

30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ

6-Session Group Study Guide

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Introduction

30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ was written to help you walk through Paul's letter to the Galatians one passage at a time. This study guide takes that journey one step further by helping you study and discuss those truths with others.

The devotional book and study guide are designed to work together. The book provides daily Bible reading, explanation, reflection, and personal application. This guide does not repeat all of that material. Instead, it brings several days together around the major themes of Galatians, helping you return to the biblical text, discuss what you have learned, and put it into practice.

Galatians naturally divides into three major sections:

Galatians 1–2: Personal

Paul defends his apostleship and the divine origin of the gospel.

Galatians 3–4: Doctrinal

Paul explains and defends justification by grace through faith rather than works of the law.

Galatians 5–6: Practical

Paul shows us what gospel freedom looks like as we walk by the Spirit and live out our faith.

This study guide follows that same general movement through six group sessions. Each session is designed for approximately 45 minutes of Bible study and discussion within a one-hour gathering. It can be used in a Sunday School class, small group, home Bible study, discipleship group, or simply with a few friends. You can also work through it individually.

How to Use This Study Guide

Before You Meet

The best group discussion begins before the group gathers. This six-week study follows the thirty-day devotional at a pace of four to six devotional readings each week. Read the assigned passages from Galatians and the corresponding days from *30 Days to Galatians* before each session.

You do not need to remember everything you read. Simply note a verse from Galatians and a statement from the devotional that especially spoke to you. Then bring your Bible, devotional book, and study guide and come ready to open God's word, participate honestly, listen to others, and allow the Holy Spirit to apply His truth to your life.

What to Expect in Each Session

Each session follows the same simple pattern, keeping the focus on Scripture, conversation, and application.

Big Idea

Each session begins with one central truth that ties the study together.

Key Verse

A key verse highlights an important truth from the section. Rather than reading every verse aloud during the meeting, selected passages will be read and discussed together. Participants should read the entire assigned Bible passage beforehand.

Getting Started

A brief introduction connects the session with the assigned Scripture and devotional readings. An opening question gets the conversation started and prepares the group to open the Word.

Open the Word

This is the heart of each session. We will focus on several key passages, consider what Paul is teaching, and discuss how those truths apply to our lives.

Each section follows a simple rhythm:

Read the Word → Understand the Truth → Discuss It → Connect It to the Book

The questions are designed to encourage meaningful conversation rather than simply produce the “right answer.” Some focus on understanding the passage, while others ask us to examine our own thinking and spiritual lives.

You may not get to every question, and that is okay. The goal is not to finish the page. The goal is to understand God's word and allow it to change us.

From the Book

Each “Open the Word” section includes a “From the Book” question connecting the discussion to something you encountered in *30 Days to Galatians*. You may revisit an illustration, application, or important truth and consider it together.

This is where personal reading becomes group conversation.

Bringing It Together

After working through the major passages, we will step back and summarize what we have discovered. A reflection question then asks the practical question: “What does all of this mean for me?”

Faith in Action

Galatians was never intended merely to give us more information. The gospel changes the way we live.

Each session offers several practical actions drawn from the biblical text and the “Faith in Action” sections of the devotional. Choose at least one and intentionally put it into practice during the coming week.

The goal is simple: Don't just learn the truth. Live it.

Closing Question and Prayer

Each session ends by identifying something God has shown us that we need to remember or practice. Then we pray, asking God to move His truth from our heads to our hearts and into our everyday lives.

True freedom is not found simply in knowing more about grace. It is found in standing firm in grace, walking by the Spirit, and living in the freedom Christ has already purchased for us.

Above all, remember why we are studying Galatians. We are not simply trying to know this letter better. We need the gospel Paul defended. We need grace, freedom from performance-based religion, confidence in what Christ has accomplished for us, and the Holy Spirit to teach us how to live free. So bring your Bible, bring your book, bring your questions, and let's walk through Galatians together!

A Word to Group Leaders

You do not need to teach another sermon or cover every question. The devotional has already provided much of the explanation participants need. Your role is to keep the group anchored in Scripture, encourage meaningful discussion, clarify when necessary, and help move the conversation toward application.

Use the suggested times as a guide rather than a stopwatch. Give meaningful conversation room to develop but keep the group moving so there is time for “Faith in Action” and prayer.

SESSION 1 – The Gospel Worth Defending

Where did this gospel come from, and why must we guard it?

Galatians 1:1–24

Companion Reading: Days 1–6 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

The gospel is God's message of grace, revealed through Jesus Christ, powerful enough to transform a life, and worth defending.

Key Verse

“For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel (Gal 1:11).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 1 and Days 1–6 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

Paul wastes no time in Galatians. The gospel is being distorted, his authority is being challenged, and believers he loves are drifting from grace. So, he begins by defending the gospel and making it clear where his message came from.

In Days 1–6, we saw that there is only one gospel, it comes from Christ, and it has the power to transform a life. Paul wants the Galatians, and us, to know the gospel clearly and stand firm in it.

Opening Question: When you hear the word “gospel,” how would you explain it to someone in one or two sentences?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. The gospel is about what Christ has done.

Read Aloud: Galatians 1:3–5

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins... (Gal 1:3-4).”

Paul begins Galatians with grace because grace is at the heart of the gospel. Jesus “*gave Himself for our sins.*” Salvation begins with what Christ has done, not what we do.

The book repeatedly makes this distinction: Legalism trusts human performance to gain God's acceptance, while the gospel rests in Christ's finished work.

Discuss:

1. What do Galatians 1:3–5 tell us about what Christ has done for us, and how is that different from trying to earn God's acceptance?
2. Why are we sometimes tempted to turn good things like church attendance, Bible reading, baptism, giving, or morality into spiritual scorecards?

