually got up in the middle of the meal and went to sit at the Jewish table. Peter was like a kid who had been caught doing something bad.

Do some people make you nervous and you do something differently than what you believe? Explain why you did this.

Do you feel uncomfortable sharing the gospel with certain people? Why or why not?

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 2:13-14, numbering the steps Paul took.

Paul had authority as an apostle. Paul was not afraid to tell Peter he was wrong. Paul knew Peter was behaving like a hypocrite because Peter said one thing, but acted differently. Peter knew God accepted Gentiles, so Peter said he accepted Gentiles too. When Jews showed up, Peter did not stay with the Gentiles. Peter got up and sat with the Jews. Peter was afraid to show his acceptance of the Gentiles in front of the Jews.

Notice that Peter was afraid. Paul said even Barnabas was influenced by these Jews. That means that Barnabas was afraid, too. Both Peter and Barnabas were afraid to stand up to the Jews and tell them that God accepted the Gentiles. They both became weak around these strong Jews. Peter and Barnabas could have witnessed about the power of the gospel to save both Jews and Gentiles but, because of their fear, they missed an opportunity.

What did Paul do as a result of this event? Paul confronted Peter in front of everyone. Paul knew this problem needed to be out in the open. Paul spoke openly and boldly and told Peter he was wrong. Peter's actions showed an unChristian bias. Salvation makes us different people who love people of all backgrounds.

What personal bias do you see in your church that might stop the spread of the gospel?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 2:15-16, underlining Paul's main point.

Paul said he and Peter were born Jews. Jews knew the real God. Gentiles didn't. Therefore, the Jews thought they were better than the Gentiles. They thought they could obey the law. Jews believed that obeying the law, such as the Ten Commandments, made them right with God. As Christians, however, both Paul and Peter knew that keeping the law could not make anyone right with God. Paul said a person could only be made right with God by trusting in Christ.

The idea that God would accept Gentiles was new to the Jews. Paul and Peter needed to show this to the other Jewish believers. The Jewish believers needed to be willing to fellowship with Gentiles. They could not force the Gentiles to obey the Jewish laws. The Jews couldn't obey all of the law, so how could they expect the Gentiles to obey it? So we learn from Paul that neither Jew nor Gentile can earn a right relationship with God. However, God will accept both Jew and Gentile if they trust in Jesus for salvation.

Do you think you can be a good person? How can you have a right relationship with God?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Life in Christ*

Some people today still believe their good works get them “points” with God. As today’s lesson teaches us, we cannot earn “points” with God. Because we broke God’s law we are sinners who are spiritually dead. When we come to Christ we die to ourselves as Christ died on the cross. As Christ rose we rise in Christ to a new life. As people who are now saved Christ lives in us. Jesus’ life in us pleases God. We mature in Christ as we allow Jesus to live in us and through us. The Christian life is a life “in Christ.”

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 2:17-18, underlining what Paul said we all are.

Paul made a new point to the Galatians. The false teachers told the Galatians they must obey the Jewish laws. Paul told the Galatians they did not need to obey the Jewish laws. The Jews themselves couldn’t possibly obey all the Jewish law. It wasn’t fair to expect the Gentiles to obey the law.

Also, Paul said we know we are all sinners. It is impossible for us to obey all of the law. Did Paul then mean to say that since we cannot obey the law that it is okay to continue to sin and disobey the law? With very strong words Paul said “no!” Paul did not mean that Christians give up right living. Paul did mean that Christians don’t trust right living for salvation. Paul knew that obeying the law could not save anyone. So Paul would never teach that it would. If Paul told other people they must obey the law, Paul would be wrong. Paul would be a hypocrite himself if he did.

Why is it not necessary for a Christian to keep the Jewish law? What is it that motivates a Christian to live a right life?

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 2:19-21, highlighting every time you find the word “live” or “lives.”

Paul said it was the law that judged him. Paul disobeyed the law; therefore, the law condemned Paul to death. The law said anyone who broke the law deserved death. Paul said he was dead spiritually. That meant he was also dead to the law. The law could not affect Paul anymore. He paid the punishment for breaking the law.

The good news is that Paul had a new life to live for God. Christ died on the cross, so Paul died with Christ, too. Jesus died as a punishment for our sins. Paul died with Christ spiritually. Jesus rose to new life. Paul received a new life through Jesus. Paul had a new life spiritually. How? Jesus died for Paul. Jesus rose for Paul. Paul trusted Jesus. Jesus saved Paul and made Paul right with God. The same was true for each one of the Galatian believers. The same is true for each one of us today.

What is spiritual death? How are we made spiritually alive?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you learned from Galatians 2. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Who are the people you may be biased against? How can the gospel be a bridge between you and those people?

Who do you know who thinks they can be saved by doing good things? What can you do to help them understand salvation by faith?

Discuss with your small group the purpose of life that you have in Jesus.



TRUE LIFE

Jesus died for us. He accepted the punishment for our sin.

GALATIANS 3:1-14

Sometimes we see made up stories. We see it on TV or on the internet or a Deaf friend tells us about the story. The news says someone died. Later, we find out that person did not die. One person said he was very sick. He needed a lot of money to pay medical bills. People gave a lot of money to that person. Later, they found out the person lied. They had trusted that person but had been fooled. Has this ever happened to you?

The people who tell the news must work very hard to make sure their news stories are correct. They must check witnesses and make sure they are not lying. In today's text, the Galatians listened to people who lied to them. The Galatians heard the false message and started to question the good news Paul had taught them. They did not know who was telling the truth. Paul was upset because the Galatians believed the lies. In today's session, Paul tried to straighten out the false ideas. To straighten out the false ideas Paul took the Galatians to the cross.

GALATIANS 3:1-14

1 You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. But you were foolish; **you let someone trick you.** **A** **2** Tell me this one thing: How did you receive the Holy Spirit? Did you receive the Spirit by following the law? No, you received the Spirit because you heard the Good News and believed it. **3** **You began your life in Christ** **B** by the Spirit. Now are you trying to make it complete **by your own power?** **C** That is foolish. **4** Were all your experiences wasted? I hope not! **5** Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you because you follow the law? No, He does these things because you heard the Good News and believed it. **6** The Scriptures say the same thing about Abraham: “Abraham believed God, and God accepted Abraham’s faith, and that faith **made him right with God.**” **D** **7** So you should know that the true children of Abraham are those who have faith. **8** The Scriptures, telling what would happen in the future, said that God would make the **non-Jewish people** **E** right through their faith. This Good News was told to Abraham beforehand, as the Scripture says: “**All nations will be blessed through you.**” **F** **9** So all who believe as Abraham believed are blessed just as Abraham was. **10** But those who depend on following the law to make them right are under a curse, because the Scriptures say, “Anyone will be cursed who does not always obey what is written in the Book of the Law.” **11** Now it is clear that no one can be made right with God by the law, because the Scriptures say, “Those who are right with God will live by faith.” **12** The law is not based on faith. It says, “A person who obeys these things will live because of them.” **13** Christ took away the curse the law put on us. He changed places with us and put himself under that curse. It is written in the Scriptures, “**Anyone whose body is displayed on a tree is cursed.**” **G** **14** Christ did this so that God’s blessing promised to Abraham might come through Jesus Christ to those who are not Jews. Jesus died so that by our believing we could receive the Spirit that God promised.

- a. Paul clearly taught the good news to the Galatians. But they let someone else influence them and lead them into false teaching. Bible teachers call these false teachers “Judaizers.”
- b. They became Christians/believers.
- c. They were trying to work for their salvation and were not depending on their faith in God.
- d. Paul is quoting Genesis 15:6.
- e. Most English Bibles use the word “Gentiles” here instead of “non-Jewish people.” A Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew.
- f. See Genesis 12:3 and Genesis 18:18. This was God’s covenant relationship with Abraham.
- g. See Deuteronomy 21:22-23. To be displayed on a tree is the same as being hung on a cross.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What do we mean when we say that Jesus died accepting the punishment for our sins?
2. How is keeping the law trying to be saved by our own power?
3. How did the Galatians receive the Holy Spirit?
4. Can a person receive the Holy Spirit by following the law?
Why or why not?
5. How did Abraham become right with God?
6. What promise did God give to Abraham?
7. Who will be cursed?
8. Why did Jesus trade places with us?
9. What was Paul writing about when he said, “whose body is displayed on a tree”? Whose body was put on a “tree” for us?
10. What blessings come to both Jews and Gentiles who trust in Jesus Christ?

BIBLE SKILL: *Word Counts*

When you study a passage or book of the Bible, it's very helpful to see which words show up often. This helps us to see what the writer emphasized.

Count how many times the following words show up in Galatians 3:

Spirit – verses 1-5 _____

Faith or believe – verses 1-14 _____

Curse or cursed – verses 10-14 _____

Right (with God) – verses 6-11 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- We are saved only by faith in Jesus. We cannot save ourselves. The Holy Spirit in us is proof we have been saved. The Holy Spirit in us changes our lives.
- We are saved and made right with God only by coming to God in faith.
- If we trust in our own goodness and obedience to God's law, we will experience judgment. If we trust in Jesus, He will save us.

Discuss as a group what the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer.

What is the only way a person can be saved? How would you explain this to your Deaf friends?

Take time to think about salvation coming through Jesus alone. Write a prayer thanking God for giving His Son so you can be saved.

MEMORY VERSE

Now it is clear that no one can be made right with God by the law, because the Scriptures say, "Those who are right with God will live by faith." – Galatians 3:11

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 3:1-2, noticing what Paul called the Galatians.

Paul told the Galatians he had taught them very clearly. The Galatians knew about Jesus' death on the cross. Paul said they allowed people to deceive them. He said, "You let someone trick you." We often blame the person who deceives others. However, here Paul blamed the Galatians. He said they should have known better. He had taught them correctly about the true gospel. They allowed someone else to come in and lead them the wrong way. God holds us accountable for the paths we choose.

We usually blame other people. Adam blamed Eve in the Garden of Eden. Eve blamed the snake, which was really Satan. Paul told the Galatians it was their fault, not the false teachers. The teachers were wrong, but the responsibility was on the Galatians, too. The Galatians were supposed to grow as Christians. They were to continue to learn the Bible. They were supposed to learn more about the gospel, God's good news, about Jesus' death on the cross for their sins and Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Paul was honest with them. He said they were foolish. They allowed someone to trick them. They believed a lie.

Here are some lies people say today: all people go to heaven; the Bible has mistakes in it; God will overlook your bad actions if you do more good actions. Are you believing any of these lies today? How can you help people know the truth?

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 3:3-5, looking for how the people gained the Holy Spirit.

Paul was really upset with the Galatians. He was surprised they believed wrong teaching. Paul said they were foolish! That was the second time Paul used the word foolish. He said they believed the good news, then God gave them His Spirit to live in them. Now they wanted to live without depending on the Holy Spirit. They wanted to obey the law to earn their salvation. Paul said they had it all wrong.

God blessed the people because they heard the good news and had faith. Now they wanted to go back to obeying the law without the help

of God's Spirit. Count how many times Paul mentioned the Spirit in verses 1-5. Five times! Paul emphasized God's gift of the Spirit to work in their lives. They were not to do the work themselves. The Holy Spirit would work in them in response to their faith in the good news.

The Galatians needed to depend on the Holy Spirit. They were wrong thinking they could depend on themselves. They were foolish to throw away faith, ignore the Spirit, and go back to doing things themselves, apart from God.

How do you live today? Do you depend on yourself or do you depend on God's Spirit within you? Explain.

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 3:6-9, underlining each time Paul used "faith."

Paul used the life of Abraham as an example. Abraham had faith in God. People often use Abraham as an example of a person who lived by faith. Paul emphasized faith as the way to live the Christian life. The way to salvation was through faith, not by works, or following the law.

Why was Abraham's faith so extraordinary? Abraham was ninety-nine years old and his wife ninety when God gave them a son. Both Abraham and his wife, Sarah, wanted a son badly. We would say it was impossible for Sarah to have a baby. Abraham didn't tell God, "That's impossible!" Abraham believed God. God rewarded Abraham for his faith and gave him a son and many descendants. Because of his faith, Abraham is the great model of faith for all Christians. And, it was this act of faith by Abraham that made him right with God.

What are some of God's promises to you? What makes each promise important to you?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 3:10-12, identifying who is cursed.

Paul contrasted Abraham's faith in God with those who try to be right with God by obeying the law. God's blessing to Abraham was because of his faith in God. Paul said those who try to obey the law will fail. Instead of getting a blessing, they will be under a curse, or punishment. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 27:26, which said a person is cursed who does not obey everything in the law.

Paul quoted from another book in the Old Testament, Habakkuk. He said, "Those who are right with God will live by faith." Paul emphasized faith again. A right relationship with God only comes through faith. People will never earn a right relationship with God. We are sinners. We can never be perfect and earn our way into heaven. Salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to live by faith?

How would you explain faith to your non-Christian Deaf friend?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Christ's Substitutionary Death*

One of the key doctrines of our faith is Jesus died as our substitute. We sinned and deserved to be punished by death. Jesus did not sin. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. Jesus loved us and wanted us to go to heaven. Jesus was willing to suffer our punishment and die in our place. God accepted the death of Jesus for what should have been our death. That is why we say Jesus' death was substitutionary for us.

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 3:13-14, noticing why Jesus died in our place.

Jesus bore our sins, died on the cross, and suffered our punishment. He was a substitute for us. Jesus did this so we would not have to suffer the punishment, which is death. We, like the Galatians, must accept Jesus as our substitute by faith. We must believe Jesus and what He did for us. And, like the Galatians, we cannot earn salvation by keeping the law. In fact, the law not only does not save, Paul said the law puts a curse on us. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 21:22 to prove his point.

God promised Abraham both a physical seed (descendants) and a spiritual seed. The physical seed was the Jews. The spiritual seed is the Church, the body of Christ. Christ died so all would receive God's blessing to Abraham as Abraham's spiritual seed. Through faith they would receive the promise, which was God the Spirit living in them.

Do you believe that Jesus died for you? How does that belief change your life?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 3. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How would you explain salvation to someone who has never been to church? What would you tell a person who tells you he/she is a good person and will go to heaven?

Why is belief in Jesus Christ so important?

Why is the Spirit so important? How does the Spirit affect our daily lives?

TRUE HEIRS

*God gives salvation to those who believe in Him and
He adopts them into His family.*

GALATIANS 3:23-29, 4:1-7

Many couples can't have children. They decide to adopt children into their family. Some families already have children, but decide to adopt children into their family anyway. These parents want to provide a good home for children who have no home. Sometimes people adopt Deaf children from other countries. Deaf children in other countries have a hard life. When couples adopt Deaf children from other countries, they give them a good home and a good future.

Today's lesson is a beautiful lesson about being adopted into God's family. The idea of adoption gives us a good picture to help us understand how God moved us from not being His people to now being His people. That is what happens in adoption. If we are not in God's family, we have no hope. God, in His love, wants to adopt us and put us in His family. God has good plans for us. God has a good future for us.

GALATIANS 3:23-29, 4:1-7

23 Before **this faith came**, **A** we were all **held prisoners** **B** by the law. We had no freedom until God showed us the way of faith **that was coming**. **C**
24 In other words, the law was our **guardian** **D** leading us to Christ so that we could be made right with God through faith. **25** Now the way of faith has come, and we no longer live under a guardian. **26** You were all baptized into Christ, and so you were all clothed with Christ. **27** This means that you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **28** In Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. **29** You belong to Christ, so you are Abraham's descendants. You will **inherit** **E** all of God's blessings because of the promise God made to Abraham.

4:1 I want to tell you this: While those who will inherit their fathers' property are still children, they are no different from slaves. It does not matter that the children own everything. **2** While they are children, they must obey those who are chosen to care for them. But when the children reach **the age set by their fathers**, **F** they are free. **3** It is the same for us. We were once like children, slaves to the useless rules of this world. **4** But when **the right time came**, **G** God sent His Son who was born of a woman and lived under the law. **5** God did this so He could buy freedom for those who were under the law and so we could become His children. **6** Since you are God's children, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, and **the Spirit cries out, "Father."** **H** **7** So now you are not a slave; you are God's child, and God will give you the blessing He promised, because you are His child.

- a. faith in Jesus Christ
- b. We were prisoners to sin.
- c. the promise of a Messiah who would save us
- d. a substitute parent. In today's world this is like a nanny.
- e. Inherit means to receive someone's money or possessions when that person dies or prior to death.
- f. The age when children are no longer considered children, but become adults.
- g. God planned His time for Jesus to come into this world and become our Savior.
- h. The Greek text uses the word "Abba" which means something like "daddy" in Aramaic. The Spirit in us confirms the relationship we have with God.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How is it that an act of faith makes us a child of God?
2. What does it mean to be “held prisoners by the law”?
3. How is the law like a guardian?
4. What does it mean to be right with God?
5. What does it mean to be “baptized into Christ”?
6. What does it mean to be “clothed with Christ”?
7. Paul said “there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female.” In what ways will Christians live differently because of this truth?
8. How are we descendants of Abraham?
9. What did Paul mean when he said we used to be like children and slaves?
10. How did Jesus buy our freedom?

KEY HEAD: *God’s Promise to Abraham*

Read the verses listed below about God’s promise to Abraham. Write what God said about Abraham’s descendants and faith.

Genesis 15:5 _____

Genesis 22:17 _____

Romans 4:13 _____

Romans 9:27 _____

Hebrews 11:12 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God's law shows us we need a Savior for our sins.
- All of us who believe in Jesus belong to God's family.
- When we believe in Jesus, we are free from the law. We can receive God's blessing because we are His children.

Discuss as a group how the law shows us we need Jesus as our Savior. How can you help others understand their need for Jesus?

What do we who are in God's family have in common? How should we treat each other?

