

## A DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY

### *Through Galatians*

#### **Day 1** *Galatians 1*

#### **One Gospel, One Truth**

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#### **Chapter Summary**

Paul opens his letter to the Galatians without his usual warm commendations, launching immediately into a defense of the gospel. He establishes that his apostleship did not come from any human source but directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father. He expresses astonishment that the Galatian churches have so quickly turned to a 'different gospel' — one being promoted by troublemakers who were distorting the true message of Christ. Paul pronounces a solemn curse (anathema) on anyone — even himself or an angel from heaven — who would preach a gospel contrary to what was originally proclaimed. He then recounts his own dramatic conversion experience, emphasizing that he did not consult with human authorities after his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. His gospel came by direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself.

#### ◆ **Key Verse**

*Galatians 1:10 — 'Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.'*

## **Devotional Reflection**

Paul's passion in this opening chapter is striking — he doesn't ease into his concern; he declares it boldly. The Galatians were being seduced by religious teachers who insisted that faith in Christ was not enough — that Jewish laws and rituals must be added to receive full salvation. Paul recognized this as a deadly distortion. The gospel is not a formula to be improved upon; it is a finished work to be received.

For us today, the temptation to add something to grace is real. We may not add circumcision, but we add performance, moral reputation, church attendance, or social standing to our sense of standing before God. We subtly believe that our worth before God fluctuates based on how well we have done. Paul's fierce response reminds us: the moment we add to the gospel, we lose it entirely.

The question 'Am I trying to please people or God?' cuts to the heart of authentic faith. People-pleasing religion is comfortable, manageable, and celebrated by crowds. But a gospel that offends no one has been stripped of its power. Ask yourself today: Is my faith shaped by the approval of others or anchored in the revelation of Christ?

## **Prayer**

*Lord Jesus, forgive me for the ways I have added to Your finished work — trying to earn what You have freely given, or seeking human approval more than Your face. I receive the gospel afresh today: not as something I achieve, but as Someone I trust. Guard me from any distorted version of grace. Make me a servant of Christ alone. Amen.*

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## Day 2 Galatians 2

### Justified by Faith Alone

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#### Chapter Summary

Paul continues his autobiographical defense by recounting his visit to Jerusalem, where he met with the recognized pillars of the church — James, Peter, and John — who confirmed the validity of his gospel and ministry. He then recounts a dramatic confrontation with Peter (Cephas) in Antioch, where Peter had been freely eating with Gentile believers but withdrew when Jewish believers from Jerusalem arrived, fearing their criticism. Paul publicly opposed him because his hypocrisy was leading others astray and undermining the truth that both Jews and Gentiles are justified through faith in Christ, not through works of the law. Paul then delivers one of the most powerful theological statements in Scripture: that he has been crucified with Christ, and the life he now lives, he lives by faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him. The chapter concludes with a warning that if righteousness could come through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

#### ◆ Key Verse

*Galatians 2:20 — 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'*

#### Devotional Reflection

Paul's confrontation of Peter shows us that truth is not served by silence — even when the person in error holds a respected position. Peter's behavior was not merely socially awkward; it was theologically destructive. By withdrawing from Gentile believers, he was communicating that their faith was incomplete, that ethnicity and religious pedigree still defined belonging

with God. Paul saw clearly that such behavior was 'not in line with the truth of the gospel' and would not remain quiet.

But the heart of this chapter is Galatians 2:20 — one of the most intimate verses in all of Paul's writing. The Christian life is not the old self improved or the old self restrained; it is the old self crucified and a new self alive in union with Christ. This is not mysticism — it is the daily, practical reality of someone who has died to their own agenda and now draws every breath, makes every decision, and loves every person through the indwelling life of Jesus.

The phrase 'who loved me and gave himself for me' is breathtakingly personal. Paul doesn't say 'who loved the world' — though He did. Paul makes it intimate: this sacrifice was for me. Receive this truth today with your own name inserted: Christ loved you and gave Himself for you.