From the Book: Think back to Day 1, “*Not So Fast, My Friend.*” What stood out to you about the simplicity of salvation by grace?

2. There is only one gospel.

Read Aloud: Galatians 1:6–12

Paul is astonished that the Galatians are turning toward “*a different gospel,*” then immediately clarifies that there really is **no other gospel**.

The Judaizers were Jewish teachers who were pressuring Gentile believers to follow the Mosaic Law, including circumcision. They were not necessarily rejecting Jesus. Their message was more subtle—Jesus plus something else. Paul says that once we add anything to faith in Christ as a requirement for being made right with God, we have distorted the gospel.

He then explains why his message carries authority: “*I have received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ* (Gal 1:12).” The gospel did not originate with Paul. It came from Christ.

Discuss:

3. Why is “Jesus plus something” so attractive to us? What are some things people might subtly add to Christ as requirements for being truly accepted by God?
4. Day 4 was titled “*Consider the Source.*” What voices most strongly influence the way Christians think today, and how can we test those voices against God's word?

From the Book: In Day 2, “*The One and Only*,” we considered some of the ways legalism still shows up in the church today. Which example stood out to you most, and why?

3. The gospel changes people.**Read Aloud: Galatians 1:13–16, 23–24**

One powerful evidence of the gospel's transforming power was Paul's own life. He had persecuted the church and tried to destroy it. Then God intervened, and the persecutor became the preacher. By the end of the chapter, people were saying: “*He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy* (Gal 1:23).” And the result? “*They glorified God because of me* (Gal 1:24).”

Discuss:

5. What does Paul's life teach us about the difference between religious performance and genuine spiritual transformation?
6. Your testimony may not be as dramatic as Paul's, but what difference has Christ made in your life that others should be able to see?

From the Book: Day 5 emphasizes that Paul's transformation could only be explained by grace. Have you seen that kind of transformation in someone you know? What did it show you about the power of the gospel?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 1 gives us four simple truths:

1. **The gospel comes from God** - We do not invent it.
2. **The gospel centers on Christ** - We do not earn it.
3. **The gospel transforms lives** - We are evidence of it.
4. **The gospel is worth defending** - We must not distort it.

Paul's life had moved from legalism to grace and from persecuting Christ to preaching Christ. God even used seasons of preparation to reshape Paul's thinking and prepare him for what came next. The gospel he defended was the same gospel that had transformed his own life.

Reflection: Looking back over Galatians 1 and Days 1–6, which of these four truths do you most need to hold onto right now, and why?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose one of these actions:

- **Rest in grace.** Identify one area where you tend to measure God's acceptance by your performance. When that temptation comes, remind yourself: *Jesus did for me what I could never do for myself.*
- **Examine your influences.** Pay attention to the sermons, podcasts, books, social media, and other voices shaping your spiritual thinking. Ask: *Does this point me toward Christ and His finished work, or toward myself and my performance?*
- **Tell your story.** Write your testimony in three simple parts: my life before Christ; how I came to Christ; and how Christ has changed my life.

Closing Question: Earlier you underlined one verse from Galatians 1 that especially spoke to you. What truth do you need to remember and practice this week?

Prayer Focus: Thank God for the gospel of grace. Ask Him to protect the group from false teaching, free each person from performance-driven Christianity, and give everyone courage to live and speak the gospel faithfully.

SESSION 2 – When Grace is on the Line

How are sinners made right with God, and what happens when our lives contradict grace?

Galatians 2:1–21

Companion Reading: Days 7–10 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

We are justified, or declared righteous before God, through faith in Christ, not by works of the law. Because the gospel of grace is true, we must stand firm in it, live consistently with it, and refuse to rebuild what Christ has already torn down.

Key Verse

“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:16).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 2 and Days 7–10 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

Galatians 1 established that Paul's gospel came from Christ. Now in chapter 2, the issue becomes even more practical: Will the church actually stand on that gospel when grace is challenged?

In Days 7–10, we see Paul defend the gospel, confront Peter when his behavior contradicts it, and bring us to the heart of the matter: We are justified through faith in Christ, not by works of the law. It is one thing to say we believe in grace. It is another thing to stand on it and live consistently with it.

Opening Question: Why do you think it is sometimes easier to believe in grace than it is to consistently live by grace?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. Grace is worth standing for.

Read Aloud: Galatians 2:3–5, 9–10

Titus was a Gentile believer, and the issue was whether he needed to be circumcised according to Jewish law. Some were teaching that Gentile believers needed to keep the requirements of the Mosaic Law in addition to faith in Christ. In other words, they were saying that faith in Jesus was not enough. They were saying that Titus also needed to take on this requirement of the law in order to be fully accepted by God. Paul understood that something much bigger than a religious practice was at stake. **The gospel itself was on the line.** If Titus had to take on the requirements of the Jewish law in order to be fully accepted by God, then faith in Christ was not enough.

That is why Paul says: *“To them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you (Gal 2:5).”*

Paul was willing to accommodate personal preferences, but he would not compromise the gospel. The Jerusalem leaders ultimately affirmed Paul's ministry among the Gentiles. Titus did not need Jesus plus circumcision. **Christ was enough.**

Discuss:

1. Why was the issue of Titus's circumcision more than just a disagreement over a religious practice? How can we know when something is a preference and when it becomes a gospel issue?
2. Churches have traditions, expectations, and preferences that may be good without being requirements for salvation. How can we keep good things from becoming additions to grace?

From the Book: In Day 7, *“Let's Settle This Once and for All,”* Titus became a living test case for whether Christ alone was enough. Why is it important for us to settle that question in our own hearts?

2. Grace must change the way we treat people.

Read Aloud: Galatians 2:11–14

Peter knew better.