What blessings are ours when we become God's children that were not ours when we were slaves under the law? How do these blessings impact how you live today?

MEMORY VERSE

So now you are not a slave; you are God's child, and God will give you the blessing He promised, because you are His child.
– Galatians 4:7

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 3:23-25, noticing the role of the law.

Paul used three pictures to teach the truth. First, Paul said we were all prisoners. You might think, “I’ve never been in jail before! What is Paul talking about?” Paul was not talking about a real jail. Paul meant we were in jail spiritually. The law showed our bondage to sin. We could not obey God’s law.

Paul said the law was like a guardian. When Paul lived many parents used a guardian to raise their son or daughter. Today that would be like a full-time nanny. A nanny has the responsibility to take care of the child. The nanny teaches and guides the child toward being an adult. This, Paul wrote, was the job of the law. The law did not save but the law did prepare us for faith. The law showed us our need for Christ by showing our bondage to sin. Therefore, in its own way, the law led us to Christ.

Christ came to set us free. Jesus opened our prison doors. We must accept Jesus’ salvation through faith. We no longer have to live in jail spiritually. We can be spiritually free if we believe in Jesus.

Describe what it means to be in prison spiritually. What does it mean to be spiritually free?

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 3:26-28, thinking about Paul’s comparisons.

ASL has a great sign for “putting clothes on a person.” The sign takes the right hand in the C handshape and puts it over the left index finger. The person doesn’t change, but the clothes change. Baptism is a picture of this change that happens in a new Christian’s life. We stay the same person, but we put on new clothes. What are our new clothes? We put on Jesus Christ. His life becomes our life. We become members of God’s family because we have Jesus now as our “new clothes.”

Paul used the picture of putting on new clothes to show us what it means to become a Christian. This was Paul’s second mental picture that he used to teach us a lesson. Some Deaf people like clothes. They like to

look nice. They like to look fashionable. Putting on clothes can change how a person feels about himself. If people put on fancy clothes, they feel different than if they put on clothes to work outside or to walk their dog. People act differently based on the clothes they wear.

When a person becomes a Christian, Jesus becomes their “new clothes.” They have a new life. They act differently. They live and act like Jesus Christ. Because believers “put on” Jesus Christ, they have a sameness. The sameness is this: whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, you came to God by faith in Jesus. In this way we are all the same.

How does your faith in Jesus help you accept other believers?

How can you show other believers that you accept them?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 3:29, reflecting on God’s inheritance.

Paul used Abraham again as an example. Paul said when you put on Jesus, you become Abraham’s children. Abraham had two types of children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One family tree (line) was Abraham’s physical children. A second family tree (line) was Abraham’s spiritual children. Paul said the new Christians are part of Abraham’s spiritual children. Because they are Abraham’s spiritual children, they will receive the blessings God promised to Abraham and his seed (children).

Just like children and grandchildren inherit their parents’ wealth, Christians are spiritual children. These spiritual children will receive God’s blessings that He promised to Abraham. All people who accept Jesus will be blessed.

The Jews claim Abraham as their father. What relationship do Christians have with Abraham?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 4:1-3, considering how Paul compares us to children.

Paul used his third, and final, picture here. Paul used the picture of children and servants in a house. In America, we do not have slaves in our homes. The Galatians knew about slaves because all over the Roman world there were many slaves. Galatia was part of that Roman world. Paul compared the Galatians to being like children before they became Christians. Little children had a greater status than slaves, but they were too young to make decisions or control anyone. They had to be obedient to adults around them. When they were old enough, they became free.

Paul explained the same truth to the Galatians in three different ways. He used three different pictures. Without Jesus Christ, we are like prisoners, like people lacking the right clothes, or like children. When we become Christians, we are like people who are free from prison. We are like people with new clothes (Jesus Christ). We are like adults, no longer under the care and authority of a “guardian.”

We now have a different relationship in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are freed, clothed, and exalted.

How did the three pictures or examples help your understanding of life with Jesus? Which example did you like the best? How can you explain this example to someone?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God our Father*

When we say that we are sinners and we turn our backs on our old lives and put our faith in Jesus to obey Him and follow Him, we become Christians. We have been adopted into a new family. God becomes our Father. God looks out for us as His children. God loves us and is good to us. God protects us and disciplines us. Jesus taught us to pray to God or talk to Him as our Father. God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God our Father will never abandon us and we will spend eternity with Him in heaven.

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 4:4-7, focusing on verse 7.

The Galatians had been like slaves, but “God sent His Son.” Wow, the whole picture changed when Jesus stepped in. God sent Jesus Christ to atone for our sins. Jesus died and rose again, opening the prison doors and setting us free. Through the sacrifice of His blood, Jesus made us clean. Jesus changed our lives.

Jesus lived and obeyed the law. Jesus died for us and bought our freedom. When we receive Jesus we become His children. When we become His children, God gives us His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in us cries out, “Father!” We are no more slaves. We are now the children of God. As God’s children, we receive His blessings that He promised to His children. What a change – to go from slaves to belonging in a royal family! From living behind prison bars to living the life of a king’s children! Glory to His Name!

How did Jesus change everything? What makes Jesus special?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 3-4. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What is the role or job of God’s law in our lives today? Does God still expect us to keep the law? Why or why not?

Why is Jesus’ life in us important? Now that we are clothed in Jesus and members of God’s family, how do we relate to each other?

What are some of the blessings we can receive now because we are God’s children? What are some blessings we will get later?



TRUE FREEDOM

Christians should eagerly share with others that we can only have spiritual freedom through faith in Christ.

GALATIANS 4:8-20

We have people we care for and love. We have all helped someone, perhaps our children, perhaps a young person or a young couple. We give advice to others. Sometimes it's about something simple, like buying a new car. Sometimes it's about something serious. For example, maybe it's about if they should marry a certain person. We keep an eye on them. We make sure they are doing okay. We worry if they are doing something wrong. We're happy when they are doing well.

In today's lesson, Paul had the same feelings about the people in Galatia. Paul spent a lot of time with the Galatians. Paul taught them a lot about knowing God and having saving faith in Jesus. Paul had to leave the Galatians. While he was not with them, Paul worried about what was happening with them. Paul couldn't go and visit them so he expressed how he felt through his letter. Paul was concerned that the Galatians were making a terrible mistake by slipping away from the freedom of the gospel and into the slavery of a false message.

GALATIANS 4:8-20

8 In the past you did not know God. You were slaves to **gods that were not real.** **9** But now you know the true God. Really, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to those **weak and useless rules** **10** you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? **10** You still follow **teachings about special days, months, seasons, and years.** **11** I am afraid for you, that my work for you has been wasted. **12** Brothers and sisters, I became like you, so I beg you to become like me. You were very good to me before. **13** You remember that it was because of an **illness** **14** that I came to you the first time, preaching the Good News. **14** Though my sickness was a trouble for you, **you did not hate me** **15** or make me leave. But you welcomed me as an angel from God, as if I were Jesus Christ Himself! **15** You were very happy then, but where is that joy now? I am ready to testify that **you would have taken out your eyes and given them to me if that were possible.** **16** Now am I your enemy because I tell you the truth? **17** Those people are working hard to persuade you, but this is not good for you. They want to persuade you to turn against us and follow only them. **18** It is good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is good. This is always true, not just when I am with you. **19** My little children, again I feel the **pain of childbirth** **20** for you until you truly become like Christ. **20** I wish I could be with you now and could change the way I am talking to you, because **I do not know what to think about you.**

- a. Paul was talking about idols that the Galatians used to worship.
- b. rules they followed for their false religions
- c. These days were connected with false religions the Galatians had participated in before they became Christians.
- d. Some Bible teachers believe Paul had a problem with his eyes. Others believe he had epilepsy or malaria.
- e. Some false religions taught that sickness was a sign the gods did not like a person. If the Galatians believed the false teaching, they would not have helped Paul.
- f. Paul felt the people were willing to do anything to help him.
- g. Paul expressed here that he felt like a mother to them, giving birth to them in pain.
- h. The actions and beliefs of the Galatians did not make sense in light of their past with Paul.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why is true spiritual freedom found only in Christ?
2. What are some false gods that people can become slaves to today?
3. What was Paul afraid the Galatians were going to do?
4. If the Galatians followed the example of Paul what would they believe about salvation?
5. How did the Galatians treat Paul when he was with them? Why?
6. What did Paul feel about the people trying to influence the Galatian Christians?
7. What did Paul call the Galatians in verse 19? How do you think he felt about them?
8. What does it mean to truly become like Christ?
9. What can we learn about Christian maturity in this passage?

BIBLE SKILLS: *False Teachers in The New Testament*

Read the verses listed below. What do these verses say about false teachers?

Matthew 7:15-20 _____

2 Timothy 4:3-4 _____

2 Peter 3:14-18 _____

1 John 4:1-6 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Salvation is by faith alone. Believers must be careful to never accept a gospel different from this one.
- Believers should encourage each other to remember how God saved them by His grace.
- When Christians share the truth of the gospel, others may feel guilty or hurt. However, we must share the gospel because of our love for them.

Discuss as a group how a person becomes saved and why it is important that we hold to this truth.

How can believers encourage each other to remember how God saved us?

What should be our motive for sharing the gospel with others? How can we share the truth in a loving way?

MEMORY VERSE

So, my brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. – Galatians 4:31

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 4:8-9, noticing who Paul says now knows believers.

Paul reminded the Galatians where they came from. Before Paul met the Galatians, they did not know God. They were slaves. The Galatians might have thought they weren't slaves. Paul meant they were slaves spiritually. They used to worship idols, which were nothing but false gods. They were slaves to these false gods. Paul used the word *but* to emphasize that something happened. Paul said the Galatians experienced a big change in their lives. They came to know the true God.

Paul said they knew God. More importantly, God knew them. You may say you know God (and in Christ this is certainly true). The question is – does God know you? Are you close friends with God? Do you spend time with God? Do you study the Bible? Do you pray often? People say I know so-and-so, he or she is a famous Deaf person. That isn't important. It is important that God knows you and that you know God.

Paul told the Galatians, “You went through a big change in your life. Why do you want to go back to your old life? In your old life, you were slaves to false gods. You followed the rules of the false gods. You were not free. Why do you want to give up your freedom and go back to slavery?”

How did your life change when you became a Christian? Are you ever tempted to go back to your old ways? How can you resist that temptation?

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 4:10-11, thinking about our religious traditions today.

Paul scolded the Galatians for following old beliefs. They still followed special days on the calendar from their worship of false gods. Some people today read horoscopes in the newspapers and believe what they predict. They think the stars can tell their future. The Galatians had similar beliefs. Paul could not believe they were still following their old beliefs. Paul was really upset. Paul was concerned that all that he had taught them was for nothing. Paul was afraid they were slipping back into their old way of life.

Paul loved the Galatians. Paul worked hard with them. Paul spent much time teaching them about God. Paul taught them about the Old Testament Scriptures. Now Paul was afraid they were listening to the wrong people. These wrong people were causing the Galatians to stop following Jesus.

Who are some people today who might lead you the wrong way?

How can you guard your heart and mind against false beliefs?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 4:12-14, underlining what Paul begged others to do.

Paul said he became like the Galatians. He lived with them. He ate with them. He talked with them. He became close friends with them. Paul said he wanted them to become like him. How could they become like him? The answer is this: he wanted them to continue to follow Jesus like he did.

Paul complimented the Galatians by saying they were very good to him. How were they good to him? When Paul went to Galatia, he was a sick man. The Galatians helped Paul get better. They did not hate him or mistreat him. They did not push him to leave. Some false religions believed that sickness was a sign God did not like someone. The Galatians did not believe this about Paul. Instead, they welcomed him like God sent him to them. What was Paul saying here? If the Galatians accepted the gospel from Paul in the first place, even when he was sick, they should certainly stay with the gospel now. Only the gospel of Christ could save.

Who do you know who might be tempted to stray from the gospel of Jesus Christ? What could you do to help this person stay true to Jesus?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Christian Discipleship*

Christians have a responsibility to teach God's Word to others. We are to disciple new Christians. New Christians are expected to grow. Growth happens as new Christians fellowship with other believers, continue to learn about God's Word, pray together, and witness to others about their faith. Normal growth results in maturity. This is how the church grows, through discipleship.

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 4:15-17, looking for the change in feelings towards Paul.

Paul said the Galatians were very happy when Paul came and lived with them. Paul said they had changed since then. Paul said they were not happy now. What was wrong? Why were they no longer happy with Paul? Paul said in the past the Galatians were willing to give their own eyes to him. What did that mean? Maybe Paul was like some of our Deaf-Blind friends. Paul could hear, but Paul may have had a vision problem. People believe that Paul could not write his letters. He had other people write his letters for him, perhaps because of his bad eyesight. That is why some teachers think the Galatians were willing to give their own eyes for Paul.

Paul said the Galatians changed their feelings because of the false teachers. The false teachers influenced the Galatians to stop following Paul and his teachings about God and Jesus Christ. Paul said the false teachers wanted the Galatians to follow them, and not Paul. Paul said that was not good. Paul was being honest with the Galatians because he loved them. He wanted to tell them the truth.

How do we know when someone is a false teacher?

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 4:18-20, underlining words that express Paul's feelings.

Paul said to be careful when people are interested in you. Why are they interested? Do they have a good reason? Some Deaf people have faced leaders from religious groups that teach false doctrine. They act friendly to Deaf people. They learn to sign well. They invite them on trips. Their purpose is not good, though. They want to teach Deaf people false things about God and Jesus. We need to watch out for each other. Paul was watching out for the Galatians and warning them.

Paul felt like he was giving birth to these Galatians again. He meant a spiritual birth. He felt like a spiritual mother. Paul was so concerned about the Galatians that he wanted to be with them. Paul knew if he could talk to them face-to-face, he would feel much better. Deaf people understand this. If we see people face-to-face, we can see their facial expressions and know what they are really feeling. Paul wanted to do whatever it took to keep the Galatian Christians fixed on Christ.

What lessons could we learn about watching out for each other? How can we protect each other from false teachers?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 4. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Who are your spiritual teachers? How do they help you stay focused on Christ and His salvation?

Look back at how you have grown spiritually. Have you faced any problems in your growth? How did you overcome these problems?

Are you ready to teach others to follow Jesus? Who are you discipling to be a mature follower of Christ?



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

People will show that they are Christians when they live with godly character.

GALATIANS 5:13-26

I remember the first time I saw a lemon tree in a backyard with real lemons growing on it. I had only seen lemons come from a grocery store. It was amazing to me to see a lemon on a tree. I'm sure Californians thought I was silly to be so awestruck over a lemon!

In Genesis when God created the earth, He commanded the plants and animals to “produce more of its own kind” (Gen. 1:11,21). That means that lemon trees produced lemon fruit. This is a law of nature that God established. In today's study we will learn what life without the Holy Spirit looks like and what life with the Spirit looks like. When the Holy Spirit lives in us the Spirit makes fruit too; of course, not lemons or apples. The Spirit makes fruit that is of the Spirit. That fruit is love, joy, peace, and many other wonderful attributes. It is wonderful having God's Spirit living in us because His Spirit makes godly character within us.

GALATIANS 5:13-26

13 My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do what pleases your **sinful self**. **A** Serve each other with love. **14** The whole law is made complete in this one command: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." **15** If you go on hurting each other and **tearing each other apart**, **B** be careful, or you will completely **destroy each other**. **C** **16** So I tell you: Live by following the Spirit. Then you will not do what your sinful selves want. **17** Our sinful selves want what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is against our sinful selves. The two are against each other, so you cannot do just what you please. **18** But if the Spirit is leading you, you are not under the law. **19** The wrong things the sinful self does are clear: being **sexually unfaithful**, **D** not being pure, taking part in **sexual sins**, **E** **20** worshiping gods, doing **witchcraft**, **F** hating, making trouble, being jealous, being angry, being selfish, making people angry with each other, **causing divisions among people**, **G** **21** feeling envy, being drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, and doing other things like these. I warn you now as I warned you before: Those who do these things will not inherit God's kingdom. **22** But the Spirit produces the **fruit** **H** of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong. **24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do. **25** We get our new life from the Spirit, so we should follow the Spirit. **26** We must not be proud or make trouble with each other or be jealous of each other.

- a. We are born with a sinful nature inside of us. It is this sin nature that Paul calls "the sinful self."
- b. Paul meant backstabbing each other and criticizing each other or gossiping in a hurtful way.
- c. This is the final end of sinful behavior. Such behavior leads to destruction.
- d. sex outside of marriage, such as cheating on your spouse
- e. other sexual sins, such as homosexual behavior or sexual relationships before marriage
- f. Satan-worship and magic
- g. making people mad with each other, perhaps by gossiping, lying, or stirring up trouble between them
- h. This word is "fruit" not "fruits." The nine words that follow are not nine different fruits but the one fruit made by the Holy Spirit living in us.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What does godly living look like?
2. What command is the summary of the whole law? How can keeping this command lead to right living?
3. What will happen if you hurt each other and tear each other apart?
4. How will Christians live when they truly follow the Spirit?
5. What evidence do you see in life that the Spirit and the sinful self are at war?
6. What are some examples that Paul gave of wrong things that the sinful person does? Why are these wrong?
7. What did Paul say would happen to the person who lived sinfully?
8. What kind of fruit does God's Spirit produce? What do these nine words mean?
9. Why would Paul call our sinful lives selfish? How does Jesus help us not be selfish?

BIBLE SKILL: *Fruit in the Bible*

Read the verses listed below. Write what it says about fruit.

Genesis 1:12 _____

Matthew 7:17-18 _____

Matthew 12:33 _____

Mark 4:20 _____

John 15:2 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers have the opportunity to truly love others.
- When believers depend on the Holy Spirit, they can live each day in a way that honors Christ.
- Sin is obvious in a person's life. Sin always leads to judgment.
- A believer's life should clearly show right living and godly fruit.