### **Prayer**

*Father, teach me what it means to be crucified with Christ — not as a painful obligation, but as a liberating death to a life that could never satisfy. I want to live today not by my own effort but by faith in Your Son who loved me personally and gave Himself completely for me. Let His life be seen in mine. Amen.*

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## Day 3 Galatians 3

### Children of Abraham by Faith

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#### Chapter Summary

Paul challenges the Galatians with a series of pointed questions: Who bewitched you? Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? He then builds a comprehensive biblical argument from the Old Testament. Abraham was counted righteous by God before circumcision existed and before the law was given — his faith was what God credited as righteousness. Therefore, those who have faith are the true children of Abraham. The law, Paul argues, cannot give life — it can only condemn, because no one keeps it perfectly. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us on the cross. The law was given as a temporary guardian or 'schoolmaster' to lead people to Christ. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. In Christ, Paul declares, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female — all are one in Christ Jesus, and all who belong to Christ are Abraham's descendants and heirs of God's promise.

#### ◆ Key Verse

*Galatians 3:26-28 — 'So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'*

#### Devotional Reflection

Paul's argument in this chapter dismantles every human hierarchy that religion tends to build. The Galatian Judaizers were essentially arguing that Gentile Christians needed to become Jewish first — adopt the law, be

circumcised, follow the calendar — before they could fully belong. Paul tears this apart with one overwhelming truth: belonging to God has always been about faith, not ethnicity, performance, or pedigree.

The image of the law as a 'paidagogos' — a household guardian or tutor — is rich. In the ancient world, this servant would escort children safely to school and back but was not the teacher. The law served a crucial protective and preparatory function, revealing sin, maintaining social order, pointing forward to the Messiah. But when the Messiah came, the guardian's role was complete. To keep living under the law's guardianship after Christ has come is like a grown adult refusing to leave the school bus.

The abolition of distinctions in verse 28 is not merely a social statement — it is a cosmic one. The cross leveled every wall humans erect to define 'in' and 'out.' If Christ has accepted someone, no human category can disqualify them. This has profound implications for how we treat those who are different from us in our churches, friendships, and communities.

### **Prayer**

*Lord, thank You that I belong to You not because of my background, performance, or ethnicity, but because of Christ alone. Forgive me when I erect walls that You have torn down. Help me to see every person in Christ with the same value and dignity that You do. I am Your child — not because I earned it, but because Jesus paid for it. Amen.*

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## Day 4 Galatians 4

### Sons, Not Slaves

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#### Chapter Summary

Paul deepens his argument about the transition from slavery under the law to sonship through faith in Christ. Before Christ came, all humanity — Jews under the Mosaic law and Gentiles under the elemental spiritual forces of the world — were like children under guardians, not yet come into their full inheritance. But when the fullness of time arrived, God sent His Son, born under the law, to redeem those under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. The Spirit of God's Son now cries out in our hearts 'Abba, Father,' confirming our status as heirs of God. Paul then turns pastoral, expressing his personal anguish that the Galatians are turning back to the very bondage from which Christ set them free. He uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah — the slave woman and the free woman — to illustrate the two covenants: one producing slaves, one producing free children of promise. He calls the Galatians to stand firm in their freedom.

#### ◆ Key Verse

*Galatians 4:6-7 — 'Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.'*

#### Devotional Reflection

The word 'Abba' — the Aramaic word for father, intimate and familial, something like 'Daddy' — was not commonly used in Jewish prayer toward God. It carried a tenderness and closeness that seemed too familiar for the Holy. Yet this is precisely the word that the Holy Spirit places on the lips of

every believer. This is your new identity: not a slave who obeys out of fear of punishment, but a child who relates to God out of love and trust.

Notice the order Paul gives: you are a son, therefore you have the Spirit; and the Spirit confirms your sonship. Your adoption was declared at the cross and sealed in your heart by the Spirit. Your feelings of unworthiness do not change your legal standing. A child who feels undeserving is still a child.

Paul's pastoral anguish is deeply moving — he says he is in the 'pains of childbirth' again over them, travailing until Christ is formed in them. This is the heart of true spiritual leadership: not a desire to be obeyed, but a longing for people to be transformed. The question this chapter presses upon us is stark: Are you living as a child or as a slave? Both may be working hard, but one works from fear and one from love. One earns, one enjoys. Which are you today?