He had eaten with Gentile believers and understood that they were fully accepted in Christ. But when a group of Jewish believers arrived, Peter pulled away from the Gentiles because he was afraid of what they would think. His actions influenced others, even Barnabas.

Paul confronted Peter publicly because his behavior was “*not in step with the truth of the gospel* (Gal 2:14).” That took courage. Peter was a respected apostle, but Paul did not allow his position or reputation to keep him from addressing the problem. Peter had not necessarily changed what he believed, but he was living in a way that contradicted it.

We can do the same thing. We can believe salvation is by grace while still treating people according to performance, background, appearance, tradition, or our own expectations. Grace should change the way we see and treat people. And when the truth of the gospel is being compromised, grace does not require silence. Sometimes it requires the courage to lovingly speak the truth.

Discuss:

3. Peter knew the truth but let fear of others affect the way he lived. Where are we most tempted to do the same thing?
4. What can we learn from Paul's willingness to confront Peter? When does loving someone require us to speak up rather than remain silent?

From the Book: Day 8, “*Old Habits Are Hard to Break*,” shows how quickly Peter's decision affected Barnabas and others. Have you seen one person's fear, hypocrisy, or legalism influence other believers? What did you learn from it?

3. Grace rests completely in Christ.

Read Aloud: Galatians 2:15–16, 19–21

Paul now brings the argument to its theological center: “*A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:16).” To be justified means to be declared righteous before God. We are not justified because we performed well enough, kept enough rules, or became religious enough. We are justified through faith in Christ.

Then Paul makes it personal: “*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me* (Gal 2:20).” Grace does not simply change our standing before God. It changes our lives. We stop trying to make ourselves right with God and begin living by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Paul closes with a statement that leaves no room for adding human effort to Christ's finished work: “*For if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose* (Gal 2:21).” If we could make ourselves right with God, we would not need the cross. But we cannot. Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Discuss:

5. What does justification by faith mean in practical terms for someone who constantly feels pressure to prove themselves to God?
6. Galatians 2:20 says, "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*" What should that truth change about the way we approach everyday life?

From the Book: Days 9 and 10 emphasize two closely connected truths. We are justified through faith rather than our performance, and we now live by faith because we have been crucified with Christ. Which of those truths do you most need to be reminded of right now, and why?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 2 gives us four simple truths:

1. **Grace is worth standing for.** We must not add anything to Christ.
2. **Grace should shape how we treat people.** Our lives should stay in step with the gospel we believe.
3. **Grace is the basis of our justification.** We are declared righteous through faith in Christ, not works of the law.
4. **Grace gives us a new way to live.** We have been crucified with Christ, and now we live by faith in Him.

Paul refused to compromise the gospel when it was challenged. He confronted Peter when his behavior contradicted it. And he reminded the Galatians that righteousness could never come through keeping the law.

The same gospel that saves us must also shape us.

Reflection: Where are you most tempted to rely on your own performance instead of Christ or let fear of others affect the way you live?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose one of these actions:

- **Stand on grace.** Identify one religious expectation, tradition, or personal standard that you may be tempted to confuse with the gospel. Remind yourself that your acceptance before God rests completely in Christ.
- **Live out grace.** Think about someone you may be judging, avoiding, or treating differently because of their background, personality, or differences from you. Ask God to help you treat that person in a way that is “*in step with the truth of the gospel.*”
- **Live Galatians 2:20.** Read Galatians 2:20 each morning this week. Before you begin your day, remind yourself: *I have been crucified with Christ. Christ lives in me. Today I will live by faith in Him.*

Closing Question: Earlier you underlined one verse from Galatians 2 that especially spoke to you. What truth from that verse do you need to carry with you this week?

Prayer Focus: Thank God that we are justified by faith in Christ rather than our own performance. Ask Him to expose any legalism, fear of people, or inconsistency between what we believe and how we live. Pray for courage to stand firm when grace is challenged and for the Holy Spirit to help us live every day in step with the truth of the gospel.

SESSION 3 — You Can't Earn This

Why has salvation always been by faith, and what did the law actually accomplish?

Galatians 3:1–29

Companion Reading: Days 11–15 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

We are made right with God by faith in Christ, not by keeping rules or trying to earn His acceptance. God's law reveals our sin and our need for a Savior, but only Christ can save us and make us children of God through faith.

Key Verse

“So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith (Gal 3:24).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 3 and Days 11–15 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

Paul has already established that we are justified by faith in Christ, not by works of the law. But in Galatians 3, he presses the issue further. If the Galatians began their Christian lives by faith, why would they now try to grow through human effort?

Paul points them back to Abraham and God's promise and explains the purpose of the law. When Paul speaks of “the law,” he is referring to the law God gave Israel through Moses. The question underneath the chapter is simple: **Will we trust what Christ has done, or try to earn what only grace can give?**

Opening Question: Why do you think we have such a hard time simply receiving something we cannot earn?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. Don't go back to trying harder.

Read Aloud: Galatians 3:1–5

Paul does not ease into the conversation: “*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? (Gal 3:1).*”

They had heard the gospel. Christ had been clearly proclaimed to them. They had received the Holy Spirit through faith. Yet somehow, they had begun to believe that what God started by grace now needed to be completed through their own effort. Paul asks: “*Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Gal 3:3).*”

That is the trap of legalism. We know we cannot save ourselves, but we can still begin living as though our spiritual growth depends entirely upon our performance. We start measuring ourselves by how well we are doing rather than resting in what Christ has done and depending upon the Spirit. We begin by faith, and we grow by continuing to trust Christ and obey Him through the power of the Spirit.

Discuss:

1. Why is it so easy to begin the Christian life depending upon God's grace and then gradually start depending upon our own performance?
2. What are some signs that our walk with Christ has become more about “trying harder” than trusting Him and walking by the Spirit?