Discuss as a group how believers can show love to other people.

How can believers depend on the Holy Spirit? How can we honor Christ?

How does God judge sin? How can we warn others?

Discuss as a group the fruit of the Spirit. How can Christians live each day with lives that show this fruit?

MEMORY VERSE

But the Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong – Galatians 5:22-23

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 5:13-15, noticing the number of times “love” appears.

Paul said believers are free, but that doesn't mean we will now want to live in ways that are wrong. We should not live for our sinful selves. In fact, God calls us to follow a greater law. That law is the law of love. Jesus said the second most important command was this one: Love your neighbor as you love yourself (Matt. 22:39). In other words, we stop serving ourselves. We now live to serve others.

When we became Christians, we changed our focus. Now we focus on God first and others second. Before we were Christians, we had ourselves, or “me,” on the throne of our hearts. Now Jesus is on the throne and His mission is to love others through service.

The Galatians had forgotten their new focus. Instead, they were hurting each other. The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) translates verse 15 as follows: “If you go on snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other!” That makes me think of a snapping turtle. You don't want to get anywhere near one! So imagine the Galatians snapping and tearing and destroying each other. We should never be this way. We should build one another up and not tear each other down.

What are some ways we can show love to people around us?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Holy Spirit*

When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes and lives inside that person. The Holy Spirit becomes a teacher and a guide. The Holy Spirit teaches us the way to live. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity (God in Three Persons). The Holy Spirit helps us become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit can become sad if we do the wrong things. We want to always obey the Holy Spirit, so He will continue to lead and teach us.

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 5:16-18, identifying the struggle inside.

We don't want to live in sin. We don't want to satisfy our sinful desires. How do we live the right way? The answer is, we follow the Holy Spirit. Our sinful nature inside us is at war against the Holy Spirit in us.

When I was a young person at camp, a man told us this story. It is like we have two dogs living inside of us, a good dog and a bad dog. They are always fighting. Which dog will win? The dog that we feed the most will win! The dog that eats the most will be bigger and stronger. That dog will win easily. How do we feed the good dog? We read our Bibles. We obey what the Bible says. We pray. We are friends with other Christians. That is feeding the good dog. The good dog will win.

The Galatians argued about obeying the law. Paul said if they followed the Holy Spirit, they would not need to worry about the law. That is a great truth for us to learn: if we follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit we fulfill the purpose of the law. Therefore, we have no need to worry about the law.

Do you feel like a battle goes on inside of you? What are ways you can help the "good dog" win? How does this fulfill the law?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 5:19-21, numbering the sins Paul identified.

Paul listed some of the wrong things people do, making it clear what is sinful. Look at the list in today's verse. We talk about how some sins are bigger or worse than other sins. God doesn't look at sin like that. God looks at all sin as evil because all sin separates us from God. If you look at the list carefully, you will be surprised at what Paul listed together. Paul listed making people angry with each other, being jealous of someone, and being selfish in the same list with witchcraft and sexual sins.

Paul spoke very strongly to the Galatian people. He said if you do these kinds of things, you will not go to heaven. If I have a selfish thought will I not go to heaven? I think this explanation will help.

In the Greek language, it is clear that Paul meant the ones who continue to do these things. It is not the selfish thought but the selfish life that is a problem. Paul said if you do these things as a habit, it shows you are not a believer. We may sin and do something wrong, but when we are in Christ we will not enjoy it. We should be sad and sorry we sinned. Paul was talking about those people who often did these bad things. They were not Christians. They did not have the Holy Spirit to help them stop sinning.

Why does the continual habit of these sins lead to judgment?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 5:22-23, underlining the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul talked to the Galatians about the negative things first. He told them how a Christian should NOT live. We saw those in verses 19-21. Next Paul discussed the positive things they SHOULD see in their lives as Christians.

What are the positive things we should see in a Christian? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These should be the norm in our Christian lives. What is the “norm”? That is short for normal. These are the things we do regularly every day. They are the pattern and the habit that show up daily in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us.

Every day you get up, get dressed, eat, go to work or go meet friends, feed your dogs, feed your family, and so on. This is part of your normal daily life - the norm. Our norms should also include joy, love, peace, kindness, and so on.

Look at your life. Does your life show the fruit of the Spirit? There are nine words in the Spirit list. The Holy Spirit is working in the life of every believer to produce the whole list. The whole list makes the one fruit. How well are you allowing God to make His fruit in you?

What does the normal Christian life look like? How does your life compare to the normal Christian life?

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 5:24-26, noticing who we are to follow.

When Jesus died on the cross, the sinful natures of the Galatians were crucified on the cross, too. The Galatians had given up their selfishness. They now lived for Jesus. They had new life from the Holy Spirit who became their guide and teacher. This is equally true for Christians today. Our sinful nature has been crucified with Christ.

A tree has its own kind of fruit. An apple tree has apples and an orange tree has oranges. The old life had its fruit. The new life has different fruit. We call the characteristics of the Christian life the fruit of the Spirit. Many Deaf people sign fruit of the Spirit with fruit over the heart, not at the mouth. Why? To show the fruit of the Spirit is a changed life. Just as an apple shows it's an apple tree, having the fruit of the Spirit shows we are Christians.

What is the fruit of the self-centered life? What is the fruit of the Spirit-led life?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 5. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

**Is it okay to excuse sin in your life or someone else's?
Why or why not?**

Many Christians today don't talk about the Holy Spirit. Discuss ways the Holy Spirit has helped you. Discuss ways the Holy Spirit has taught you something.

Can you explain what it means to live in the Spirit to another Christian? What would you say? What is the fruit of the Spirit?

TRUE COMPASSION

The Holy Spirit gives Christians the ability to care for others in the right way and for the right reasons.

GALATIANS 6:1-10,14-15

Several Christian organizations focus on showing Jesus' love through helping people during hard times. They help people after a flood, an earthquake, a hurricane, or a fire.

In one state a group of Deaf people were trained for working with disaster relief. They later had the opportunity to work alongside hearing people to repair flood damaged houses. They showed the love of Jesus. When people go through hard times, they need love and a helping hand.

The verses in our lesson today show what true compassion for others looks like. Paul explained how by helping others we show that we are rightly using the blessings that God has given us. Finally, Paul calls us back to the cross. The cross is the story we tell and the reason we care for others.

GALATIANS 6:1-10,14-15

1 Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong, **you who are spiritual** **A** should go to that person and gently help **make him right** **B** again. But be careful, because you might be tempted to sin, too. **2** By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the **law of Christ**. **C** **3** If anyone **thinks he is important** **D** when he really is not, he is only fooling himself. **4** Each person should judge his own actions and **not compare himself with others**. **E** Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. **5** Each person must be responsible for himself. **6** Anyone who is learning the teaching of God should share all the good things he has with his teacher. **7** Do not be fooled: You cannot cheat God. **People harvest only what they plant**. **F** **8** If they plant to satisfy their sinful selves, their sinful selves will bring them ruin. But if they plant to please the Spirit, they will receive eternal life from the Spirit. **9** We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time if we do not give up. **10** When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should give special attention to those who are in the family of believers.

14 I hope I will never **brag about things like that**. **G** The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for bragging. Through the cross of Jesus my world was crucified, and I died to the world. **15** It is not important if a man is circumcised or uncircumcised. The important thing is being the **new people** **H** God has made.

- a. These are mature Christians and possibly leaders in the church.
- b. help the person see their sin or wrongdoing, repent and do right again
- c. The law of Christ is the law of love. See Galatians 5:14 and Matthew 22:36-39.
- d. This person may think he is special and too important to help someone else.
- e. People often judge themselves by looking at someone else to see if they are better than someone else.
- f. Paul used this example from farming to make a spiritual application.
- g. Those people who wanted to brag about forcing new Christians to be circumcised (mentioned in verses 12-13). Paul said he never wanted to brag about that kind of thing.
- h. New people means Christians. They are called new people here because they have new life.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What does true Christian love look like in action?
2. What did Paul tell the Galatians to do if someone in their church did something wrong?
3. Why did Paul tell them to be careful?
4. What is the law of Christ?
5. Why is it important for Christians not to compare themselves with others?
6. What did Paul tell those learning about God to do for their teachers?
Does your church do a good job doing this?
7. What did Paul mean when he told them that “people harvest only what they plant”?
8. Why do Christians give special attention to the family of believers?
9. What was Paul’s only reason for bragging?
10. What does it mean to be the new people of God?

BIBLE SKILL: *The Law of the Harvest*

The Bible teaches that what we sow, we will reap. Read the verses listed below and write what is said about sowing and reaping.

Job 4:8 _____

Hosea 10:12 _____

John 4:36 _____

2 Corinthians 9:6 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Christians should look out for one another in the church. Christians who are mature in faith should help their brothers and sisters when they sin.
- Believers should manage their resources well so they can help their leaders and others.
- Believers should always help others know about Jesus and the gospel.

What are the right things we should do when a Christian brother or sister slips back into sin?

Discuss as a group ways that Paul's advice to the Galatians applies to your own church.

**What actions can you do that will lead others to Jesus and the gospel?
How can you commit yourself to those actions this week?**

MEMORY VERSE

We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time if we do not give up.
– Galatians 6:9

DAY ONE

Read Galatians 6:1-2, and summarize it.

Paul told the Galatians that spiritually mature Christians had a responsibility to care for those Christians who were not yet mature in their faith. If one of them did something wrong, the mature Christian should go to that person. They should tell the person how to get right with God again. How would the person get right with God? The person would confess his or her sin, repent, and stop sinning.

Paul also warned mature Christians they needed to be careful because they could fall in the same sin. They should go to the one sinning and show a gentle attitude to that person. They should go in love and not be rough or harsh with the new Christian.

The law of Christ is the law of love. Mature brothers and sisters have a responsibility to love those in the church and help other believers stop sinning. They should not condemn people in the church with problems, but should support them and help them. By doing this, they show Christ's love to His people.

How do you feel when you see your Christian brothers and sisters sinning?

What steps can you take to help your sinful brothers and sisters?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Body Life*

Christians are part of the Body of Christ. God has made us to live in community with each other. God does not want us to live isolated lives. We are responsible to love and care for each other and are to be sensitive to the needs of others. A healthy church body will work together in this kind of loving unity.

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 6:3-5, focusing on the danger of judging others.

People often compare themselves with others. We think we are more spiritual than another person if we act better than them. Maybe we give more money. Maybe we help greet people more than someone else. Maybe we go to church more often. Maybe we know more Bible verses. Paul said we should not compare ourselves with other people in the church. Each person is responsible for himself or herself.

We should judge ourselves and what we do. What are our motives? Are we doing the best we can to help others and to serve God? Are we loving God with all our hearts and loving our brothers and sisters more than ourselves? We will all stand before God. God will judge us based on the truth we have seen and what we have done with that knowledge. It's not fair to compare ourselves with others because every person's life experience is different.

How will God judge people? How should you judge yourself?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 6:6-8, underlining what Paul said people harvest.

In these verses Paul told the Galatians something practical to do. He told them they needed to share what they had with those who were their teachers. Today we would say to pay those who teach you about God, for example, your pastor. He told them they couldn't fool God. Maybe they were keeping things that they should be sharing with their brothers and sisters; but God knew everything.

Paul reworded verse 6 into an important spiritual principle. Here is the principle: Whatever you sow or plant, you will reap. If you sow for your sinful nature, you will reap the consequences. If you follow God and sow spiritual seeds, you will reap eternal life. Wait a minute? Did Paul mean they would be saved based on their actions? No, that's not what Paul meant. They were saved, but they would grow in the Christian life in proportion to how much and in what way they sowed.

We are like farmers who plant in a field. We either plant good stuff or bad stuff. The good stuff we plant is when we act like Jesus and obey the Bible. We show love, are kind to others, say encouraging things, help people, share what we have, tell others about Jesus, and love God wholeheartedly. The bad stuff is when we do wrong like get angry, act selfishly, show hate, say hurtful things, don't pray, ignore God, and lie to others. We will reap what we sow.

Every day we sow to the Spirit or we sow to the flesh. What are ways we sow to the Spirit? What are ways we sow to the flesh? How are you sowing today?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 6:9-10, and memorize verse 9.

Paul told the Galatians not to become tired of doing good. Often we may think, "Why am I doing this?" For example, why do we go to Sunday School and church? Many of our Deaf friends sleep in on Sunday mornings. It would be nice to sleep in sometimes. Paul said don't give up. Keep doing the right things. One day you will be rewarded, IF you don't give up. The Bible teaches us to be faithful to the end.

Paul told the Galatians they should take the opportunity to help people. Sometimes a person needs our help, but it isn't a good time for us. The question is not "is this a good time for me?" The question is "is this an opportunity to do good?" Paul said act when the opportunity comes. That opportunity may not happen again. We should make the most of every opportunity that we have to do good.

Paul said, most importantly, help other believers. We are to do good for everyone, but especially to those who are Christians. We never know how much our help can encourage others who may be discouraged. It doesn't matter if we help in a big way or a small way. God will see everything and reward us later.

How do we do good without getting tired? What is our motivation to continue living for God without quitting?

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 6:14-15, considering how we can brag on the cross.

Some people tried to force the Galatians to be circumcised as part of the requirements for becoming a Christian. They hoped to convince the Galatians to be circumcised so they could brag about their influence over the Galatians. Paul said he would never brag about his own influence over people. Paul wanted to brag about only one thing: the cross of Jesus Christ. Paul said he died to the world and the world died to him through the cross. The world could no longer influence Paul.

The phrase “New people God has made” can also be translated as “new creation.” Paul said this was what he bragged about. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17 CSV). This means the person who becomes a Christian has an entirely new life. This excited Paul. He wanted to share this good news with everyone he met. We should be the same way.

What excited you about telling the good news about Jesus to others? Discuss how you and your group can share the good news with more Deaf people.

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from Galatians 6. Meet with one or two other members of your study group and discuss ways to live what you have learned.

Is there someone you need to help restore to Christ? As a mature Christian, how would you do this?

What does your church do to care for the teachers and pastor(s) in your church?

Why is Jesus and the story of the cross more important than anything else? With whom can you share the story this week?



WITH PERSEVERANCE

Christians can go through problems in life because they know God is always working to help them.

JAMES 1:2-15

James wrote this letter for Jewish Christians who did not live in Israel. They had scattered abroad. They faced persecution as Christians. The church was still young and working out the differences between Judaism and Christianity. James wrote this letter to the new believers facing many challenges. He gave them practical advice about how to become mature Christians.

Today we face intense spiritual battles. We know the end is near and Jesus will return soon. Still, we must be ready to meet Jesus even while we fight this spiritual battle. We must be strong Christians and not like soldiers still in boot camp. It is true that we face problems in life. But James teaches us that God uses problems to lead us to maturity. Therefore, as God gives us wisdom we can face the problems of life, look forward to eternal life, and resist sin. It is true that tough times will come. However, if we follow the teachings of James, we can live with hope.

JAMES 1:2-15

2 My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy,

3 because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you **patience**. **4** Let your patience **show itself perfectly** in what you do.

Then you will be **perfect and complete** and will have everything you need. **5** But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it.

He is **generous** to everyone and will give you wisdom without criticizing you. **6** But when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea, blown up and down by the wind.

7-8 Such **doubters** are thinking two different things at the same time, and they cannot decide about anything they do.

They should not think they will receive anything

from the Lord. **9** Believers who are poor should take pride that God has made them **spiritually rich**.

10 Those who are rich should take pride that God has shown them that they are spiritually poor.

The rich will die like a wild flower in the grass.

11 The sun rises with burning heat and dries up the plants. The flower falls off, and its beauty is gone.

In the same way the rich will die while they are still taking care of business.

12 When people are tempted and still continue strong,

they should be happy. After they have **proved their faith**,

13 God will reward them with life forever. God promised this to all those who love Him.

13 When people are tempted, they should not say, "God is tempting me." Evil cannot tempt God, and God Himself does not tempt anyone.

14 But people are tempted when their own **evil desire** leads them away and traps them. **15** This desire leads to sin, and then the sin grows and brings death.

a. Another word for perseverance or endurance. It means able to be calm while going through trouble or difficulty.

b. another translation for this phrase is "let perseverance finish its work" (NIV)

c. in other words, to grow up and mature spiritually

d. To give a lot. In this example, God gives much wisdom to people who ask Him.

e. someone who isn't sure if something will be true or not, so they hesitate to commit themselves

f. Someone who is a Christian. They may be poor, but in Christ they have all the resources that belong to God; therefore, they are spiritually rich in Christ.

g. James taught that faith must be backed by works to be real faith. Faith without the right actions to go with it is not true faith. It has not proved itself.

h. when the selfish nature inside a person wants to do something bad

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why can believers endure the hard times of life?
2. What makes you perfect and complete or of mature character?
3. How does a Christian get wisdom?
4. What happens if you ask God for wisdom but you doubt? Why?
5. James said the poor Christian and the rich Christian should be proud about different things. What are the poor Christians supposed to be proud about and the rich Christians proud about?
6. How do you prove your faith in God? What happens if you prove your faith?
7. How do we get eternal life? To whom did God promise eternal life?
8. How are people tempted? What is the end result if we give in to temptation?

BIBLE SKILL: *Temptation*

Where does temptation come from? How do we fight temptation? Read the verses listed below and write what you learn about temptation.

Matthew 4:1 _____

James 1:14 _____

1 John 2:16 _____

Matthew 26:41 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God uses the trials in our lives to make us grow and become mature Christians.
- Believers can ask for wisdom from God and they can be sure that God will give them wisdom.
- Believers can endure the problems in this life because we know we will be with our loving Father forever.
- Believers must face the hard times of life and not let the hard times lead to sin.