### **Prayer**

*Abba, Father — I say those words today not as a formula but as a declaration of who I am and who You are. Thank You for adopting me, for placing Your Spirit in my heart, for making me an heir. Deliver me from every slave mentality — from working for love instead of from love. Let me live today as a beloved child, not a striving servant. Amen.*

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## Day 5 Galatians 5

### Walking in the Freedom of the Spirit

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#### Chapter Summary

Paul urges the Galatians to stand firm in the freedom that Christ has won for them and not to be 'yoked again to a burden of slavery.' He makes a startling argument: if they submit to circumcision as a requirement for salvation, Christ will be of no benefit to them — they will be obligated to keep the entire law perfectly. True freedom, however, is not an invitation to self-indulgence — it is the opportunity to serve one another through love, which fulfills the entire law. Paul then describes the brutal reality of the flesh's desires: sexual immorality, idolatry, hatred, jealousy, drunkenness, and more — acts that exclude people from the kingdom of God. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — is produced naturally in those who walk in step with the Spirit. Against such fruit there is no law. Paul calls believers to crucify the flesh and keep in step with the Spirit, resisting the twin dangers of conceit and envy.

#### ◆ Key Verse

*Galatians 5:1 — 'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.'*

#### Devotional Reflection

Freedom is the great word of Galatians 5, but Paul immediately defines it carefully. Christian freedom is not the freedom to do whatever you want — that is slavery to the flesh. Nor is it the freedom to impress God with your moral record — that is slavery to the law. True freedom is the Spirit-empowered capacity to love as Christ loved: wholly, sacrificially, joyfully.

The 'fruit of the Spirit' in verses 22-23 is singular — it is one fruit with nine expressions. This means you cannot pick some and skip others, like choosing fruit at a market. If the Spirit is truly dwelling and working within you, all nine qualities will gradually emerge. And notice: Paul calls it fruit, not achievement. Fruit is not manufactured; it grows organically from a healthy root. Your job is not to produce these qualities by willpower but to stay rooted in the Spirit — through prayer, Scripture, community, and surrender.

Look again at the list of 'works of the flesh' and notice how many are relational — hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, dissensions, factions, envy. The flesh loves to divide, to compete, to compare. The Spirit loves to unite, to serve, to build up. In a culture saturated with outrage and division, walking in the Spirit is both deeply countercultural and profoundly attractive.

### **Prayer**

*Holy Spirit, I acknowledge that I cannot produce Your fruit through self-effort. Today I choose to walk in step with You — surrendering my agenda, my pride, my fears. Bear Your fruit in my life: love where I am cold, peace where I am anxious, kindness where I am harsh. I stand in the freedom Christ won for me. Amen.*

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## Day 6 Galatians 6

### Sowing and Reaping in the Spirit

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#### Chapter Summary

Paul concludes with practical instructions for Spirit-led community living. Believers are to gently restore those caught in sin, bearing one another's burdens while also carrying their own loads responsibly — a balance between compassion and personal accountability. He warns against self-deception: God cannot be mocked, and whatever a person sows, they will reap — sowing to the flesh produces corruption, sowing to the Spirit produces eternal life. Therefore believers must not grow weary in doing good, knowing that in due season they will reap a harvest if they do not give up. Paul then writes a final personal note in large handwriting, summarizing his entire letter: the teachers demanding circumcision are motivated by human pride and fear of persecution, not genuine devotion to God. Paul's only boast is in the cross of Christ, through which the world has been crucified to him and he to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters — what matters is the new creation in Christ.

#### ◆ Key Verse

*Galatians 6:9 — 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.'*

#### Devotional Reflection

The agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping is one of the most honest and sobering principles in Scripture. It tells us that our daily choices are never neutral — they are seeds. Every act of kindness, every moment of prayer, every choice to forgive, every surrender to the Spirit is a seed sown into eternity. Conversely, every compromise, every indulgence of the flesh, every bitter word nurtured in the heart is also a seed.

But the reaping is not instantaneous — and this is both the difficulty and the dignity of faith. The Galatians were tempted to abandon the gospel because the law seemed to offer more visible, immediate, socially respected rewards. The harvest of righteousness often comes later, sometimes much later. 'In due season' requires that we trust the Sower when the field looks empty.

The closing summary of the letter brings everything back to one sentence: 'May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' After six chapters of passionate argument, this is Paul's destination — not a doctrine, but a Person; not a system, but a sacrifice. The cross is where every human achievement is exposed as insufficient and every human failure is covered by grace. Stand here today. The new creation has begun in you.

 **Prayer**

*Lord, help me to sow faithfully today — to invest in what is eternal when the temporary is so much louder. Restore in me a long-view faith that does not grow weary. And in the end, let my only boast be the cross of Your Son. I am a new creation; the old has gone. Thank You. Amen.*