From the Book: Day 11, “*Who Cast a Spell on You?*” focuses on Paul's amazement that the Galatians would begin by faith and then return to performance. What stood out to you about Paul's warning against trying to finish in our own strength what God began by His Spirit?

2. God's plan has always been faith.

Read Aloud: Galatians 3:6–9, 15–18

The Judaizers pointed the Galatians toward the law, but Paul takes them farther back, all the way to Abraham. “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gal 3:6).*” Abraham was declared righteous because he believed God. That happened centuries before God gave the law through Moses. Paul's point is simple: Salvation by faith was not God's backup plan. Righteousness has always been received by faith, not earned by works.

God's promise to Abraham ultimately pointed to Christ, and the law could not cancel that promise. In fact, the law exposed our need for Christ, who “*redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us* (Gal 3:13).”

We do not earn God's favor by proving ourselves worthy. We trust His promise and receive by faith what Christ has provided.

Discuss:

3. Abraham was counted righteous by faith centuries before the law was given. What does that teach us about the place of faith and works in being made right with God?
4. How does knowing that salvation by faith was always God's plan strengthen our confidence in the gospel?

From the Book: Days 12 and 13 remind us that God's promise is received by faith and that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. What did you read in either of these days that helped you better understand why salvation must rest on Christ rather than our performance?

3. The law points us to Christ.

Read Aloud: Galatians 3:19–26

If the law cannot save us, an obvious question follows: **Then why did God give it?**

Paul explains that the law had a purpose. It was given because of sin and made clear God's righteous standard. The problem was never that the law was bad. The problem was that sinners could not keep it perfectly or gain righteousness through it.

Paul describes the law as a “*guardian*” until Christ came. It showed us God’s righteous standard, exposed our failure to meet that standard, and pointed us toward the One who could do for us what the law could never do. “*But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith* (Gal 3:25–26).”

The law can show us the problem, but it cannot cure it. It can expose our sin, but it cannot remove it. **The law points us to Christ. Christ saves us.**

We can make a similar mistake today when we expect religious rules, ceremonies, traditions, or good behavior to accomplish what only Christ can do. Those things may have value in their proper place, but none of them can make a sinner righteous before God.

Discuss:

5. If the law was meant to reveal our sin and point us to Christ, what goes wrong when we try to use rules or religious practices to make ourselves acceptable to God?
6. According to verses 25–26, what changes when a person comes to Christ through faith?

From the Book: Days 14 and 15 help explain why the law was given and how it ultimately points us to Christ. How has understanding the purpose of the law changed the way you think about grace?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 3 gives us four simple truths:

1. **We begin and continue by faith.** We grow as we trust Christ and depend on the Spirit rather than our own performance.
2. **God's promise came before the law.** Salvation by faith has always been God's plan.
3. **The law reveals our need.** It exposes sin and shows us that we cannot make ourselves righteous.
4. **The law points us to Christ.** Through faith in Him, we are justified and become children of God.

The Galatians were in danger of moving backward. They had received Christ by faith but were being persuaded that something more was needed. Paul reminds them that God's promise cannot be improved by human performance.

You cannot earn what God gives by grace.

Reflection: When are you most likely to feel that God's acceptance depends on how well you are doing?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose one of these actions:

- **Stop keeping score.** Identify one area where you tend to measure your spiritual standing by how well you are performing. When you catch yourself keeping score, thank God that your acceptance rests in Christ.
- **Trust the promise.** Choose one promise from Galatians 3 and write it somewhere you will see it this week. When you feel pressure to prove yourself to God, return to what He has already promised in Christ.
- **Let the law point you to Jesus.** When God's word exposes sin in your life this week, resist the temptation either to excuse yourself or to try to make yourself worthy. Confess it, thank Christ for His grace, and respond in obedience.

Closing Question: Earlier you underlined one verse from Galatians 3 that especially spoke to you. What truth from that verse do you need to believe and live this week?

Prayer Focus: Thank God that salvation has always rested on His promise rather than our performance. Ask Him to expose areas where you are trying to earn what He gives by grace. Thank Him for His law, which reveals our need, and especially for Christ, who has done for us what the law could never do. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you continue by faith just as you began by faith.

SESSION 4 — You're Not a Slave Anymore

What has Christ changed about our relationship with God?

Galatians 3:23–4:31

Companion Reading: Days 16–21 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

Through faith in Christ, we have been redeemed, adopted into God's family, and given the Holy Spirit. Because we are God's children, we should live in the freedom and security of grace rather than returning to fear, rules, or performance as a way of gaining God's acceptance.

Key Verse

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal 4:7).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 3:23–4:31 and Days 16–21 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

Paul has spent much of Galatians explaining how we are made right with God. Now he begins showing us what that means for our relationship with God.

Through faith in Christ, we become God's children. We belong to His family, receive His Spirit, and become heirs of His promises. Paul summarizes the change in one powerful sentence: *“You are no longer a slave, but a son (Gal 4:7).”*

But with that truth comes a warning: **Don't go back.** Christ has set us free from spiritual bondage and brought us into God's family. Now we need to learn to live like we belong.

Opening Question: What is the difference between knowing that God has forgiven you and knowing that you actually belong to His family?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. In Christ, we belong to God's family.

Read Aloud: Galatians 3:23–29

Paul has just explained that the law served as a guardian until Christ came. Now that Christ has come, everything changes. *“For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (Gal 3:26).”*

Notice how we enter the family—through faith in Christ. We do not earn our place. We do not work our way in. We belong because of what Christ has done. And because our identity is now found in Christ, the old distinctions that people often use to establish worth or status cannot determine our standing before God: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28).”*

Paul is not saying those distinctions cease to exist. He is saying they do not determine our standing before God. Everyone comes the same way, through faith in Christ, and every believer belongs fully to God's family.