Discuss as a group how trials can make us more mature as Christians.

How do we get wisdom from God? What conditions did God put on receiving His wisdom?

What encouraging word about eternal life can you use to help others be faithful through the problems of life?

What should be our attitude toward temptation and how do we fight temptation?

MEMORY VERSE

My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience - James 1:2-3

DAY ONE

Read James 1:2-4, memorizing verses 2 and 3.

James talked about having full joy, or being happy. But why did he say his readers were happy? Did you notice he related troubles and joy? What?! Problems lead to happiness? Remember, in the Christian life, God's ways are not our ways. God uses the problems that come into our lives to make us more mature Christians. A diamond has to be cut and polished before it shows its full beauty. Having problems might not feel good, but problems polish us and make us more beautiful to God and others.

James said these troubles test our faith. We all took tests in school. The teacher used tests to see if we knew the lesson. The teacher did not know if we would get an A or an F. In our lives, when problems happen to us, God expects us to pass with an A! God doesn't allow the problems to find out how we will respond. He already knows how we will respond. He uses the problems we face to help us grow.

A missionary prepared to go to another country. The missionary went to a pastor from that country living in America for advice. What did the pastor who had faced persecution in his home country say? He said, "Be happy. Let people see that Christ makes you a happy person. That will draw people to Christ."

Why should we have joy when we experience various problems in our lives? How do hard experiences make your faith mature?

KEY DOCTRINE: *God, the Giving God*

By nature, God is a very giving God. He is not selfish. He gives out of love. He gives generously (see Jas. 1:5). God gave His own Son to die for us. God doesn't look for our faults when He gives. God loves to give and shower us with His blessings. God wants His people to be giving, too, just as He is giving.

DAY TWO

Read Galatians 1:5-8, praying as Paul directed.

When we face problems in our lives, what is something we need? Of course, we need wisdom. But what is wisdom? Wisdom is knowing what is right and true, and making good decisions based on that knowledge. We need wisdom when we deal with troubles.

How do we ask God for wisdom, though? We must ask in faith, with no doubt. God rewards the person who has faith in Him. “Without faith no one can please God” (Heb. 11:6). James compared the person without faith with a wave of the sea tossed back and forth by the wind. I love going to the sea and watching the waves, especially when they are big and the wind is blowing hard. But the wind and the waves can easily represent the problems around us. We do not want to let the problems move us. We want to be steady with our eyes on Jesus.

We know people who have a hard time making a decision. “Yes, I’ll go with you.” “Oh no, I changed my mind.” “Oh, I can go now.” It is frustrating to make plans with a person like that. God is frustrated, too. God will not give that person anything because that person has no real faith in God. When we ask God in faith for wisdom we can know God will give it!

Why did James compare the one who doubts to a wave in the sea? How can you get wisdom for living?

DAY THREE

Read Galatians 1:9-11, reflecting on the short life of a wild flower.

Poor people have a hard time in life. What a thrill to know that they can be rich in God’s kingdom! Some people call God’s kingdom the “upside down kingdom.” The poor are promoted (exalted) and the rich are demoted (put down low).

James warned the rich person. If the rich person is willing to be made low and trust Jesus, he will go to heaven. However, the rich person who values his money and his high position more than he values Christ

will not go to heaven. What did James compare this rich person to? A wildflower that dies in the hot sun. James loved to make comparisons using nature. Some states have a wildflower program where they plant wildflowers along the highway. Those flowers are beautiful, but their life is short. Next time you see some, remember James compared those flowers to a rich man without God.

What should cause pride for poor people? What should cause pride for the rich? How can poor people and rich people get to heaven?

DAY FOUR

Read Galatians 1:12, looking for the promise made.

James said when believers go through testing, they must continue strong and not quit. They must pass the test without getting angry, talking bad to people, or complaining. If they pass the test, they should be happy. Why should they be happy? God will reward them with eternal life. If we love God with all our hearts, we will be tough and endure the troubles. We will look at God and not our problems. This is how we prove we are really Christians.

Passing the test doesn't mean we earn eternal life. We say we are Christians, then we act like we are Christians – that proves our faith. Sometimes a football player at the Deaf school where I work talks tough and brags, but then he plays lousy. Nobody pays any attention to him. If, however, a football player talks tough and dominates the football game, then people say, "Wow, he's really a good football player." He has proved he's a great football player. His actions showed that what he said was true. It's the same for us as Christians. If we say that we're Christians and we show it with our lives, then people will see our faith in action and God will reward us with eternal life.

How can you continue strong in faith while going through testing? What are some ways we can encourage each other through our various troubles?

DAY FIVE

Read Galatians 1:13-15, identifying how we are tempted.

Remember the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? (See Gen. 3.) The snake came to Eve and convinced her to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree. She then convinced Adam to eat the fruit, too. God exposed their sin. What was their response? Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the snake. James warned his readers. James said don't blame God when you are tempted. God does not tempt us to evil. Accept the responsibility yourself.

We have a sin nature inside of us that wants to do wrong. When we listen to temptation and sin, we can't blame anyone else. If we continue to sin, we get ourselves into a bigger trap and get deeper in trouble. The end result of sin is death. We don't want to go down the wrong road of temptation and sin. Especially do not let the hardships of life lead you to sin. Stay faithful by resisting temptations by asking God to help you say no to sin.

What are some ways you can avoid temptations? How can Christians help each other stay out of sin?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 1:2-15. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What are some trials you and your group are facing today? How can you pray for each other to grow mature during hard times?

What in your life needs God's wisdom? How will God's wisdom change your life?

How are you exposed to temptations? Discuss with your group how to fill your mind with Christ and avoid sin.



WITH OBEDIENCE

Christians follow Jesus by obeying Him and showing His compassion to others.

JAMES 1:19-27; 2:1-4

Sometimes people work on a committee together. One person talks a lot. That person has lots of ideas. That person says he will do this, that, and the other. The people on the committee are happy to have someone who will work hard and do things. Time goes by and nothing happens. Everyone realizes this person is a talker, not a doer. How disappointing! No one likes a talker who doesn't act.

Today's lesson encourages us to be doers. Is it okay to learn the Bible, go to Sunday School, listen to the preacher but never do the things we learn? Of course it is not! James told what he thought about a person who listened, but was not a doer. Instead, we must put into practice what we learn from God's Word. When God's Word corrects us we must change what we do. When God's Word directs us we must follow where it leads. We must especially do what the Bible teaches us to do related to loving people equally.

JAMES 1:19-2:4

19 My dear brothers and sisters, always **be willing to listen and slow to speak.** **A** Do not become angry easily, **20** because anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants. **21** So **put out of your life** **B** every evil thing and every kind of wrong. Then in gentleness **accept God's teaching** **C** that is **planted in your hearts,** **D** which can save you. **22** Do what God's teaching says; when you only listen and do nothing, you are **fooling yourselves.** **E** **23** Those who hear God's teaching and do nothing are like people who look at themselves in a mirror. **24** They see their faces and then go away and quickly forget what they looked like. **25** But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy. **26** People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just fooling themselves. Their "religion" is worth nothing. **27** Religion that God accepts as pure and **without fault** **F** is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.

2:1 My dear brothers and sisters, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, never think **some people are more important than others.** **G** **2** Suppose someone comes into your church meeting wearing nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor person comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. **3** You show special attention to the one wearing nice clothes and say, "Please, sit here in this good seat." But you say to the poor person, "Stand over there," or, "Sit on the floor by my feet." **4** What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others, and with **evil thoughts** **H** you are deciding that one person is better.

- a. Most translations translate this "quick to listen, slow to speak." Often we talk a lot, but we don't give other people a chance to talk much.
- b. Stop doing those things.
- c. Obey God's Word.
- d. God's teaching "planted in your hearts" is the seed of God's Word that was taught to them.
- e. These people think they are Christians, but if they only hear the Bible and don't obey it, they are not true Christians.
- f. Without blame. That means that other people who see their lives can't find anything they are doing wrong.
- g. Jesus taught that all people are equal. No one is better than another person but all are worthy of equal honor.
- h. Thinking a rich person is better than a poor person is evil because all people are equal. No matter how much money someone does or doesn't have, God demands we treat people with equal kindness.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why should we be quick to allow others to share their thoughts before we share ours?
2. Why should we not become angry?
3. What is able to save a person?
4. How does a person fool himself?
5. Why did James compare people to someone who looked in a mirror, then walked away?
6. How do people become free from sin?
7. Who are the people who are truly happy? What makes them happy?
8. What does true religion, or a true Christian, look like?
9. How can you keep yourself from the world's evil influence?
10. What are the dangers of treating people differently if they have or don't have money?

BIBLE SKILL: *Planting in God's Kingdom*

Read the verses listed below. What was planted? Who did the planting/sowing? What are seeds compared to?

Psalm 1:3 _____

Psalm 92:12-13 _____

Matthew 13:3-9,18-23 _____

1 Corinthians 3:6 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

Christians must obey the Bible. They must stop doing bad things.

When Christians learn new truths in the Bible, they immediately obey the new teachings.

Christians should show love and kindness to all people both by what they say and what they do.

Discuss as a group how anger can prevent us from living as the Bible commands us to live. What other actions did James say Christians must stop doing?

What actions can you find in today's verses that lead to true happiness? How can you do those things yourself?

Based on this passage, how should Christians treat widows and orphans? How should we treat the poor and the rich?

MEMORY VERSE

Do what God's teaching says; when you only listen and do nothing, you are fooling yourselves - James 1:22

DAY ONE

Read James 1:19-21, asking God to help you act on those verses.

People can be very self-centered. Sometimes we like to talk too much. It can be hard to sit back and let someone else talk. James knew this. He told the Jewish Christians they needed to be quick to listen to others and slow to talk themselves.

Second, James warned them not to get angry fast. Do you remember the story of Cain and his brother Abel from Genesis 4:3-10? Cain got angry with God for accepting Abel's sacrifice and not his own. His anger led to murder, which led to punishment. Any time we feel angry, we need to be very careful. Anger will lead us to sin if we don't repent of it.

Finally, James told his readers to put everything bad out of their lives and put in God's Word. They needed to do that with gentle hearts. In Hosea 10:12 God told His people to break up the ground in their hearts like a farmer who plows before he plants. Seeds can't grow in hard, rocky soil. If the soil is broken up, the seeds will grow and produce crops. That's why James told them to obey the Word with gentleness or humility. That meant their hearts were soft ground, ready for the planted seeds of God's Word to grow.

Have you removed sin from your life? Is your heart soft or hard ground?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Authority of The Bible*

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. God Himself gave different men His Word to write. The Bible shows us how to be saved. The Bible shows us how to live every day. The Bible has no mistakes in it. It is all true. The Bible has the answer for all of life's questions. It explains how God made the earth and everything in it. It explains how sin and evil got here. It explains the hope we have through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

DAY TWO

Read James 1:22-24, focusing on verse 22.

James warned the Jewish Christians. If they heard God's Word, but did not obey it, they fooled themselves. They probably thought listening to God's Word was good enough. Some people today go to church on Sundays and think that's good enough. James said this is wrong thinking! It's not enough to learn God's Word or go to church on Sundays. We must obey His Word.

Suppose a fireman goes to someone's home and warns the person about a fire next door. The person might listen and think that's good to know. Was listening enough? No. The person needed to act. He needed to respond to the fireman and get out of his house. If the person only listened to the fireman but didn't leave his house he has endangered his life. It's the same for the person who learns God's Word, but doesn't obey what the Bible says to do. That person will be in eternal danger.

James used a picture of someone looking in a mirror, and then going away without doing anything about his or her appearance. You would not want to look in the mirror, see your hair in a mess, then arrive at work with your hair messed up. You would want to fix your hair first. God's Word is like a mirror for us to see what we need to change in our lives.

What commands from God do you continue to ignore?

What are you ready to do now to begin to obey God's commands?

DAY THREE

Read James 1:25, listing ways to find true happiness.

This verse can have a powerful impact on our lives. James told the people how to be truly happy. Everyone wants to be truly happy, but not many really know how to obtain happiness. Here's the secret to true happiness: carefully study God's Word. Then obey what the Bible says. Not only will you find true happiness, you'll find true freedom.

Are you willing to pay the price? If you obey this one verse, it will change your life forever. This is the secret to happiness and true freedom. This is not a new teaching. David said the same thing in Psalm 1. David said the person who delights in the law of God is happy and blessed. This promise is for anyone who is willing to carefully study and obey God's Word. Then you will be very happy and will feel free in your spirit.

What is the secret to true happiness and freedom? What changes do you need to make to follow this verse every day?

DAY FOUR

Read James 1:26-27, noticing the kind of religion God accepts.

Another way to recognize a true Christian is to watch his communication. What people talk about and the kinds of signs they use show if they are true Christians or not. A true Christian will not continuously use bad language. A true Christian will not continue to say hurtful things to people. If a person says bad things and does not repent, that shows us something is wrong and that person may not be a Christian.

James wanted to be very clear to the Jewish Christians. He wanted them to know for sure what a Christian does and does not look like. James did not want anyone later to say, "I didn't know. I thought I was a Christian." You see, people walking the path to heaven listen to people, don't get angry quickly, study the Bible, think on the Bible all the time, obey the Bible, don't say evil things, care for widows and orphans, and avoid the world's influence. If people live this way, they are living like Christians. James did not want anyone to be fooled.

Write down the characteristics of Christians that James listed above. Do you practice these things daily?

What changes could you make today that would show up in the sing language that you use?

DAY FIVE

Read James 2:1-4, considering how these things are done today.

Another important principle James told these young Christians is that they should never exalt rich people or demote poor people. They should treat everyone equally. The poor were rich in Christ and the rich were poor in spirit. We should never think of someone as more important than another person. We must love equally like God does.

Two missionaries were once walking in an isolated area in Africa. They saw a woman, who looked poor, working in a field. The two men walked past the woman, but one man felt he should go back and share the gospel. They shared the gospel with that woman. They did not know, but she was a very influential woman. When she first saw the two men, she decided in her heart that if what they had to say was important enough for them to talk to her, she would do whatever they said. She became a believer and became a strong witness for Christ. We can never judge people by outward appearances. God treats everyone equally and so must we.

What changes do you need to make in how you treat other people?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 1:19-27; 2:1-4. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Discuss with your group ways to obey God's Word more. What wrong ways of living do people in your group need to change?

How can you hold each other accountable to put into practice what you have learned from God's Word today?

When has your church not treated other people equally? How can you inspire your church to show love to all people by words and actions?



WITH WORKS

When people have true faith, their lives change and others can see the difference.

JAMES 2:14-26

Imagine you're standing on one side of a creek, and you want to get to something on the other side. You realize that the only way to do that is to cross an old wooden bridge that spans the creek. You must trust that the bridge is sturdy and reliable and have faith that it will not collapse beneath you. You must then choose to prove your faith by crossing the bridge. If you believe the bridge will support you, you have to take action to show your faith by walking across the bridge.

Today's session is about faith that proves itself by doing things. Some people think they don't have to prove their faith through action. James says "wrong!" Real faith shows itself in actions and not just believing in your mind. You must follow up that faith with action, like you would in the scenario above.

JAMES 2:14-26

14 My brothers and sisters, if people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save them? **15** A brother or sister in Christ might need clothes or food. **16** If you say to that person, “God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat,” but you do not give what that person needs, **your words are worth nothing.** **A** **17** In the same way, **faith by itself—that does nothing—is dead.** **B** **18** Someone might say, “You have faith, but I **have deeds.**” **C** Show me your faith **without doing anything,** **D** and I will show you my faith by what I do. **19** You believe there is one God. Good! But the demons believe that, too, and they tremble with fear. **20 You foolish person!** **E** Must you be shown that **faith that does nothing is worth nothing?** **F** **21** Abraham, our **ancestor,** **G** was made right with God by what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. **22** So you see that Abraham’s faith and the things he did worked together. His faith was made perfect by what he did. **23** This shows the full meaning of the Scripture that says: “Abraham believed God, and God accepted Abraham’s faith, and that faith made him right with God.” And Abraham was called God’s friend. **24** So you see that people are made right with God by what they do, not by faith only. **25** Another example is **Rahab, a prostitute,** **H** who was made right with God by something she did. She welcomed the spies into her home and helped them escape by a different road. **26** Just as **a person’s body that does not have a spirit is dead,** **I** so faith that does nothing is dead!

- a. What they say is shown to be false by their lack of action.
- b. James meant that faith is dead unless it has right actions that show that faith has been real.
- c. The person did a lot of good works.
- d. not doing things based on faith, such as helping the poor, the orphans, not being angry, and so on
- e. James said they were foolish because they said they believed in Jesus, but they didn’t do the things a Christian would do.
- f. Faith without actions to back it up is false faith; therefore, it is worthless.
- g. Abraham lived over two thousand years before James wrote his letter. He was the father of the Jewish people. This story is in Genesis 22.
- h. The Rahab story is from Joshua 2.
- i. A person is made of a body and a spirit. If the body doesn’t have the spirit, then the person is dead. Body and spirit are separated at death.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What kind of faith is true faith?
2. What is the problem with telling a person “God be with you! I hope you stay warm...”?
3. What does faith “by itself” mean?
4. What did James mean when he talked about faith with action (deeds or works)?
5. Why did James compare the belief of the person with no deeds with the demons’ belief?
6. What did James expect the believers’ faith to do?
7. What did Abraham do that showed his true faith?
8. What must a believer do to be God’s friend like Abraham was?
9. How are Abraham and Rahab different? How are they the same?
10. What is the relationship between faith and works?

BIBLE SKILL: *Faith with Works*

Read the verses listed below. What did these people do to show their faith?

