



GALATIANS

GREETING

1 ¹From Paul—an apostle ^cchosen, not by any group or individual but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who brought him back to life—²and all the believers who are with me.
To the churches in Galatia.

³Good will^a and peace are yours from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! ⁴In order to free us from this present evil world, Christ took the punishment for our sins, because that was what our God and Father wanted. ⁵Glory belongs to our God and Father forever! Amen.

FOLLOW THE GOOD NEWS WE GAVE YOU

⁶I'm surprised that you're so quickly deserting Christ, who called you in his kindness,^b to follow a different kind of good news. ⁷But what some people are calling good news is not really good news at all. They are confusing you. They want to distort the Good News about Christ. ⁸Whoever tells you good news that is different from the Good News we gave you should be condemned to hell, even if he is one of us or an angel from heaven. ⁹I'm now telling you again what we've told you in the past: If anyone tells you good news that is different from the Good News you received, that person should be condemned to hell.

¹⁰Am I saying this now to win the approval of people or God? Am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant.

JESUS ALONE GAVE PAUL THE GOOD NEWS HE SPREADS

¹¹I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the Good News I have spread is not a human message. ¹²I didn't receive it from any person. I wasn't taught it, but Jesus Christ revealed it to me.

¹³You heard about the way I once lived when I followed the Jewish religion. You heard how I violently persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴You also heard how I was far ahead of other Jews in my age group in following the Jewish religion. I had become that fanatical for the traditions of my ancestors.

¹⁵But God, who appointed me before I was born and who called me by his kindness, was pleased ¹⁶to show me his Son. He did this so that I would tell people who are not Jewish that his Son is the Good News. When this happened, I didn't talk it over with any other person. ¹⁷I didn't even go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went to Arabia and then came back to Damascus.

¹⁸Then, three years later I went to Jerusalem to become personally acquainted with Cephas.^c I stayed with him for fifteen days. ¹⁹I didn't see any other apostle. I only saw James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰(God is my witness that what I'm writing is not a lie.) ²¹Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

^a 1:3 Or "Grace." ^b 1:6 Or "grace." ^c 1:18 Cephas is the Aramaic name for the apostle Peter.

NOVEMBER 11

Galatians 1:1–2:21

Paul defended his authority and argued that faith in God is enough to save someone. Christians do not need to perform religious rituals or follow laws to be saved from their sin.





²²The churches of Christ in Judea didn't know me personally. ²³The only thing they had heard was this: "The man who persecuted us is now spreading the faith that he once tried to destroy." ²⁴So they praised God for what had happened to me.

PAUL WAS ACCEPTED AS AN APOSTLE BY THE LEADERS IN JERUSALEM

2¹Then 14 years later I went to Jerusalem again with Barnabas. I also took Titus along. ²I went in response to a revelation from God. I showed them the way I spread the Good News among people who are not Jewish. I did this in a private meeting with those recognized as important people to see whether all my efforts had been wasted.

³Titus was with me, and although he is Greek, no one forced him to be circumcised.

⁴False Christians were brought in. They slipped in as spies to learn about the freedom Christ Jesus gives us. They hoped to find a way to control us. ⁵But we did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the Good News would always be yours.

⁶Those who were recognized as important people didn't add a single thing to my message. (What sort of people they were makes no difference to me, since God doesn't play favorites.) ⁷In fact, they saw that I had been entrusted with telling the Good News to people who are not circumcised as Peter had been entrusted to tell it to those who are circumcised. ⁸The one who made Peter an apostle to Jewish people also made me an apostle to people who are not Jewish. ⁹James, Cephas, and John (who were recognized as the most important people) acknowledged that God had given me this special gift. ^a So they shook hands with Barnabas and me, agreeing to be our partners. It was understood that we would work among the people who are not Jewish and they would work among Jewish people. ¹⁰The only thing they asked us to do was to remember the poor, the very thing which I was eager to do.

PAUL SHOWS HOW CEPHAS WAS WRONG

¹¹When Cephas came to Antioch, I had to openly oppose him because he was completely wrong. ¹²He ate with people who were not Jewish until some men James had sent from Jerusalem, arrived. Then Cephas drew back and would not associate with people who were not Jewish. He was afraid of those who insisted that circumcision was necessary. ¹³The other Jewish Christians also joined him in this hypocrisy. Even Barnabas was swept along with them.

¹⁴But I saw that they were not properly following the truth of the Good News. So I told Cephas in front of everyone, "You're Jewish, but you live like a person who is not Jewish. So how can you insist that people who are not Jewish must live like Jews?"

¹⁵We are Jewish by birth, not sinners from other nations. ¹⁶Yet, we know that people don't receive God's approval because of their own efforts to live according to a set of standards, but only by believing in Jesus Christ. So we also believed in Jesus Christ in order to receive God's approval because of faith in Christ and not because of our own efforts. People won't receive God's approval because of their own efforts to live according to a set of standards.

¹⁷If we, the same people who are searching for God's approval in Christ, are still sinners, does that mean that Christ encourages us to sin? That's unthinkable! ¹⁸If I rebuild something that I've torn down, I admit that I was wrong to tear it down. ¹⁹When I tried to obey the law's standards, those laws killed me. As a result, I live in a relationship with God. I have been crucified with Christ.