Discuss:

1. According to verses 26–29, what gives us our place in God's family? Why is that important to remember?
2. How should knowing that every believer belongs to the same family change the way we see and treat one another?

From the Book: Day 17, *“The Family of God,”* reminds us that we are not outsiders trying to earn our place. Do you find it easier to believe that truth about other Christians or about yourself? Why?

2. You're not a slave anymore.

Read Aloud: Galatians 4:1–7

Paul now uses the picture of a child who is an heir but, while still young, lives under guardians and managers. He uses that illustration to describe life under the law before Christ.

Then come some of the greatest words in Galatians: “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...*” (Gal 4:4).” God sent His Son to redeem us so that we might receive adoption. Redemption means that Christ purchased our freedom. Adoption means God brought us into His family. But Paul does not stop there. Because we are God's children, He has given us His Spirit, who cries from our hearts, “Abba! Father!”

Think about the change:

Slave → Son

Bondage → Freedom

Fear → Relationship

Outsider → Family

Under guardianship → Heir

The Christian life is not about trying to earn God's acceptance. In Christ, we have been redeemed and adopted. We obey our Father not to earn a place in His family, but because by grace we already belong to Him.

Discuss:

3. What do the words redeemed and adopted tell us about what God has done for us through Christ?
4. How would the way you pray, obey God, or respond to failure change if you really believed that God is your Father and you are His child?

From the Book: Day 18, “*The End of an Era*,” emphasizes the change from slave to son and from guardian to family. Which truth about your new identity in Christ means the most to you right now: redeemed, adopted, God's child, or heir? Why?

3. Don't go back to bondage.

Read Aloud: Galatians 4:8–11, 28–31

Paul now asks a question that almost sounds unbelievable. If Christ has set you free and brought you into God's family, why would you ever want to go back? The Galatians had once been enslaved to pagan religion. Now they were being tempted to place themselves under the requirements and observances of the law as though those things were necessary for their standing with God. Paul asks: “*How can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?*” (Gal 4:9).”

That is the danger of legalism. It takes people whom Christ has set free and convinces them to start living like slaves again. We may not be tempted by exactly the same religious practices as the Galatians, but we can still go backward. Whenever our relationship with God becomes driven by fear, religious scorekeeping, rituals, traditions, or trying to prove ourselves worthy, we begin living like slaves instead of children.

Paul closes the chapter by returning to Abraham and contrasting Hagar and Sarah, slavery and freedom, human effort and God's promise. His conclusion is simple: “*So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman (Gal 4:31).*” You have been set free. Don't go back.

Discuss:

5. What are some ways Christians can fall back into fear, religious scorekeeping, or trying to earn God's acceptance?
6. Paul says we are “children of promise” rather than children of slavery. What are some practical signs that a believer is living with the freedom and security of being God's child?

From the Book: In Day 20, “*The Pastor and the People*,” Paul longs to see “*Christ formed*” in the Galatians. What is the difference between simply following religious expectations and actually becoming more like Christ?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 3:23–4:31 gives us four simple truths:

1. **We belong to God's family.** Through faith in Christ, we are His children.
2. **We have been redeemed and adopted.** Christ did not simply release us from bondage; God brought us into His family.
3. **We have been given the Holy Spirit.** We can know and approach God as our Father.
4. **We must not go back to slavery.** We are children of promise, so we should live in the freedom Christ has given us.

Paul wants the Galatians to understand that grace has changed more than their eternal destination. It has changed their entire relationship with God. They do not have to approach Him as slaves trying to earn His approval. They can approach Him as children who know they belong.

You are not trying to earn a place in God's family. In Christ, you already belong.

Reflection: What situation most often causes you to question God's acceptance or feel that you have to prove yourself to Him?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose **one** of these actions:

- **Live like you belong.** When guilt, fear, or insecurity makes you question your standing with God, remind yourself of Galatians 4:7: *"You are no longer a slave, but a son."* Thank God that your place in His family rests in Christ.
- **Talk to your Father.** Begin your prayer time each day by simply addressing God as Father. Before asking Him for anything, thank Him that through Christ you have been adopted into His family and can come to Him with confidence.
- **Don't go back.** Identify one rule, tradition, habit, or expectation you sometimes use to measure your standing with God. Put it back in its proper place. Obey God and practice spiritual disciplines out of love and gratitude, not as a way of earning His acceptance.

Closing Question: Earlier you underlined one verse from this week's passage that especially spoke to you. What truth from that verse do you need to believe and live this week?

Prayer Focus: Thank God for sending His Son to redeem us and bring us into His family. Thank Him that through faith in Christ we are no longer slaves but sons and daughters, and that He has given us His Spirit. Ask Him to expose places where we still live out of fear, depend on our performance, or give in to religious pressure. Pray that we would know God as our Father, live securely as His children, and refuse to return to the bondage from which Christ has set us free.

SESSION 5 — Stand Free. Walk Free.

What does Christian freedom actually look like?

Galatians 5:1–26

Companion Reading: Days 22–26 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

Christ has set us free, but Christian freedom is not permission to live however we want. We stand firm in grace, use our freedom to love and serve others, and depend on the Holy Spirit to help us say no to the flesh and live more like Christ.

Key Verse

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 5 and Days 22–26 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

For four chapters, Paul has defended the gospel of grace. Now he turns to a practical question: How should people who have been set free actually live?

His answer is not, “Do whatever you want.” It is also not, “Keep enough rules so God will accept you.” Christian freedom means standing firm in what Christ has done, using our freedom to love others, and learning to walk daily by the Holy Spirit. This is where freedom moves into everyday life: our choices, attitudes, relationships, and response to temptation.