Matthew 8:5-10,13 _____

Mark 2:3-5 _____

Luke 7:37-38,44-50 _____

Luke 8:43-48 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- If a person who seems to trust Christ does not show obedience to Christ then his faith is a false faith.
- True faith is more than believing in Jesus with your mind. True faith means putting your full trust in Jesus to save you.
- True faith leads a person to do the right things. That person will start acting like Jesus.

Discuss with your group how we know a person's faith is real.

What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and trusting Him as Savior and Lord?

If a person has true faith, what kinds of things will he or she do? What kinds of actions will faith show? How do your actions reveal your faith in Jesus?

MEMORY VERSE

In the same way, faith by itself—that does nothing—is dead.
- James 2:17

DAY ONE

Read James 2:14-17, memorizing verse 17.

People with faith must show their faith is real. James gave an example. Suppose a Christian brother or sister needed clothes or food and you told them, “God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat.” Would they be happy with you? Would they think you had a strong faith? No! They would think you were a hypocrite because you say you are a Christian, but you do not act like a Christian.

Faith is real where it shows up through the actions of your life. For example, I should have faith in airplanes when I get on an airplane to go halfway around the world. Buying a ticket and getting on a plane is proof of my faith in airplanes. For the Christian, the proof of her faith is her actions, or works. She obeys the Bible because she believes what God says. True faith will show itself in obedience.

Peter had faith that he could walk on water with Jesus (Matt. 14:28-29). How do we know he had faith? He stepped out of the boat. Did the other disciples have faith? No. How do we know? They didn’t step out of the boat. Their “faith” without works (stepping out of the boat) was dead. It wasn’t real faith.

How do your works show your faith to your friends?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Faith Demonstrated by Works*

People are saved by faith alone. This is the very clear teaching of the Bible. People are not saved by the good works they do. Ephesians 2:8-9 and many other verses make this clear. The writings of James do not conflict with the clear teaching of the Bible. James teaches us that faith is demonstrated by works.

DAY TWO

Read James 2:18-19, noting the response of the demons.

James tried a new argument. James said faith without works was nothing. Why did he consider faith without works as worthless? Because he knew the demons believe in God, too, yet they are not saved at all. Their belief is only mental assent and not conversion. The demons have not changed their actions nor will they willingly bow to God or obey Him. So a person with only faith or belief in Jesus, but without changed actions or works, is the same as the demons. He is not a true Christian.

James said he had works. He could prove his faith through his works. Real saving faith will result in a changed life. His works did not save him. Only Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection saved him. His works were proof of his true faith in Jesus, just like Peter had true faith to step out of the boat.

What is the difference between believing about God in your mind and trusting Jesus for salvation?

DAY THREE

Read James 2:20-24, looking for what made Abraham right with God.

James called his readers foolish. He was truly surprised they needed more proof that faith without works is nothing. Nevertheless, James went on to use Abraham as an example. James said Abraham was made right with God because he offered his son Isaac on the altar. God tested Abraham and Abraham proved his faith in God. Abraham believed God would still raise up children through Isaac. How was Abraham's faith made perfect? Abraham's faith was made perfect or complete when he was ready to sacrifice Isaac. God accepted Abraham's faith based on Abraham's faith-motivated actions.

Notice verse 22. This verse draws together faith and works. We know from all the New Testament that salvation happens because we put our faith in Jesus. But James shows us the partnership between saving faith

and works. Works do not bring salvation but works show that salvation has truly happened in our lives.

Finally, because of the depth of Abraham's faith in God and his commitment to God, God called Abraham his friend. What a special honor for Abraham! Abraham acted a certain way because of his faith in God. God rewarded him for his actions, which came from his faith.

Why is Abraham an example of faith shown by works?

What actions show your faith this week?

DAY FOUR

Read James 2:25, underlining Rahab's actions.

James used another example of someone whose active faith showed up in her works - Rahab the prostitute. Who was Rahab? Perhaps you remember the story in Joshua 2 when the spies went to search out the land. Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. The spies stayed at Rahab's home. The king of Jericho sent men to her house looking for the two spies. Rahab hid the two spies on her roof and told the king's men that they had already left the city. When the king's men left, she asked the spies to spare her family and not kill them. She told them where to go so they would be safe.

What Rahab did required a lot of faith. If the king knew what she did, he would have killed her. Rahab would have been considered a traitor. Rahab had a lot of courage to support God's people. She clearly had faith in God because she told the spies all the great things God had done for them. She knew God would give Jericho to the Israelites and she wanted her family kept alive and safe. Because of Rahab's faith she helped spies and thus was made right with God. Rahab is an example of how faith that shows itself in action is salvation faith.

What have you learned from Rahab that helps you to show your faith?

DAY FIVE

Read James 2:26, writing it as a math equation.

James was skilled at building a case to prove a point just like a lawyer may build a case to win in court. First, he defined faith that is not true faith. He gave an example of false faith. Then he gave examples of true faith. Finally, he gave his readers a clear picture with which they could identify. The picture was life and death.

Everyone reading James knew a dead body when they saw one. A dead body, one without spirit, was obvious to all. In the same way, a person who boasted of faith but had no actions of faith was as false and dead as a body without a spirit.

Some Christians thought it unnecessary to do good works because salvation comes by faith. James showed this to be wrong. Some Christians thought salvation comes by works. Paul showed they were wrong. We need both James and Paul to keep our thinking biblically accurate.

What are ways other people around you can see your faith in action?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 2:14-26. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

How can you help Deaf people in your church understand the difference between false faith without works and true faith with works?

How can you explain to your Deaf friends the difference between knowing about God in your mind and believing in Jesus for salvation?

Abraham and Rahab did radical, or amazing, actions of faith. What could be some radical ways to show your faith in the Deaf community today?



WITH CONTROL

Christians show they are mature believers by controlling the things they say whether with their hands or with their mouth.

JAMES 3:1-12

Do you remember the story about when Isaiah received his call from God to be a prophet? That story is in Isaiah 6. He saw the LORD sitting on a very high throne. Next the angels standing near the LORD cried out “holy, holy, holy.” Immediately, Isaiah realized he was a sinner. He was in the presence of a holy God. If we truly sense God’s presence, we will also be aware of our sinfulness.

Before Isaiah could become God’s spokesman or prophet, God had to deal with Isaiah’s sin. An angel used tongs and took a hot coal from the altar with fire on it. The angel touched the hot coal to Isaiah’s mouth. What did this mean? It meant that Isaiah’s sinfulness was shown by the words he spoke. The hot coal purified his mouth and made him clean. Now that he was cleansed, Isaiah became a prophet for God. Now Isaiah could speak good things for God. In today’s session, we will learn that what we say shows our relationship to God. The Christian who controls his speech shows he is a mature believer.

JAMES 3:1-12

1 My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. **2** We all make many mistakes. If people never said anything wrong, they would be perfect and **able to control their entire selves**, **A** too. **3** When we put **bits** **B** into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can control their whole bodies. **4** Also a ship is very big, and it is pushed by strong winds. But a very small **rudder** **C** controls that big ship, making it go wherever the **pilot** **D** wants. **5** It is the same with the tongue. It is a small part of the body, but it brags about great things. A big forest fire can be started with only a little flame. **6** And the **tongue** **E** is like a fire. **It is a whole world of evil among the parts of our bodies**. **F** The tongue spreads its evil through the whole body. The tongue is set on fire by hell, and it starts a fire that influences all of life. **7** People can **tame** **G** every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish, and they have tamed them, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is wild and evil and full of deadly poison. **9** We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father, but then we curse people, whom God made like Himself. **10** Praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers and sisters, this should not happen. **11** Do good and bad water flow from the same **spring?** **H** **12** My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives, or can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well full of salty water cannot give good water.

- a. If a person is able to control what they say, they will be able to control other things in their lives as well. They will not only control speech, but also actions.
- b. A bit is a piece of metal put in a horse's mouth so the rider can control the horse's movement.
- c. The rudder is a movable piece under the water, usually at the back of a boat. The person driving the boat can use the rudder to steer the boat.
- d. The pilot is the person who steers the boat.
- e. The way of communicating or talking for hearing people. For Deaf people, we would say our hands.
- f. It refers to the tongue. The tongue is responsible for spreading evil throughout our whole body by saying bad things.
- g. James here compares taming an animal to taming or controlling the tongue.
- h. a place where water comes up out of the ground

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. What is the relationship between being spiritually mature and controlling speech?
2. Why will God judge teachers more strictly?
3. How is a bit, a rudder, and a forest fire like a tongue?
4. How is the tongue for hearing people like hands for Deaf people?
5. What did James mean when he said the tongue was small, but it brags about great things?
6. How does the tongue spread evil or wrongdoing throughout our bodies?
7. What did James mean when he said the tongue was full of deadly poison?
8. What is wrong with praises and curses coming from the same mouth or hands?
9. What did James mean about the fig tree, grapevine, and a well of salty water?

KEY DOCTRINE: *What We Should or Should Not Say*

Read the verses listed below. Write what these verses teach about what we should or should not say to each other.

Ephesians 4:25-32 _____

Colossians 3:8-17 _____

1 Timothy 5:13 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- God will judge teachers more strictly than others. Teachers need to remember they are responsible to God to teach in the right way.
- Christians need to realize how much they can influence others by what they say.
- Christians should realize that what they say shows what is inside their hearts.

Discuss as a group the responsibility that teachers have. Discuss ways you can encourage and support those who teach God's Word to you.

Think about the things you say. Who listens to you throughout the day? How can you communicate in a way to build up people and encourage them?

If what you say shows what is in your heart what do your words show about you? What changes do you need to make in your heart and with your words?

MEMORY VERSE

My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.
- James 3:1

DAY ONE

Read James 3:1-2, reflecting on verse 1.

James wrote about teachers. Teachers have a great influence on other people. Teachers can lead people in the right way or the wrong way. People sometimes think it's exciting to be a teacher or a leader. People do not realize that sometimes it's not easy being a teacher or a leader. Being a teacher is a big responsibility. A teacher often feels burdened with teaching the right things. Teachers want to be sure their students learn what is important and what is true.

God looks at teachers as people with a lot of influence on their students. God will judge teachers based on if they did a good job or a bad job of teaching their students. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul listed teaching as one of the spiritual gifts in the church. God expects spiritually-gifted teachers to teach and lead Christians to a greater walk with Him. How do people teach others? Hearing people teach by talking using their tongues. Deaf people teach by signing with their hands. However we communicate, it is important to communicate truth.

Why should people carefully consider what it means to be a teacher?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Christian Gifts*

God has given gifts to His people in His church. Everyone who is a Christian has at least one gift. The purpose of our gifts is to serve one another in the church by using our gifts. Gifts in today's churches include preaching, teaching, healing, discernment, serving, giving, encouraging, and showing mercy. Many spiritual gifts involve words. Christians with word gifts are especially responsible to use words for Christ.

DAY TWO

Read James 3:3-4, noticing what James compares the tongue to.

In verses 3 and 4, James gave his readers two examples of small items that have big influences. First, he used horses as an example. People who ride horses control which way the horses go by using bits in the horses' mouths. The bit is a small piece of metal. Conversely, the horse is a huge animal. James said that even though the horse is big, people can control it with a tiny bit.

The second example James used was that of a ship and its rudder. A rudder is small, but a ship is big. Yet, the small rudder can control the movement of the entire ship. It doesn't matter how strong the winds are against the ship, the captain can still control the ship just by controlling the rudder. Like bits and rudders, the tongue is a small item with big influence. The Christian must keep his words under control.

How can Christians apply the lessons learned from bits and rudders?

DAY THREE

Read James 3:5-6, looking for how the tongue is a fire.

In verses 5 and 6 James used a third example to show the big influence of the tongue. James said a spark from a match can start a big forest fire. In the same way our words can spread evil among many people. It is scary to think how much influence our words can have. James wrote that the evil our words can do is from hell itself.

James writes about the tongue. But his true lesson is about words and communication. In the Deaf world we mostly communicate with our hands. So every time James writes "tongue" you can think "hands."

It is easy to apply the lesson of James in our culture. Sometimes we talk about the Deaf grapevine. We mean that news travels fast. Bad news or gossip travels even faster. With our words and hands we start "fires" and spread evil. We Deaf Christians must be very careful to use the influence of our words in godly ways.

How can you practice communicating in a way that honors God?

DAY FOUR

Read James 3:7-8, listing the things we tame.

James said people have tamed all kinds of animals. We can look at our zoos to see that is true. We see what people have done with dolphins, wild birds, even dogs. People take pride in themselves for their work in taming various animals. We even enjoy watching people showing how well they have trained their dogs.

James said it's amazing we can tame all these wild animals, but we still cannot tame our tongues (or our hands). James said the tongue is "wild and evil and full of deadly poison"! James could not say anything stronger than that. Poison spreads and is used to bring harm to others, or even death. Christians have no business with anything poisonous that can infect their whole group.

How can you tame your hands and your way of communicating with others?

How can you and your church hold each other accountable for your communication?

DAY FIVE

Read James 3:9-12, noting the opposites.

Finally, James said something positive about the tongue. He said people can praise God with their tongues. This is a good thing. However, James then said people praise God but curse people, who are made in the image of God. James said both praise to God and curses of people should not come from the same mouth or from the same hands. To do so is hypocritical. Christians should be consistent in how they talk and their speech should be godly.

James used some more examples. Either a spring has good water coming out or bad water coming out. Fig trees produce figs. Grapevines produce grapes. James gave us an easy test for our faith. Here is the test - do your words show you belong to Christ? The faithful Christian speaks words that honor Christ and build up others. How did you do on the test?

What have you said recently that did not honor Christ? How can you submit your words to Christ so you will honor Him in the future?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 3. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

Why do teachers have added responsibility for their words? What will keep teachers connected to the truth?

How do the illustrations James used help you understand the nature of words, those spoken with the voice, those spoken with hands, and those written on our keyboards?

What do you learn about your own heart from your words? How can you make your words honor Christ?

WITH SUBMISSION

Christians should be committed to follow God's will for their lives.

JAMES 4:6-17

Amazing Grace is a famous hymn by John Newton who lived from 1725 – 1807. Newton grew up in a Christian home with his mother and attended a church until his mother died when he was seven. Afterward, he lived with his father and learned life at sea onboard ships. Later, he had his own slave ships. Newton lived a life of sin and was far from God. Finally, after Newton saw that God had His hand of protection on his life, he turned to God by trusting Christ. Newton was very sorry for his former life of sin and his involvement in the slave trade. He knew God's grace had changed his life so he began to live a vastly different life. As a Christian he submitted to Christ.

Newton is one example of someone who lived out the points of today's lesson. Newton submitted to God and changed from a life of sin. He received grace from God and gave it to others. He let God lead him even when it was hard. Finally, he knew what was right and he did it!

JAMES 4:6-17

6 But God gives us even more **grace**, **A** as the Scripture says, “God is against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.” **7** So give yourselves completely to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run from you.

8 Come near to God, and God will come near to you. You sinners, clean sin out of your lives. You who are trying to follow God and the world at the same time, make your thinking pure. **9 Be sad, cry, and weep!** **B** Change your laughter into crying and your joy into sadness. **10 Humble yourself in**

the Lord’s presence, **C** and He will honor you. **11** Brothers and sisters, do not tell evil lies about each other. If you speak against your fellow believers or judge them, you are judging and speaking against the law they follow. And when you are judging the law, you are no longer a follower of the law. You have become a judge. **12** God is the only **Lawmaker** **D** and Judge. **He is the only**

One who can save and destroy. **E** So it is not right for you to judge your neighbor.

13 Some of you say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to some city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money.” **14** But you do not know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a **mist**. **F** You can see it for a short time, but then **it goes away.** **G** **15** So you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.” **16** But now you are proud and you brag. All of this bragging is wrong. **17** Anyone who knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, is sinning.

a. Grace is any free gift that is not earned. We see it most clearly in the gift of salvation and the blessing of life.

b. We should realize our sin and go to God with sorrow and repentance.

c. Recognize your lowly position before God. Get on your face before God and ask for His mercy.

d. God is the One who makes our moral laws, such as the Ten Commandments. God knows the rules or laws we need to live by.

e. God is the One who can save us or destroy because He is our judge. Only God can forgive us through Jesus or send us to hell.

f. Mist is small drops of water in the air, like a fog, but perhaps not as thick.

g. Your life will be finished, and one day you will die. Your life will be quickly gone like the mist is quickly gone.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. How would you explain grace to someone?
2. To whom does God show His grace?
3. What happens when we stand against the devil?
4. How will God come near to you or make Himself known to you?
5. If you want to get close to God, what do you need to do?
6. Why is it not possible to follow God and the world at the same time?
7. What did James say about judging our brothers and sisters in Christ?
8. Who is the only one who can save us or destroy us?
9. How can we include God in our plans for daily lives?
10. What did James mean when he said our lives are like a mist?

BIBLE SKILL: *God's Guidance*

Read the verses listed below. What are ways we know God is leading us?

Proverbs 3:5-6 _____

Acts 11:12 _____

Philippians 4:6-7 _____

Revelation 3:7 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- A person can have victory over sin and the devil when they obey God.
- Christians are to be full of grace and helpful to Christians who are struggling to obey God.
- Christians should seek God's leading in every detail of their lives.
- God wants His people to obey Him and follow Him.

Discuss as a group how obeying God will give you victory over sin and the devil.

What does it mean to show grace to each other? How can we be helpful to Christians who are struggling to obey God?

Why is it important to submit all our plans to God? How can we help one another be submissive?

What is sin? Why is it sin to fail to do the right thing even when I know what the right thing is?

MEMORY VERSE

Anyone who knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, is sinning - James 4:17

DAY ONE

Read James 4:6-7, looking for what God is against.

Throughout the Bible we see clearly God is against the proud person. Pride was Satan's sin and God hates pride in people. The opposite of pride is humility. God is for the person who humbles himself, makes himself low before God. The humble person realizes he has nothing to be proud about. He is a sinner and an enemy of God on the road to hell. To the humble person what does God give? Grace! God loves us no matter how bad we are. God offers us eternity with Him in heaven.

When we realize God is good and wants only good things for us, we will give ourselves completely to God. When we put ourselves under God's authority, we can stand against the devil. Satan will run away from us. Satan is not afraid of us, but if we place ourselves under God's rule, Satan will leave us alone. Notice the word "run." Satan won't just walk away. Satan will run away!

Remember Jesus is the victor. He has won the battle against Satan. We are victors with Jesus.

What does God think about pride and humility?

How do we stand against the devil?

KEY DOCTRINE: *Our Spiritual War*

Because the spiritual war is all around us it is hard for us to see it. But it is there. The Bible teaches that in the beginning humans were free from sin. But God gave the first humans freedom and they chose sin. All humans since that time have done the same. The world, the flesh, and the devil pull us toward sin. God offers grace and forgiveness. Even after becoming believers we live in this tension between the pull of sin and the loving grace of God. We learn, in Christ, how to fight this spiritual war.

DAY TWO

Read James 4:8-10, counting the commands given.

How does God come near to us? God has already hunted for us, just like the story of the shepherd with ninety-nine sheep and one lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). The shepherd looked for the one lost sheep. God is ready to have a relationship with us. God already made the first move to have a relationship with us by sending Jesus into the world. Now we must make the next move. We must approach God and seek God with all our hearts.

We must confess our sins and cleanse our lives from sin if we want a relationship with the holy God. We should come to God in true repentance, willing to change and start living clean, holy lives because of God's grace. We simply cannot be friends with the world and friends with God at the same time. God wants us totally committed to Him and to Him alone.

Why is it important to confess our sins to God?

What do you need to do to be closer to Him?

DAY THREE

Read James 4:11-12, identifying who is the judge.

James told the Jewish Christians that they should not lie about each other or say bad things about each other. They should not speak against or judge one another. Only God can judge us guilty or innocent. God Himself made the law for us to follow. If we judge one another, we put ourselves in God's place. That is wrong. Only God has authority to judge us.

God is the only one we should fear. God is the One who saves and God is the One who condemns. We should not fear people, only God. We should be concerned about how God will judge us.

Judging is different from discernment. God expects us to discern between good and bad. In fact, one of the gifts in the church is discernment. In these evil days in which we live, we must discern

between those following God and those who are not, between the sheep and the wolves. Judging is pronouncing condemnation, saying mean things, tearing down people. When we judge people we condemn and offer no grace. When we discern good from evil we can quickly give grace to those who struggle with sin.

What is the difference between judging others and discerning good and bad?

What do our actions look like when we give grace to struggling people?

DAY FOUR

Read James 4:13-16, noticing the length of our life.

We make plans every day for that day or for the future. It is not wrong to make plans, but we must remember to follow God's plans. We often run ahead of God and make our own plans. Later, we realize they were only our plans and not what God wanted us to do. God has a plan for our lives. Therefore, we should submit our decision making to God's control. If we truly allow God to control our lives, we will seek God's leading in our daily decisions.

James compared our lives to a mist. A mist or fog usually only lasts for a short time. James meant our lives on this earth are short in comparison to eternity. We should honor God's leading in our lives. Remember Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane told the Father, "Not my will, but Your will be done." We should live this way – in submission to His will in every part of life.

How do you know God is leading in your daily life? What steps must you take for Him to lead?

DAY FIVE

Read James 4:17, memorizing the verse.

James closed this section by saying if you know the right thing to do, but do not do it, that is sin. We often think of sin as doing something wrong. But sin also can happen when we fail to do the right thing. If we do not stand up for the oppressed or the orphan, we are sinning. If we ignore people hurting in our church, that is sin. It is also sin if we fail to pray for others. Samuel, the prophet, told the people of Israel, “I will surely not stop praying for you, because that would be sinning against the LORD” (1 Sam. 12:23).

God gave us many commands in the Bible. We should study our Bibles to find God’s commands for us. Then we should obey God’s commands whole-heartedly and without waiting. Then our lives will please God.

How are you trying to obey God’s commands? What will make you an obedient follower of Christ?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 4. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What are some ways you can give yourself to God more? How can you get closer to God?

How can you build up and encourage one another when struggling with obedience?

What do you need to change to put God in control of everyday life? What does God want you to stop doing and what does He want you to start doing?



WITH ANTICIPATION

When facing problems in life, Christians should turn to God for help.

JAMES 5:7-9,13-20

Remember the story of David when he was anointed with oil to become the next king of Israel (1 Sam. 16)? David did not immediately become king. He suffered many hardships and hid from Saul for many years before he finally became king. But David did not give up. David knew God would keep His promise, so David turned to God for help.

Remember when the Israelites left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea? God promised to give them a special land, which they did not immediately get. When they arrived at the promised land, they had to occupy it. They didn't give up. They trusted God in every hard time.

Today Christians are waiting for Jesus to come again. He promised to return but He also said we will have problems while we wait. We must be patient even while we have great anticipation for His return. While we wait we must pray and trust God for answers. While we wait we must also work. At least part of our work is helping those who wander from Christ. As we help our wandering brothers and sisters we aid them and ourselves to finish our race well.

JAMES 5:7-9,13-20

7 Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes again. A farmer patiently waits for his valuable crop to grow from the earth and for it to receive the **autumn and spring rains**. **A 8** You, too, must be patient. Do not give up hope, because the Lord is coming soon. **9** Brothers and sisters, do not complain against each other or you will be judged guilty. And the Judge is ready to come!

13 Anyone who is having troubles should pray. Anyone who is happy should sing praises. **14** Anyone who is sick should call the church's **elders**. They should pray for and **pour oil on the person** **B** in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will heal that person. And if the person has sinned, the sins will be forgiven. **16** Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, **great things happen**. **17 Elijah** **C** was a human being just like us. He prayed that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years! **18** Then Elijah prayed again, and the rain came down from the sky, and the land produced crops again. **19** My brothers and sisters, if one of you **wanders away from the truth**, **D** and someone **helps that person come back**, **E 20** remember this: Anyone who brings a sinner back from the **wrong way** **F** will save that sinner's soul from **death** **G** and will cause many sins to be forgiven.

- a. The land of Israel has two rainy periods a year - one in the fall and one in the spring.
- b. Pouring oil on someone's head was a sign of God's special protection or care for that person. Oil was also used as a medicine.
- c. Elijah was an Old Testament prophet. For the story mentioned here, read 1 Kings 17:1,18:1-45.
- d. to go off the main road, to sin and move away from God
- e. help the sinner return back to God
- f. the way of sin, which leads away from God
- g. Death here means physical death.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Why do we need patience to wait for the Lord to come back?
2. Why should we not complain against each other?
3. How can we pray at all times?
4. What should we do if we are happy?
5. What should we do if we are sick?
6. What applications for our churches today can we make for the anointing of oil?
7. What kind of prayer does God answer?
8. What lessons do we learn about prayer from the example of Elijah?
9. What should we do for someone who wanders away from God?
10. Why is it important to turn to God in hard times?

BIBLE SKILL: *Accountability*

Accountability is helping each other do the right things. Read the verses listed below. List ways you can encourage each other and support each other.

Hebrews 10:23-25 _____

Galatians 6:2 _____

Titus 2:11-15 _____

Hebrews 4:16 _____

IN MY CONTEXT

- Christians can live expecting and knowing Jesus will come back.
- Christians should pray in faith about everything. We should expect God to answer our prayers.
- Christians should show grace to Christians who get off on the wrong road. Christians should help them get back in a right relationship with God.

Discuss as a group what it means that Jesus will come back soon. What can we do to be ready when Jesus comes back?

What does James teach us about prayer? What kind of prayer does God honor? What are the conditions for prayer that God will answer?

How can we reach out to struggling Christians and strengthen their faith?

MEMORY VERSE

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, great things happen.
- James 5:16

DAY ONE

Read James 5:7-9, identifying words and phrases that involve waiting.

One of the last lessons James taught in his letter was about the return of Christ. He used the example of a farmer to teach this lesson. A farmer patiently plants his crop and then waits for the seasonal rains. The farmer does not get impatient. He knows his crop will grow. He knows he will reap a harvest because God will provide. The patient waiting of farmers today can still inspire us to wait patiently for Jesus.

While we wait, we must remember the end goal. Our goal is for Jesus to come back and find us to be His faithful servants. We must not forget our goal. We need to be patient and continue doing good things that please God. Today we have so many things that want our attention that it becomes easy to lose our focus on God. Jesus said He can come back any time. When he returns will He find you faithfully serving Him?

If you knew Jesus was coming back today, how would your life change?

What in your life shows that you expectantly anticipate the return of Jesus?

DAY TWO

Read James 5:13-15, noting the problems James expected.

James told his readers to expect to have problems. James also told them what to do when they had problems. What were they supposed to do? Pray! Often we do not pray; instead we complain. We tell others all about our problems, but we fail to talk to God. We should go to God first. We need to ask God to help us. In James 4:2, James told his readers they did not have things because they did not ask God. God wants us to be specific in our requests to Him.

James told the Jewish Christians what to do for sick Christians. They were to anoint the sick person with oil and pray. Oil was used as medicine in those times. It was also a sign of the Holy Spirit. Using oil and prayer did not force God to heal. Anointing oil was a sign of God's special influence in that person's life. It was a sign of trusting that God could protect or heal that person in a special way.

Why is sin mentioned here? Why did James say that if the sick person had sinned God would forgive their sins, too? God may send sickness into people's lives if they have sinned or done something wrong. In such a case God uses the sickness to get their attention, thus leading to forgiveness.

What problems do you need to take to God in prayer? Why do we pray for those who are sick?

KEY DOCTRINE: *The Power of Prayer*

Prayer is talking to God. Jesus taught us how to pray and from him we learn principles of prayer. Through prayer we worship God, ask forgiveness for our sins, and help other people. Our God is a powerful God and for His own reasons He loves to answer our prayers if they are for His glory. We need to be a praying people and unleash the power of prayer.

DAY THREE

Read James 5:16, comparing different translations.

God honors or listens to a certain kind of prayer. First, prayer must be in faith. We must believe God has the power to answer our prayers. If you study stories about Jesus healing people in the New Testament, you will often notice Jesus praised their faith. Jesus was willing to help people who had faith in Him. For example, there were many blind people in Israel during Jesus' time. Why did Jesus not heal all of the blind people? They did not all come to Him in faith. God rewards people who have faith in Him.

Second, we must be clean before God. We confess sin when we truly see the wrong in it. We confess sin to God. But James knew that there is healing and repentance in sin that is confessed to a brother or a sister. Such confession can lead to healing.

We need to remember we have a great God and He does great things. No one can fully explain it but He often does great things when His people pray.

Is your heart clean before God? How can you prepare your heart for prayer?

DAY FOUR

Read James 5:17-18, noticing Elijah's actions.

James used an example from the Old Testament to demonstrate a prayer of faith. Elijah the prophet warned evil King Ahab about the consequences for his sins. Elijah was a man who knew the Scriptures. Elijah boldly told King Ahab there would be no rain. In Deuteronomy 11:16-17, God warned His people that if they turned aside and worshiped false gods, He would stop the rain so the crops would die and the people would suffer. Elijah acted on God's Word believing God and His promise. God honored Elijah's faith and stopped the rain. Later, Elijah prayed and God started the rain again.

James said Elijah "was a human being just like us." Sometimes we read these great stories in the Bible and think the people were awesome and very different from us. Not true. These people were regular people just like you and me, but they had great faith in a great God. Like Elijah, we must know God and His Word, confess our sin, and have faith in God. God can do mighty things through us if we meet His conditions. Are you willing for God to use you? Are you willing to pray in faith for others?

How does Elijah's story encourage you today?

DAY FIVE

Read James 5:19-20, highlighting the results of turning back.

James brought up the problem of people who get sidetracked from following God. A person can be saved, but somehow get off the main road of following God. A person can be trapped in sin or temptation. So James wanted Christians to watch out for each other. If they saw one of their brothers or sisters falling away from the Lord, they should help that person get back on the right track. They should help the person get right with God again.

Christians in the local church need to remember we are responsible for one another. As members of one body, when one person suffers we all suffer. If one person goes astray, we are responsible to help that person. Just like a shepherd looks for one lost sheep (Matt. 18:12), we should work to help everyone stay on track following God. James said if we save one person from the wrong path, we have saved that person from physical death.

What can you do to help your Christian brothers and sisters stay on the right track?

CONNECT AND SHARE

Think about what you have learned from James 5. Meet with one or two other members of your study group to find ways to live what you have learned.

What are some new things you can do to help more Deaf people know that Jesus could return soon? How does your anticipation for the return of Christ change your life?

Make a prayer journal with your small group. Discuss people and things you want to pray for regularly.

Discuss with your group how you can each be accountable to one another. How does your accountability to each other help everyone live godly lives?

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PLPS

- Create a group plan, adapting the group plans to fit the needs of your group.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Talk It Out to start your conversation.
- Create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 160–161.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early.
- Pray for the study and the group members.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

After the Group Study Time

- Consider the After the Session idea at the end of the group plans.
- Contact all group members, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests.
- Record insights gained about teaching, group members, and Scripture.
- Do it all again.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

- Encourage everyone on your ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily.
- Ask them. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week.”
- Tell them. Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- Show them. Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group.
- Invite them. Call on volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they use the Daily Exploration section.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

At the end of every session, you will find a section entitled Connect and Share. This section is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly, holding each other accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Allow group members to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups)
- Allow groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
- You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
- Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new group members and guests.
- As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.

Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
- Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
- Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
- Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.
- Be in a smaller group as well. You may even want to host a smaller group for guests and new group members.

TRUE GOSPEL

Galatians 1:1-10

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will have a desire to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Ask a member to study the Introduction to the Book of Galatians and summarize it for the class. Or be prepared to share the information yourself.

Ask three members to be prepared to sign the sections of verses below: Galatians 1:1-2, Galatians 1:3-5, and Galatians 1:6-10. They should also present the notes beside the text for their assigned verses.

Find Galatia on inside back cover or from adult leader pack. Show the location to members during the session.

Be prepared to summarize the story of Paul's conversion from Acts 9.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Share the story about the woman in the introduction to the session in the Personal Study Guide. She took cooking lessons from a professional chef. Ask members if they have experienced something like that. For example, sometimes people who are beginning to learn sign language from a skilled teacher will trust someone else about specific signs. They may even tell their ASL teacher he or she is wrong. **ASK:** *How do we know who to trust?*

EXPLAIN: *In today's session we will learn about Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Call for the volunteer to share the introductory information about the Book of Galatians. Show where Galatia was located on the Bible map (see inside back cover).*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Appointed by God (Galatians 1:1-2)

Direct the volunteer to sign the verses. Discuss what it means to be an apostle. **ASK:** *Does anyone remember how God called Paul to be an apostle?* Summarize the story from Acts 9 if no one remembers. Sign Acts 9:15, which is God's clear calling for Paul's work. Paul had full authority from God to tell the good news.

Paul mentioned Jesus rose from the dead. **ASK:** *Why is Jesus' resurrection important?*

2. Through His Grace (Galatians 1:3-5)

Invite the second volunteer to sign verses 3-5 and explain the notes beside the text. Write the words "grace" and "peace" on the board. Guide members to discuss the meaning of these words. Some people describe grace as unmerited favor. This means God showed His love to us even though we didn't earn it (see Romans 5:8). He offers salvation as a gift through His grace. When we accept His gift we experience His peace.

ASK: *What parts of the good news did Paul mention in these first five verses? (God the Father planned to save us long ago. Jesus died for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead.)*

3. Distorted by Some (Galatians 1:6-10)

Paul's letter began with reminders about the good news. The next section of his letter had a strong message. Call for the volunteer to sign verses 6-10 and explain the notes beside the text. **ASK:** *How can we know someone is not teaching the truth? Paul said there is one way to be saved. **ASK:** What did Paul say would happen to someone who teaches a different gospel?*

Lead the group to find Ephesians 2:8-9 in their Bibles. Sign the verses together. Explain that we can never brag about earning our salvation. We could never be good enough to save ourselves. Salvation is a free gift.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions. Close the meeting time with prayer. Ask God to help the group hold to His truth and be wise when others try to teach a different way.

Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

TRUE GRACE

Galatians 2:11-21

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will accept people that are different from themselves.

Recruit a member to be prepared to summarize the story of Peter's vision from Acts 10:1-29, 34-36 for the group meeting.

Be prepared to answer questions about the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

SHARE: *Has anyone ever said to you, "Do what I say, not what I do"? Sometimes children see their parents do something the children are not allowed to do. When the children ask about it, the parents may reply with that statement.*

When we say one thing but act differently, we act like hypocrites (we are two-faced). As Christians, we should want to live in a way that is honest and honors God. Today we will learn about ways we can honor God in our actions.

Invite the volunteer to tell the story about Peter's vision. **ASK:** *What did Peter learn about God? How did his vision change his actions? (He learned God accepts all people. See Acts 10:34-36. Peter changed by associating with people who were not Jews.)*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Confronted by Truth (Galatians 2:11-14)

Sign Galatians 2:11-14. Discuss questions 2-4 in the Explore the Text section of the Personal Study Guide. **ASK:** *We just saw the story about Peter's vision. Are you surprised by his actions in Antioch? Why or why not?*

Direct the group to find Acts 1:8 in their Bibles. **ASK:** *Where did Jesus tell the disciples to be witnesses for Him? What does this mean for us today? How can we show God's love to people who are different from us?*

2. Justified by Grace (Galatians 2:15-18)

Paul emphasized again in these verses how we become right with God. Direct the group to find Galatians 2:16 in their Bibles. Ask them to read the verse and count how many times Paul says we are made right by faith/trust in Jesus Christ (three times). Count how many times he says we are not made right by following the law (three times).