Opening Question: When you hear the word freedom, do you naturally think more about being free from something or being free to do something? Why?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. Stand firm in the freedom Christ gave you.

Read Aloud: Galatians 5:1–6, 7–9

Paul begins with one of the great declarations in Galatians: *“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1).”*

Christ has already done the work necessary to make us right with God. Paul warns the Galatians not to put themselves back under a religious system that says Christ is not enough. That is why he speaks so strongly about circumcision. Circumcision itself was not the problem. The problem was trusting it as something necessary for justification. Paul says we cannot depend on Christ for our righteousness while also depending on religious performance to make us right with God. We cannot have it both ways.

He then reminds them, *“You were running well. Who hindered you? (Gal 5:8).”* False teaching had cut into their race. Paul warns that even a small amount of error can spread: *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump (Gal 5:9).”*

We face the same danger. We may not be tempted by circumcision or the Mosaic Law, but we can still turn church traditions, spiritual habits, personal convictions, or religious expectations into measurements of God's acceptance.

Discuss:

1. Where are Christians most tempted to turn good spiritual practices or personal convictions into a way of measuring how accepted they are by God?
2. Paul asks, *“Who hindered you from obeying the truth? (Gal 5:7).”* What voices, influences, or pressures are most likely to pull believers away from simple trust in Christ today?

From the Book: Days 22–24 remind us to stand firm, refuse to mix grace with performance, and pay attention to anything that knocks us off course. Which of those warnings stood out to you most in your reading, and why

2. Use your freedom to love.

Read Aloud: Galatians 5:13–15

Paul now corrects another misunderstanding of freedom: *“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another (Gal 5:13).”*

Freedom in Christ is not freedom to become more self-centered. It frees us from living for ourselves and always insisting on our own way. Paul turns freedom in an unexpected direction: Serve one another.

Legalism says, “I serve so God will accept me.”

The flesh says, “I am free, so I can do what I want.”

Grace says, “God has already accepted me in Christ, so I am free to love and serve someone else.”

This becomes extremely practical in our homes, churches, workplaces, friendships, and disagreements. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do with our freedom is give up a preference, hold our tongue, help someone who is struggling, forgive an offense, or put another person's needs ahead of our own.

Discuss:

3. Where are you most tempted to make Christian freedom about your rights, preferences, or desires rather than loving and serving someone else?

4. Think about your everyday relationships. What would *“through love serve one another”* look like practically at home, at church, at work, or with someone who is difficult for you?

From the Book: Day 25, *“Let Freedom Ring,”* emphasizes that freedom becomes visible through love. What statement or example from that day's reading challenged the way you think about Christian freedom?

3. Walk by the Spirit in everyday life.

Read Aloud: Galatians 5:16–26

Paul now tells us how this kind of life is possible: “*Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh* (Gal 5:16).”

The Christian life involves a real battle. The flesh pulls us toward pride, anger, lust, jealousy, selfish ambition, division, and other sinful desires. The Holy Spirit leads us toward a life that reflects Christ. Paul does not simply tell us to try harder. He tells us to walk by the Spirit. Walking suggests daily dependence—one step, then another. Ordinary choices are made throughout an ordinary day.

Paul then gives us a way to examine the direction of our lives. The works of the flesh are visible, but so is the fruit of the Spirit: “*Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control* (Gal 5:22–23).” Fruit does not appear all at once, but healthy fruit should grow. One of the best ways to evaluate our spiritual growth is to look at how we respond to people, pressure, temptation, disappointment, and conflict.

Then Paul says: “*If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit* (Gal 5:25).” This is everyday Christianity. Stay sensitive to the Spirit. Follow His leading and obey God's word. When you get out of step, confess it and get back in step. Then take the next faithful step.

Discuss:

5. Looking at the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, where do you see the greatest battle in your everyday life right now?
6. Choose one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit from verses 22–23. What would growth in that area actually look like in one of your closest relationships?

From the Book: Day 26, “*Walk This Way*,” reminds us that walking by the Spirit happens step by step, day by day, and decision by decision. What part of that day's reading helped you think more practically about what it means to keep in step with the Spirit?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 5 gives us four simple truths:

1. **Christ has set us free.** We do not have to return to performance-driven religion.
2. **Freedom must be guarded.** We should pay attention to voices and influences that pull us away from the truth of the gospel.
3. **Freedom should produce love.** We are free not simply to please ourselves, but to serve one another.
4. **Freedom is lived by the Spirit.** We depend on Him daily to resist the flesh and produce Christlike fruit in us.

Paul has moved us from standing to serving to walking. We stand in the grace Christ has given us. We serve others through love. And we walk daily by the Holy Spirit. That is what freedom looks like when it leaves the page and enters everyday life.

Reflection: Where do you most need to stand firm, serve in love, or walk by the Spirit this week?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose one of these actions:

- **Stand free.** Pay attention to one area where guilt, comparison, religious pressure, or the expectations of others make you feel that you must prove yourself to God. Remind yourself that your acceptance rests in Christ.
- **Serve in love.** Choose one person you can intentionally serve this week. Give up a preference, meet a need, offer encouragement, forgive an offense, or help without expecting recognition.
- **Walk in step.** Choose one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit that needs growth in your life. Pray about it each morning and watch for opportunities during the day to respond in a way that reflects the Spirit's fruit rather than simply following your first impulse.

Closing Question: Earlier you underlined one verse from Galatians 5 that especially spoke to you. What truth from that verse do you need to practice in everyday life this week?

Prayer Focus: Thank God that Christ has truly set us free. Ask Him to keep us from returning to performance-driven religion or using freedom selfishly. Pray for the Holy Spirit to expose the desires of the flesh that still pull us toward sin and to produce His fruit in our attitudes, choices, and relationships. Ask Him to help us stand firmly in grace, serve one another through love, and walk in step with the Spirit every day.