EXPLAIN: *Paul did not mean the law was not important. He mentioned in Romans 3:20 that the law shows people their sin. If we did not have the law we would not know we need a Savior. Paul also said the law is holy and good (Romans. 7:12). However, following the law does not make people right with God. There is only one way—through faith in Jesus Christ (see John 14:6).*

3. Crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:19-21)

Sign Galatians 2:19-21. Discuss questions 8 and 9 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *If Christ lives through a person, what would that person's actions look like? (Their actions would serve and honor God, they would show love to different kinds of people, they would share the good news, they would be honest in their interactions with other people, etc.)* **ASK:** *Why do Christians struggle to live like Christ? (We still struggle with our old sin nature, we allow the world to influence us, etc.)*

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context. Discuss the questions as a group. If there is time, divide the group into groups of two or three. Allow time for them to share their testimonies with each other. When they are finished, call the group together and discuss any questions they may have about sharing testimonies.

Close with prayer. Ask God for opportunities to share their testimonies with others they meet this week. Remind the group to do the daily readings this week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



TRUE LIFE

Galatians 3:1-14

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will feel confident in their salvation.

Recruit a member to be prepared to sign Genesis 15:5-6.

Recruit three volunteers to sign the three sections of Scripture for the session.

Do the Bible Skill in the personal study guide so you will have a count on each of the concepts.

Be prepared to answer any questions members might have from the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *Has anyone lied to you and you believed the lie? How did you feel when you learned the truth? Paul was upset with the Galatians because they believed the lies from the Judiazers. (You may need to remind the members who the Judiazers were.) The Galatians knew the truth and then believed lies.*

EXPLAIN: *The introduction to the session talks about false stories. We have seen this topic often in our world today. How do we know what to believe? We become frustrated. However, in relation to our spiritual lives, we do know where to find the truth—in the Word of God.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Spirit Confirms It (Galatians 3:1-5)

EXPLAIN: *Most students do not enjoy tests. But teachers must give tests. They ask questions to see what their students know. The questions also help the students to remember what they have learned. In Galatians 3, Paul asked the people several questions. He wanted the Galatians to think and remember what they knew. He wanted them to wake up and think about how the false teachers deceived them. Direct the volunteer to sign verses 1-5. Encourage the group to watch for the questions Paul asked in the verses.*

Discuss questions 1-3 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide. Lead the group to find Ephesians 1:13-14 in their Bibles. Discuss what these verses say about the Holy Spirit.

2. Abraham Believed It (Galatians 3:6-9)

It is clear that faith is the key. Invite the volunteer to sign Genesis 15:5-6. Remind the group that Abraham lived before God gave the law. His belief and faith in God pleased God. Invite the other volunteer to sign Galatians 3:6-9. Discuss questions 4 and 5 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *What did Paul mean that “the true children of Abraham are those who have faith”?* (See verse 7.)

3. The Curse Demands It (Galatians 3:10-14)

Paul was a devout Jew — he knew the Old Testament writings through and through. He understood the importance of the law. Invite the volunteer to sign verses 10-14. Sign verse 10 again. **ASK:** *Can we always obey the law?* Guide the group to find James 2:10 in their Bibles. After they have time to read the verse, discuss what it means.

Discuss what it means to be under a curse. In this passage it means a person will experience punishment. All people are under this curse because we cannot live perfectly to earn our salvation. Discuss questions 6-9 from Explore the Text. Emphasize how Jesus took the curse away from us because of His death on the cross.

IN MY CONTEXT

Lead the group to complete the Bible Skill. Call for one or two members to count how many times Paul mentioned Spirit in the verses. Direct one or two others to count the number of times Paul mentioned faith or believe, and so on. Assign each person present a word to count. After they have finished their counts, call for each person to share. **ASK:** *Why did Paul emphasize these concepts?*

Review the summary statements from In My Context. Discuss the questions as a group.

Close with prayer. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



TRUE HEIRS

Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-7

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will experience joy as children of God.

Read Galatians 3:19-22 for more explanation of the law.

On index cards write the following words with a bold marker: anger, bad temper, hurt others, evil words, lies. Pin the cards onto a sweater or shirt that you can put on over your clothes. Write the following words on cards to pin on a different sweater or shirt: mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness.

Be prepared to answer questions members might have from last week's readings.

If there is a member of your group who has adopted a child, ask them to share about their experience with the group.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Invite the member to share their experience with adoption. If no one in your group has experience with adoption, share the information from the introduction to the session in the personal study guide. It is an amazing blessing that God loves us so much He made a plan to adopt us into His family.

Explain that in Jeremiah 29:11 God assured the Israelites of His plans for them. He reminded them of His desire for them to have hope and a future. In the same way, God made a plan for us, His adopted children. He has prepared a place for us to live eternally with Him.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. An Old Guardian (Galatians 3:23-25)

Sign Galatians 3:23-25. Explain the purpose of the law. Use the information from Galatians 3:19-22. In verse 24 Paul describes the law as a guardian. A guardian shows a child the difference between right and wrong. In this case, the law showed the non-believer their need for Jesus as Savior.

Discuss questions 1-4 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide.

2. A New Community (Galatians 3:26-28)

Sign Galatians 3:26-28. Discuss questions 5-7 from Explore the text.

EXPLAIN: *All people are the same in their need for a Savior. The requirement for salvation is the same for all people. God offers salvation to all people. We are the same in His eyes. This should bring unity to the group of believers.*

EXPLAIN: *In Colossians 3:8-9 and 12-15, Paul used the picture of taking off and putting on clothes to show the change in a person's life. Put on the shirt you prepared with negative words. **EXPLAIN:** These words describe a person's possible actions and attitudes before meeting Christ. Lead the group to list other words that describe non-believer's actions or attitudes. **EXPLAIN:** Paul told believers to get rid of these things. Take off the shirt. Put on the shirt with the positive words. **EXPLAIN:** The Christian life should look different. Guide the group to think of other words to describe the Christian life.*

3. A New Position (Galatians 3:29; 4:1-7)

Sign Galatians 3:29; 4:1-7. **EXPLAIN:** *Paul encouraged the Galatians by reminding them they were no longer children or slaves. They did not need the constant guardian of the law. In God's timing, they could enjoy being a part of God's family through their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.*

Discuss questions 8-10 from Explore the Text. Allow members to share how they feel about being a part of God's family.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions.

Close in prayer, thanking God for adopting us into His family. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

TRUE FREEDOM

Galatians 4:8-20

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members.

Recruit a member to practice signing the story of the blind man in John 9:1-9. They should practice it so they can sign it without needing to look at the text.

Enlist four members to read one passage each from the Bible Skill. They should be prepared to share what they learn from the passage.

FOCUS ATTENTION

We have all heard stories about false teachers who hurt other people. One of the most famous was Jim Jones. He led a group of about 1,000 people to move to Guyana in 1978. There he convinced the people to drink cyanide, a poison. Over 900 people died. This is a terrible story but it teaches an important lesson. False teachers want people to follow them, not God. Often they want people to think of them as God. They show concern for others to trick them into following the wrong teaching.

We may not know any false teachers like Jim Jones, but we do know people who try to convince us the Bible is wrong. Some people try to tell us sin is all right. Others tell us we must follow all the laws and live perfectly or we will go to hell. How can we protect ourselves and others from the lies? We must study and understand what God teaches us through His Word. We must encourage each other.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. The Problem (Galatians 4:8-11)

Sign Galatians 4:8-11. Remind the group how in last week's session Paul told the Galatians they were not children anymore. They did not need the guardian of the law. By going back to their old ways it was like they were becoming children again. They no longer enjoyed the freedom of being

mature sons and daughters. Paul was so disappointed, he felt his time with them was wasted.

Discuss questions 1-4 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide. When discussing false teachers, be sure to emphasize some of the ways we can recognize false teachers, such as: if they teach salvation by works, if they don't recognize Jesus Christ as God, or if they teach against the Bible as the Word of God.

Invite the four members to share what they learned about false teachers from the verses in the Bible Skill.

2. The Plea (Galatians 4:12-14)

Call for the volunteer to sign the story about the blind man. **ASK:** *What did the disciples ask Jesus about the blind man?* **EXPLAIN:** *In Jesus' time people thought any physical problem meant the person was a sinner. Some people believe this today.* **ASK:** *What was Jesus' response?*

Sign Galatians 4:12-14. Notice how Paul praised the Galatians for the way they welcomed him and for their goodness to him even though he was sick.

3. The Passion (Galatians 4:15-20)

Sign Galatians 4:15-20. Discuss questions 6-9 from Explore the Text. Remind the group it is important for us to know the Bible well. We should learn about Bible doctrine and study the Baptist Faith and Message to learn the basic beliefs of Baptists. If we do these things, we can stand up for our faith.

IN MY CONTEXT

ASK: *Do you know people who turned to false teaching? Why do you think they fell away? Why might false teachers target Deaf people?* Some Deaf people might be lonely and vulnerable to false teachers. Make an effort to help them. Teach them what they need to know. Be a good friend to them.

Review the summary statements from In My Context. Discuss the questions.

Close with prayer. Ask God to keep us strong in the Word so we can recognize false teaching. Remind the group to do the daily readings this week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

TRUE FRUIT

Galatians 5:13-26

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will desire the fruit of the Spirit.

Recruit a member to prepare to sign the story from Mark 12:28-30. They should practice so they can sign it without looking at the text.

Be prepared to answer questions about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *We have been studying Paul's message to the Galatians with his emphasis on God's gift of salvation through His grace. Some people think that means we can sin as we want because we live under grace. Is this right? NO! The law cannot save anyone, but as believers we do have laws and commands we should desire to obey. Call on the volunteer to sign the story from Mark 12:28-30. **EXPLAIN:** If we love God and others, we will honor the law.*

Direct the group to find Galatians 5:6 in their Bibles. **ASK:** *What is most important? Faith. And how do we show our faith? (Through love.)* Today we will learn more about what the life of the believer should look like.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Freed (Galatians 5:13-15)

Invite a volunteer to sign Galatians 5:13-15. **EXPLAIN:** *Apparently the Galatians were acting with a critical spirit toward each other. This can happen when we focus on the law. We can feel we are better than others. We might look down on people who do not act like we do. Paul wanted the believers to follow the law of love. **ASK:** What does love look like?* Invite the group to find 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 in their Bibles. Lead the group to help you list the characteristics of love on the board.

Discuss questions 3 and 4 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide.

2. Controlled (Galatians 5:16-18)

Invite a volunteer to sign Galatians 5:16-18. Remind members that as believers we have the Holy Spirit living in us. **ASK:** *How does the Holy Spirit help us?* Allow for discussion. Paul reminded us to live by the Spirit. This means we should pay attention to how the Spirit leads us. Discuss question 5 from Explore the Text.

3. Abandoned (Galatians 5:19-21)

Invite a volunteer to sign Galatians 5:19-21. Discuss questions 6 and 7 from Explore the Text. Paul does not mean believers can lose their salvation. We all fall into sin at times. However, the Holy Spirit will convict us of sin. Believers will not be comfortable with a habit of sin. We need to ask for forgiveness (see 1 John 1:9). Then we will again enjoy full fellowship with God.

4. Produced (Galatians 5:22-26)

ASK: *When we allow the Spirit to control our lives, what will others see in us?* Sign Galatians 5:22-26. Discuss questions 8 and 9 from Explore the Text. Take time to discuss what each part of the fruit of the Spirit means. We already discussed what love is like. Joy is an inner happiness even during difficult times. **ASK:** *How can believers exhibit these in difficult times?* Peace is having a good relationship with others, the opposite of conflict. Patience is putting up with others, even when they are difficult to be around. Kindness is being thoughtful to others, doing nice things. Goodness is having a generous spirit toward others. Faithfulness is acting in a way so others know they can trust us and can depend on us. Gentleness is showing humility, and self-control means to be able to win over our sinful desires.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions at the end.

Close in prayer, asking God to help us as a group to develop a stronger expression of the fruit of the Spirit. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



TRUE COMPASSION

Galatians 6:1-10, 14-15

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will grow in compassion toward others.

This session could be an opportunity to discuss tithing/giving in relation to being stewards. Recruit a member to share their experience with tithing.

Be prepared to answer questions about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

The title of the session for today is True Compassion. **ASK:** *What is compassion?* Allow for discussion. Use some examples from the introduction to the session in the personal study guide. Guide the group to share examples of compassion they have seen.

SHARE: *When people rush to help those who experience disasters, why do they go? Do they want praise? Typically they go because they care about others. They do not expect a reward.*

In today's session, Paul urged believers to express compassion in three ways. We are to be guards, stewards, and proclaimers. We will look at each of these roles and the motive for our actions.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Guards (Galatians 6:1-5)

The first role Paul encouraged believers to take on is that of a guard. We need to watch out for each other and help each other live a godly life. Sign Galatians 6:1-5. Discuss questions 1-5 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide. In relation to questions 2 and 3, remind the group that our attitude is important. We must always remember we are sinners too.

In relation to question 4, remind the group of the discussion from last week and Jesus' answer about the greatest commandment. In relation to question 5, when we compare ourselves to others, we may think we are better than them. We will have an arrogant attitude. Or we may think we are terrible in comparison to another person. We may feel sad or depressed because we are not like them. But we are responsible for our own actions. We should not compare ourselves with others. We should have a goal to become more like Christ and love each other.

2. Stewards (Galatians 6:6-10)

The second role Paul would have believers take on is that of a steward. A steward is a person who cares for another person's things. As believers, we should understand that everything we have truly belongs to God: our time, our talents, our things, our money. Invite the volunteer to give their testimony about tithing/giving.

Sign Galatians 6:6-10. Discuss questions 6-8. **EXPLAIN:** *Some Christians believe when they faithfully tithe, God helps them manage the money they have left better. When they give time to do things God wants them to do, He helps them manage the time they have left better. Invite volunteers to share their experiences with this concept.*

3. Proclaimers (Galatians 6:14-15)

The third role Paul encouraged believers to take on is that of a proclaimer. **ASK:** *What should we proclaim?* Sign verses 13-15. Our session focuses on verses 14-15, but verse 13 helps us understand what kinds of things Paul did not want to boast about. He did not want to brag about following the law, or getting others to follow the law, like the Judaizers. Discuss questions 9 and 10 from Explore the Text.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context. Discuss the questions.

Direct the group to sign Galatians 6:9 together as a reminder to keep on and not give up.

Close with prayer. Ask God to help us guard each other, be good stewards, and proclaim the good news.

Encourage the group to complete the Bible Skill in addition to the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



WITH PERSEVERANCE

James 1:2-15

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will gain strength from God to continue faithfully in Him.

Enlist a member to study the Introduction to the Book of James and summarize it for the class.

Be prepared to answer questions about the readings and Bible Skill from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Invite the volunteer to share the information from the Introduction to the Book of James.

EXPLAIN: *The introduction to our session talks about how we face difficult times in our world today. **ASK:** How can we prepare for battle? Why is it important for us to grow and become mature in our faith? We must be ready for troubles and, as James told his readers, we can rejoice in our troubles.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Joy over Progress (James 1:2-4)

James wrote this letter to Jewish Christians. Many had moved far away from Israel because of persecution. **ASK:** *What kinds of troubles do you think they had?* Allow for discussion.

Sign James 1:2-4. Discuss questions 1 and 2 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide. Direct the group to find and read Romans 8:28 in their Bibles. Encourage the group to share experiences they have had where troubles led to something good or made them stronger.

2. Confidence in Him (James 1:5-8)

ASK: *Have you ever asked someone a question and they looked at you like you should know better? They act like you are silly for asking? How do you think God*

feels when we ask Him? Direct a volunteer to sign James 1:5-8. **EXPLAIN:** God will give us wisdom when we ask, and He doesn't criticize us for asking!

Discuss questions 3 and 4 from Explore the Text. **EXPLAIN:** In Ephesians 4:14, Paul uses the picture of waves blowing back and forth to represent babies in faith who are "influenced by every new teaching." James uses the same picture to show a person who doubts God. It is as if a person says to God, "Please give me wisdom, but You probably won't do it." Why would God want to answer that person?

3. Focus on the Crown (James 1:9-12)

Sign James 1:9-12. Discuss question 5 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** Why did James compare the rich to a flower that will die? Perhaps it was a reminder that riches do not last. Can a rich person, or any person, take their money and things with them when they die? Of course not. We need to have the right view of our possessions. They belong to God. They will not last, but we will have eternal life.

Discuss questions 6 and 7 from Explore the Text.

4. Guard Against Sin (James 1:13-15)

EXPLAIN: In the first part of James 1, James talked about troubles from the world. He encouraged believers to remain joyful through the troubles because they would grow in the process. In James 1:13-15, James addressed temptation—trouble from within. Direct a volunteer to sign James 1:13-15. Discuss question 8 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** Who can we blame for our temptations?

Divide the group into smaller groups of 2 or 3. Lead them to work through the Bible Skill together. After they are finished, reassemble the group so they can share what they learned about temptation.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions.

Close with prayer. Ask God for wisdom to face the troubles in our world. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



WITH OBEDIENCE

James 1:19-27; 2:1-4

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will develop a desire to obey God.

Enlist a member to be prepared to sign James 1:22-25.

Be prepared to share your experience of feelings after you study the Bible and obey it.

Be ready to answer questions about the daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *Have you ever become angry at someone and later realized you didn't know the whole story? That person didn't do what you thought. Allow volunteers to share their experiences.*

EXPLAIN: *In today's session we will learn some helpful information from James to help us with these kinds of problems.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Heeding (James 1:19-21)

Sign James 1:19-21. Discuss questions 1 and 2. When discussing anger someone may ask about when Jesus was angry at the temple. Or they may ask about God's anger. We need to remember God and Jesus express a righteous anger. When Jesus cleared the temple, it was because people were using the temple in the wrong way.

Most of the time we become angry because we don't get our way. Maybe someone hurts our feelings. Or we get angry because of the terrible things happening in the world. When we become angry it is important for us to ask God for wisdom in dealing with our anger.

Discuss question 3 from Explore the Text. **ASK:** *How is God's Word planted in our hearts?*

2. Doing (James 1:22-25)

EXPRESS: *Do you know anyone who knows information from the Bible, but they do not obey it? James talked about people who do this. Invite a volunteer to sign James 1:22-25. Discuss questions 4-7 from Explore the Text.*

Invite the group to share their experiences with studying the Bible or obeying the Bible. James said both of these things will make us happy or blessed. Share your experience.

3. Loving (James 1:26-27; 2:1-4)

James explains more ways we can express our faith. Sign James 1:26-27; 2:1-4. James had strong words to say about people who say wrong things.

ASK: *Why is our communication so important? We must remember the things we say or sign shows what is in our hearts. Sometimes we may say something mean and quickly say, “I was just kidding.” But things we say can hurt others. We will learn more about this in chapter 3.*

Discuss questions 8-10 from Explore the Text. **EXPLAIN:** *James clearly taught we should not think some people are more important than others. This is also called showing favoritism. The example James used was believers who treated rich people better than they treated poor people. We may not have this problem in our churches, but we may show favoritism in other ways. We sometimes prefer a person who has beautiful singing skills, or a person who tells fun stories. We may treat a person better if we know they will help us later. Ask members if they can think of other examples of favoritism.*

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions. Encourage the group to do the Bible Skill in addition to the daily readings this week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

Close in prayer. Ask God to help us become good examples of Christian living to our world.



WITH WORKS

James 2:14-26

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray their lives will show their faith through works.

Enlist a member to be prepared to sign the story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis 22:1-14.

Be prepared to answer questions members might have about the Bible Skill and daily readings from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Invite the volunteer to sign the story of Abraham and Isaac. After the story, **ASK:** *Which came first, Abraham's faith or his action of willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac? Why does it matter?*

Some people feel Paul's letter to the Galatians and James's letter are in conflict with each other. Paul emphasized salvation by grace and James emphasized works. They did emphasize different things, but both agreed that salvation is by faith alone. And both agreed that true faith will express itself in godly action.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Dead Faith (James 2:14-17)

Invite a volunteer to sign James 2:14-17. **ASK:** *What kind of faith did James mean in verse 14? He meant just a mental acceptance of some truths about God. Faith that does not express itself in good works is not a true saving faith. The person who does nothing has not put true faith in Christ for salvation. ASK: What example did James use of a useless faith? It is like doing nothing for a person in need.*

Discuss questions 1-3 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide.

2. Working Faith (James 2:18-19)

Invite another volunteer to sign James 2:18-19. Again James used an example of a faith that was not a saving faith. The demons believe in God. They have accepted some truths about Him. They are even afraid of Him, but they do not trust in Him for salvation. When we put faith in Christ for salvation, He becomes our Lord. Our lives will show evidence of the faith we have in Him.

Invite the group to find Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 3:8 in their Bibles. Sign these verses and discuss them. These verses remind us how God wants our lives to look. We should honor Him and show our faith through action.

Discuss questions 4-6 from Explore the Text.

3. Saving Faith (James 2:20-26)

Invite another volunteer to sign James 2:20-26. Remind members about the story of Abraham at the beginning of the session. His faith came first. Lead the group to find Genesis 15:6 in their Bibles. This verse is after God made His promise to Abraham. It is quoted in James 2:23. Abraham put his faith in God. Later he proved his faith by his willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

Discuss questions 7-10 from Explore the Text. Allow the group members to share stories about people who showed their faith through their actions. The stories can be from the Bible or they can be about people they know.

Lead the group to list actions we can do to show our faith. Write them on the board as they share ideas.

IN MY CONTEXT

Divide the group into four smaller groups. Give each group one of the passages from the Bible Skill. Direct each group to study their passage to find how the person showed faith. When they are finished, reassemble and invite a representative from each group to share what they discover.

Review the summary statements from In My Context. Discuss the questions. Close in prayer, asking God to help us show our faith through our actions. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.



WITH CONTROL

James 3:1-12

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will understand the importance of our communication.

Enlist three volunteers to be prepared to sign the three sections of Scripture for today's session.

Be prepared to discuss answers to questions about the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

ASK: *How do people communicate?* Answers could include: through sign language, talking, facial expression, or text/email. **EXPLAIN:** *In today's session we will discuss the third chapter of James. In it James had much to say about the tongue. As you read the verses, you can think of all the ways we discussed that communication happens—not just through talking.*

For example, suppose in a group one person shares his or her feelings. Another person in the group rolls his eyes and shakes his head. He just communicated how he feels about that person. Is that a kind way to react? Is it helpful? No! And the negative communication might influence others to have a negative feeling about the person sharing. We need to remember all forms of communication whenever we see James mention tongue.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. When Teaching the Truth (James 3:1-2)

Invite the first volunteer to sign James 3:1. Discuss question 1 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide. **EXPLAIN:** *In Matthew 23 Jesus criticized the Jewish religious leaders because they taught about the law and how to live righteously, but they did not live what they taught. They loved the attention they got because they were leaders, but their hearts were not right.*

Teachers must be careful to live right in the same way they teach others. Their words and their lives influence others. The writer of Hebrews said, “Remember your leaders who taught God’s message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith” (Hebr. 13:7).

Invite the volunteer to sign James 3:2. **ASK:** *Why did James say this? He meant the tongue, our communication, is difficult to control. If we can control our communication, we will be able to control our actions too.*

2. When Influencing Others (James 3:3-6)

ASK: *Do any of you have experience with boats? (If some do, follow up with the next question.) How do you control the boat? Allow for explanation and discussion.*

ASK: *Do any of you have experience riding horses? (If some do, follow up with the next question.) How do you control the horse? Allow for explanation and discussion.*

EXPLAIN: *Watch as _____ signs the next verses. See what James said about horses, boats, and tongues. Direct the second volunteer to sign James 3:3-6. Discuss question 5 from Explore the Text. Also **ASK:** How does our communication influence our own lives?*

3. When Offering Praise (James 3:7-12)

Invite the third volunteer to sign James 3:7-12. **EXPLAIN:** *James gave some examples of things that are not natural, i.e. fresh water and bad water coming out of the same spring. This is as unnatural as Christians communicating in conflicting ways. Discuss questions 6-10 from Explore the Text.*

IN MY CONTEXT

Lead the group to complete the Bible Skill to learn more about how we should or should not communicate with others.

Review the summary statements from In My Context and discuss the questions.

Close with prayer, asking God to help us communicate in a way that pleases Him. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

WITH SUBMISSION

James 4:6-17

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will show grace to each other.

Enlist a member to study the story of the master and servant from Matthew 18:23-35 and be prepared to summarize it for the group.

Be prepared to discuss any questions members may have from the daily readings for last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

Share the story from the introduction to the session in the personal study guide. Sign the first verse of the song 'Amazing Grace' together.

ASK: *How did you feel the first time you experienced God's forgiveness and grace? Or how did you feel when a person forgave you for a wrong you did?*

In today's session we will learn how we should behave because of God's grace shown to us.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Through Humility (James 4:6-10)

Lead the group to find and read 1 Peter 5:5-6 in their Bibles. **EXPLAIN:** *You may know God is against proud people. James told the people how to get rid of their pride. Watch as I sign the passage from James. There are ten commands in the verses. We will try to list them after.*

Sign James 4:6-10. **ASK:** *What commands did you notice? Write them on the board as the group lists them. (They include: Give yourselves to God, stand against the devil (resist), come near to God, clean sin out of your lives, make your thinking pure, be sad, cry, weep, change your laughter into crying, change your joy into sadness, humble yourself.)* **ASK:** *Does "humble yourself" summarize all the other actions?*

Discuss questions 1-6 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide.

2. Through Grace (James 4:11-12)

Sign James 4:11-12. **ASK:** *What does it mean to judge others? One way we can sign this concept is 'look up and down at.'* This communicates the idea of setting ourselves above another person. We think that person has done something wrong or unwise. Do we forget about our own mistakes? Invite the volunteer to summarize the story of the master and servant.

ASK: *How much did God forgive us? How much should we forgive others? How can we show God's grace to others? Discuss questions 7-8 from Explore the Text.*

3. Through Submission (James 4:13-16)

ASK: *In the next passage we will see another way people show pride. Paul talks about people who brag. Do you remember what Paul said about bragging? What did Paul brag about? (See 2 Corinthians 11:16-30.)*

Sign James 4:13-16. **ASK:** *In the verses, James talked about people who made plans. Is it wrong to make plans? What did these people do wrong? Discuss questions 9-10 from Explore the Text. Remind the group that it is not wrong to make plans. It is wise to make plans. But as believers we should seek God's leadership and be ready to change our plans to fit His plans.*

4. Through Obedience (James 4:17)

EXPLAIN: *Many people think sin is doing wrong things or doing things against God's plan. This is true. But there is more. Watch as I sign verse 17 to see another definition of sin. Sign James 4:17. ASK:* *What are some things you know God wants Christians to do? List these as they answer. ASK:* *Do we do all these things? If we don't, we need to confess to God and ask for His forgiveness. Ask God for help and strength to obey Him better.*

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions.

Close with prayer. Ask God to help us understand how to be humble before Him. Remind members to do the daily readings and Bible Skill for the week, and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

WITH ANTICIPATION

James 5:7-9,13-20

PLAN AHEAD

Pray for group members. Pray they will live everyday as if Jesus could return today.

Recruit a member to be ready to sign Hebrews 11:13-16 for the group.

Be ready to answer any questions members might have from the daily readings and the Bible Skill from last week.

FOCUS ATTENTION

EXPLAIN: *As children, it felt like our next birthday (or Christmas) would never come. Time passed so slowly. We wanted the celebrations to come quickly. Do you remember that feeling? Sometimes we feel that way about God's promises. We want them to happen right now.*

Discuss how David and the Israelites waited on God's promises from the introduction to the session in the personal study guide. Remind members God's timing is not the same as ours. All His plans will happen at the right time, when all is ready.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Patience (James 5:7-9)

The Jewish believers experienced various troubles in their new homes. Remember, they had moved far from Jerusalem. Some experienced oppression from rich people. Sign James 5:7-9. James encouraged the believers with the promise of Christ's return. Christians today are encouraged with this promise as well. We live faithfully knowing Jesus could come back at any time.

People in the Old Testament lived in faith waiting for Jesus to come. The writer of Hebrews lists some of the faithful people. Invite the volunteer to sign Hebrews 11:13-16. Even though these people of faith did not see the promise fulfilled, they lived with faith in God. In the same way, we

can live a life of faith in God whether we see Jesus return or meet Him when we die. Discuss questions 1 and 2 from Explore the Text in the personal study guide.

2. Prayer (James 5:13-18)

Sign James 5:13-18. Discuss questions 3-8 from Explore the Text. It is clear from this passage that prayer is an important part of the believer's life. Direct half of the group to find 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and the other half to find Philippians 4:6. Lead the group to determine how these verses help explain what James was calling on his readers to do.

3. Protecting (James 5:19-20)

Again James encouraged believers to care for each other. Some of the people who left Jerusalem also wandered away from the truth. They may have been discouraged by their troubles. Maybe they felt others judged them. Maybe they were tempted into sin. Whatever the reason, James had something to say about this. Sign James 5:19-20.

ASK: *What did James mean in verse 20?* It is possible the one who wandered from the truth was never a true believer. If this was the case, the one who brought them back would be helping to save him from spiritual death. It is also possible (most Bible commentaries interpret the passage this way) the one who wandered was a true believer but strayed from God. If this was the case, the one bringing him back would help save him from physical death for much sin can lead to death. Either way, when one comes to Christ much future sin will never happen.

ASK: *What does it mean to be accountable to someone? How can we be accountable to each other?* Create four smaller groups. Assign each group one of the verses in the Bible Skill. Direct them to review the assigned passage and review the Bible Skill activity. After they have had time to discuss, bring the larger group back together. Ask each group to share what they learned with the whole group.

IN MY CONTEXT

Review the summary statements from In My Context in the personal study guide. Discuss the questions and ideas.

Close in prayer. Remind the group to do the daily readings for the week and connect with someone for Connect and Share.

LEADER **PACK**

PACK ITEM 1 *Map: The First Missionary Journey of Paul*

Sessions 1-13 Use the map on page 155 or locate a map in a Bible atlas that shows the first missionary journey of Paul.

PACK ITEM 2 *Outlines of Galatians; James*

Sessions 1-13 Refer to the outline printed on page 12.

PACK ITEM 3 *Poster: Fruit of the Spirit*

Sessions 6-7 Create a poster that displays Galatians 5:22-23a.

PACK ITEM 4 *Poster: Doctrine of Salvation*

Sessions 1,3,4,13 Create a poster or record on the board the opening paragraph of the doctrine of salvation, found in section “IV. Salvation” of The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message © Southern Baptist Convention. Available online at www.sbc.net.

PACK ITEM 5 *Poster: Pairs in Galatians and James*

Sessions 2,4,5,6,9 Create a chart that lists these comparisons:

Galatians

The gospel vs. false gospels; Law vs. freedom; Law vs. faith; Sons and heirs; Hagar vs. Sarah; Works vs. grace; Slave vs. free; Spirit vs. flesh; Jerusalem above vs. Jerusalem below

James

Trials vs. temptations; Hearing vs. doing; Law vs. love; Faith and works; Wisdom from below vs. wisdom from above; Proud vs. humble; Our will vs. God’s will

PACK ITEM 6 *Key Verse: Galatians 2:16*

Sessions 2-3 Display Galatians 2:16 on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper.

PACK ITEM 7 *Handout: Galatians; James Time Line*

Session 8 Locate a study Bible with a time line of people and events in Galatians and James (from 900 BC–AD 330). Use it as a reference.

PACK ITEM 8 *Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*

Sessions 1,4,6,8,11 Make a list of these suggested memory verses to distribute to your group:

Galatians 1:8; Galatians 2:19b-20; Galatians 3:11; Galatians 4:7; Galatians 4:31; Galatians 5:22-23; Galatians 6:9; James 1:2-3; James 1:22; James 2:17; James 3:1; James 4:17; James 5:16

PACK ITEM 9 *Handout: Doctrine of Salvation*

Sessions 1,3,6,13 Create a poster or make copies of a print out of the doctrine of salvation, found in section “IV. Salvation” of The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message © Southern Baptist Convention. Available online at www.sbc.net.

PACK ITEM 10 *Handout: The Law in the New Testament*

Session 3 Use a Bible dictionary to create a handout that explains the role of the law in the New Testament. Include Matthew 5:17-22,27-28; Luke 16:16; Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:10-13,24; 5:13-16; and Ephesians 2:8-9.

PACK ITEM 11

Handout: Opponents of Paul

Session 5 Use a Bible handbook or dictionary to list the opponents of Paul and their charges against him, using Galatians 1:6-8 to support your findings.

PACK ITEM 12 *Handout: James, Jesus’ Half-Brother*

Sessions 8,10 Use a Bible dictionary or commentary to provide background on the life of James, Jesus’ half-brother. Note his progression from an unbeliever to a believer in action.

PACK ITEM 13 *Handout: Analogies in James*

Sessions 8,11 Create a chart that includes the definition of *analogy* and the following subtitles and corresponding Scriptures:

- Agriculture (Jas. 1:10-11; 3:12; 5:7-8)
- Nature (Jas. 3:3,5,7-8,11-12)
- Socioeconomics (Jas. 2:6; 4:13-14; 5:3-4,9)
- Everyday Life (Jas. 1:15; 2:26; 5:2)

The First Missionary Journey of Paul



Galatians; James

Together, Galatians and James confirm two great truths of salvation: we are saved by grace through faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. Galatians emphasizes salvation by faith apart from works. James emphasizes works as evidence of faith. While some see a contradiction between the two books, a closer look reveals the views of Paul and James to be complementary. Examining salvation from different vantage points, Paul spoke to those trying to obtain salvation by works and James wrote to those who claimed to be saved but with no visible evidence in their lives. Today, believers and unbelievers continue to struggle with these same issues. Thankfully, Paul and James tackled them head-on. Get ready for an exciting ride through two of the most dynamic books in the entire Bible.



Let the Word dwell in you.

The Promise of a

18 But with thee
enant; and *thou sh
thou, and thy sons, an
wives with thee.

19 And of every living
of every sort shalt thou
keep *them* alive with
and female.

20 Of fowls after their
ter their kind, of every
earth after his kind,
come unto thee, to ke

here, and its meaning is
tions include "roof" or "t
then the text probably in
inches over the sides of
dow," then it refers to an
four sides of the boat fr

6:17 Only after He com
did God tell him why it w
a flood—a term used onl
all-destroying flood in No
earth shall die. The bibli
in Genesis 6–8 most nat
covered the entire globe.
this (2 Pet. 2:5, 3:6). That
dominant Christian unde
remains so today. Belie
explain the flood's impac
also tackle questions su
quired to flood the entir
preflood geography, so
have needed four times
the flood to cover the b
in this light some defen
gered that pre-flood ge
graphy. Specifically, the
was flatter in the preflo
to flood and that the viol
geographical and geolog
ical approach suggestin
ity is largely the same. I
greater quantity of water
lost by an unknown mec
was greatly diminished af

6:18 The term *covenant* i
ment between two partic
trary.

6:19 God's preservation
not support billions of a
male and one female on
preserving

6:20 The word *male* is