SESSION 6 — Grace All the Way Home

What does a life shaped by grace look like?

Galatians 6:1–18

Companion Reading: Days 27–30 of *30 Days to Galatians: True Freedom in Christ*

Big Idea

The grace that saves us also shapes the way we live. It teaches us to restore one another, carry one another's burdens, keep doing good, and boast in nothing but the cross of Christ.

Key Verse

“But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14).”

Before You Meet

Read Galatians 6 and Days 27–30 of the devotional. As you read, underline one statement from the book and one verse from Galatians that especially speaks to you.

Getting Started | 5 Minutes

Paul is nearing the end of his letter, but he is not finished showing us what freedom looks like in everyday life. Galatians 6 brings grace into our relationships, responsibilities, choices, and priorities.

What do we do when another believer falls? What happens when doing good gets tiring? And when everything else is stripped away, what are we really living for?

Galatians began with Paul defending the gospel of grace. It ends by showing us what a life shaped by that grace looks like.

Opening Question: When you think about someone who is spiritually mature, what qualities do you expect to see in the way that person treats other people?

Open the Word | 25–30 Minutes

1. Grace helps people get back up.

Read Aloud: Galatians 6:1–5

Paul begins with a very real situation: “*Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness* (Gal 6:1).” Notice the goal: Restore him. The word carries the idea of restoring something to its proper condition. When another believer falls into sin, our first response should not be gossip, condemnation, or spiritual superiority. Grace moves toward restoration. But Paul immediately adds a warning: “*Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted* (Gal 6:1).” We help others humbly because we know we are capable of falling too.

Then Paul says: “*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ* (Gal 6:2).” In verse five, he tells each person to “*bear his own load*.” Those statements are not contradictory. We are responsible for our own lives, but sometimes the weight becomes too heavy to carry alone. That is when the body of Christ should step in. Grace does not say, “That's your problem.” Grace helps people get back up.

Discuss:

1. Why do you think Christians are sometimes quicker to criticize someone's failure than to help restore them? What would restoration with “*a spirit of gentleness*” look like in real life?
2. How can we know when someone needs help carrying a burden and when they need encouragement to take responsibility for what they can carry?

From the Book: Day 27, “*I Get By With a Little Help From My Friends*,” reminds us that the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone. When has another believer helped carry a burden for you, and what did that mean to you?

2. Grace keeps doing good.

Read Aloud: Galatians 6:7–10

Paul now gives us a principle that reaches into every part of life: “...*whatever one sows, that will he also reap* (Gal 6:7).” Every day we are planting something. Our choices, habits, priorities, relationships, use of time, and spiritual decisions are seeds. Some feed sinful desires. Others reflect the work of the Spirit.

Then Paul speaks directly to something every faithful Christian eventually experiences—weariness. “*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up* (Gal 6:9).” Sometimes doing the right thing gets tiring. You serve and see little fruit. You pray and nothing seems to change. You invest in someone who disappoints you. You keep doing what God has called you to do and wonder whether it is making any difference. Paul says: **Don't give up.** We cannot always see what God is doing beneath the surface, but faithful obedience is never wasted.

Discuss:

3. If your current habits and priorities are “seeds,” what kind of harvest are they likely to produce in your spiritual life, relationships, and family?
4. Where are you most tempted to grow weary in doing good right now? What would faithfulness look like if you simply refused to give up?

From the Book: Day 28, “*Get Busy Livin' or Get Busy Dyin'*,” asks us to think seriously about what we are sowing with our lives. What statement or example from that day made you think differently about your habits or priorities?

3. Grace leaves us boasting in the cross.

Read Aloud: Galatians 6:12–18

As Paul prepares to close the letter, he returns one last time to the issue that started the whole controversy. The false teachers wanted something visible they could point to. They wanted the Galatians circumcised so they could “*boast in your flesh* (Gal 6:13).” Paul wants nothing to do with it: “*But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal 6:14).” There are really two ways to live. We can spend our lives trying to build something about ourselves worth boasting about, or we can point to Christ and what He has done.

Then Paul gives us one of the great summary statements of the letter: “*For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation* (Gal 6:15).” That brings us right back to grace. Christianity is not about polishing the old life until we become a better version of ourselves. In Christ, we have been made new. The cross has changed our standing with God, our identity, our priorities, and the direction of our lives. Paul even points to the marks he carried on his body from suffering for Christ. Unlike the false teachers, who wanted an outward mark they could boast about, Paul’s scars showed the cost of faithfully following Jesus.

Paul then closes the letter exactly where we would expect: “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen* (Gal 6:18).” After everything he has written, grace gets the last word.

Discuss:

1. What are some things Christians can be tempted to “boast” in besides the cross, even good things such as accomplishments, knowledge, ministry, morality, or spiritual discipline?
2. If the cross really is our only boast and we really are new creations in Christ, what should become less important to us, and what should become more important?

From the Book: Day 30, “*I’m Your Huckleberry*,” reflects on the marks Paul carried because of his faithfulness to Christ. What does it look like to follow Christ faithfully when doing so actually costs us something?

Bringing It Together | 5 Minutes

Galatians 6 gives us four simple truths:

1. **Grace restores people.** When someone falls, we should help them get back up with gentleness and humility.
2. **Grace carries burdens.** We take responsibility for our own lives while stepping in when someone else needs help carrying what has become too heavy.
3. **Grace keeps doing good.** We sow toward the Spirit and remain faithful even when we grow tired or cannot yet see the harvest.
4. **Grace keeps the cross at the center.** We stop trying to build a life worth boasting about and point instead to what Christ has done.

Paul has spent six chapters fighting for Christian freedom. But that freedom was never simply freedom **from** something. Christ freed us **for** something. We are free to restore instead of condemn. Free to serve instead of compete. Free to persevere instead of quit. Free to live for Christ instead of ourselves.

And when the whole letter is finished, Paul leaves us exactly where we need to be—at the foot of the cross, living by grace.

Reflection: After walking through Galatians, what is one area of your life where you need to trust God's grace and live differently?

Faith in Action | 5 Minutes

This week, choose one of these actions:

- **Help someone get back up.** Think of someone who is struggling, discouraged, carrying a burden, or trying to recover from a failure. Reach out with gentleness. Listen, encourage, pray, and help carry the load where you can.
- **Plant something that matters.** Identify one habit or choice that is feeding the wrong things in your life. Replace it with one intentional practice that helps you walk by the Spirit and invest in what matters eternally.
- **Boast in the cross.** Look for an opportunity this week to tell someone what Christ has done for you. Keep the focus off your accomplishments and point clearly to His grace.

Closing Question: This study began with the gospel worth defending and ends with Paul boasting in the cross. After these six sessions, what is one truth from Galatians that you do not want to forget?

Prayer Focus: Thank God for the gospel of grace and the freedom Christ has purchased for us. Ask Him to make us people who restore gently, carry one another's burdens, sow toward the Spirit, and refuse to grow weary in doing good. Ask Him to keep us from pride, performance, and anything else that competes with Christ. Pray that the truth of Galatians would move beyond this study and shape the way we live every day. And above all, ask God to keep us boasting in nothing but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take It Home

Living Free When the Study Is Over

For six sessions, we have walked together through Paul's letter to the Galatians. We have talked about grace, justification, legalism, adoption, freedom, the Holy Spirit, spiritual fruit, carrying burdens, perseverance, and the cross. But now the study is over, so what do we do with all of this?

We live it.

Galatians was never intended to be merely a theological argument that we understand. Paul wrote because the gospel was at stake, and because the way these believers understood the gospel would determine the way they lived. The same is true for us.

We live in a confused world. We are constantly being told to define truth for ourselves, follow our hearts, create our own identity, and pursue whatever makes us happy. At the same time, religion can pull us in the opposite direction, convincing us that God's acceptance depends upon how well we perform, how many rules we keep, or whether we measure up to someone else's expectations. Galatians rejects both.

Truth comes from God. The gospel is not ours to rewrite, improve, or adjust to fit the culture. Paul said the gospel he preached was not “*man's gospel*” but came through Jesus Christ (Gal 1:11–12).

Our righteousness comes through Christ. We do not earn God's acceptance through religious performance. We are justified through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2:16). Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Our identity is found in Christ. “*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me* (Gal 2:20).” Christianity is not about becoming a slightly improved version of ourselves. In Christ, we have been made new.

We are God's children. Through Christ, we have been redeemed, adopted, and brought into God's family. We are no longer slaves trying to earn our place. “*So you are no longer a slave, but a son* (Gal 4:7).”

We are free. “*For freedom Christ has set us free* (Gal 5:1).” We are free from the condemnation of sin and the bondage of performance-driven religion. But that freedom is not permission to live however we want. We are free to love, serve, obey, and become more like Christ.

We walk by the Spirit. The Christian life cannot be lived in our own strength. The flesh still pulls us toward sin, but the Holy Spirit leads us in another direction. So, we learn to keep in step with Him, one choice, one response, and one day at a time. As we do, His fruit becomes more visible in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Finally, **we keep coming back to the cross.** Paul could have ended Galatians by pointing to his accomplishments, his ministry, his suffering, his knowledge, or his authority. Instead, he said, *“But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14).”*

That is where this journey should leave us too. We do not boast in how much Bible we know, how religious we are, our church, our denomination, our morality, our spiritual disciplines, or our accomplishments. We boast in Jesus and what He has done for us.

The world will continue offering other ways to define truth, identity, success, and meaning. Religion will continue tempting us to replace grace with performance. Our own flesh will continue pulling us toward pride, comparison, fear, and self-reliance. So, we must keep coming back to the truth Paul has given us.

When you are tempted to prove yourself to God, stand in grace. When you are tempted to measure yourself against someone else, remember who you are in Christ. When the flesh pulls hard, walk by the Spirit. When another believer falls, restore them gently. When someone's burden becomes too heavy, help carry it. When doing good gets tiring, don't give up. And when you are tempted to boast in what you have done, look again at the cross.

The world around us may continue to grow more confused, but we do not have to be. The gospel tells us what is true. The cross tells us what God has done. Grace reminds us that we could never earn it. The Spirit empowers us to live differently. And in Christ, we know who we are.

That is the message of Galatians.

Christ has set you free. Now stand firm, walk by the Spirit, and live free!

About the Author



Dr. Billy Bell has served in pastoral ministry for more than 20 years, with a passion for teaching God's word and helping people understand how biblical truth applies to everyday life. He currently serves as Executive Pastor at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, Kentucky, where he helps provide leadership in ministry, church operations, discipleship, teaching, and preaching.

Billy's path into full-time pastoral ministry was not a straight line. For many years, he served bi-vocationally, working in operations leadership while also serving as an associate pastor. Looking back, he sees those years not as wasted time, but as part of God's preparation for the ministry to which he had been called.

He holds a Master of Ministry in Biblical Exposition and a Doctor of Educational Ministry in Pastoral Leadership from Andersonville Theological Seminary. His approach to teaching is practical and expository: Understand what Scripture says, understand what it means, and then ask how it should change about the way we live.

Billy and his wife, Christy, enjoy serving the church together, camping, hiking, and spending time with their family. His desire in writing and teaching is simple—to help people know God's word, understand the gospel clearly, grow in their relationship with Christ, and faithfully live out what they believe.