^a2:9 Or "had given me grace."

Today
Memorize
Galatians 1:10
and make it the
basis of your
prayers through-
out the day.





²⁰I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live I live by believing in God's Son, who loved me and took the punishment for my sins. ²¹I don't reject God's kindness.^b If we receive God's approval by obeying laws, then Christ's death was pointless.

GOD APPROVES OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE

3 ¹You stupid people of Galatia! Who put you under an evil spell? Wasn't Christ Jesus' crucifixion clearly described to you? ²I want to learn only one thing from you. Did you receive the Spirit by your own efforts to live according to a set of standards or by believing what you heard? ³Are you that stupid? Did you begin in a spiritual way only to end up doing things in a human way? ⁴Did you suffer so much for nothing? I doubt, that it was for nothing! ⁵Does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you through your own efforts or through believing what you heard?

⁶Abraham serves as an example. He believed God, and that faith was regarded by God to be his approval of Abraham. ⁷You must understand that people who have faith are Abraham's descendants. ⁸Scripture saw ahead of time that God would give his approval to non-Jewish people who have faith. So Scripture announced the Good News to Abraham ahead of time when it said, "Through you all the people of the world will be blessed." ⁹So people who believe are blessed together with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰Certainly, there is a curse on all who rely on their own efforts to live according to a set of standards because Scripture says, "Whoever doesn't obey everything that is written in Moses' Teachings is cursed." ¹¹No one receives God's approval by obeying the law's standards since, "The person who has God's approval will live because of faith." ¹²Laws have nothing to do with faith, but, "Whoever obeys laws will live because of the laws he obeys."

¹³Christ paid the price to free us from the curse that God's laws bring by becoming cursed instead of us. Scripture says, "Everyone who is hung on a tree is cursed." ¹⁴Christ paid the price, so that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to all the people of the world through Jesus Christ and we would receive the promised Spirit through faith.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND PROMISE

¹⁵Brothers and sisters, let me use an example from everyday life. No one can cancel a person's will or add conditions to it once that will is put into effect. ¹⁶The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. Scripture doesn't say, "descendants," referring to many, but "your descendant," referring to one. That descendant is Christ. ¹⁷This is what I mean: The laws, given to Moses, 430 years after God had already put his promise, to Abraham, into effect didn't cancel the promise, to Abraham. ¹⁸If we have to gain the inheritance by following those laws, then it no longer comes to us because of the promise. However, God freely gave the inheritance to Abraham through a promise.

¹⁹What, then, is the purpose of the laws given to Moses? They were added to identify what wrongdoing is. Moses' laws did this until the descendant to whom the promise was given came.^a It was put into effect through angels, using a mediator. ²⁰A mediator is not used when there is only one person involved, and God has acted on his own.

²¹Does this mean, then, that the laws given to Moses contradict God's promises? That's unthinkable! If those laws could give us life, then certainly we would receive God's approval because we obeyed them. ²²But Scripture states that the whole world is controlled by the power of sin. Therefore, a promise based on faith in Jesus Christ could be given to those who believe.

^b 2:21 Or "grace." ^a 3:19 Or "Moses' laws did this until the descendant referred to in the promise, to Abraham, came."

NOVEMBER 12

Galatians 3:1-4:31

No one can do anything to win God's approval or earn salvation. Paul taught that only faith in Christ can save people from their sins.





²³We were kept under control by Moses' laws until this faith came. We were under their control until this faith which was about to come would be revealed.

²⁴Before Christ came, Moses' laws served as our guardian. Christ came so that we could receive God's approval because of faith. ²⁵But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under the control of a guardian. ²⁶You are all God's children by believing in Christ Jesus. ²⁷Clearly, all of you who were baptized in Christ's name have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There are neither Jews nor Greeks, slaves nor free people, males nor females. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs, as God promised.

YOU ARE GOD'S CHILDREN

4 ¹Let me explain further. As long as an heir is a child, he is no better off than a slave, even though he owns everything. ²He is placed under the control of guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³It was the same way with us. When we were children, we were slaves to the principles of this world. ⁴But when the right time came, God sent his Son into the world. A woman gave birth to him, and he came under the control of God's laws. ⁵God sent him to pay for the freedom of those who were controlled by these laws so that we would be adopted as his children. ⁶Because you are God's children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into us to call out, "Abba!^a Father!" ⁷So you are no longer slaves but God's children. Since you are God's children, God has also made you heirs.

⁸When you didn't know God, you were slaves to things which are really not gods at all. ⁹But now you know God, or rather, God knows you. So how can you turn back again to the powerless and bankrupt principles of this world? Why do you want to become their slaves all over again? ¹⁰You religiously observe days, months, seasons, and years! ¹¹I'm afraid for you. Maybe the hard work I spent on you has been wasted.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR POSITIVE ATTITUDE?

¹²Brothers and sisters, I beg you to become like me. After all, I became like you were.

You didn't do anything wrong to me. ¹³You know that the first time I brought you the Good News I was ill. ¹⁴Even though my illness was difficult for you, you didn't despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were God's messenger^b or Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵What happened to your positive attitude? It's a fact that if it had been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶Can it be that I have become your enemy for telling you the truth?

¹⁷These people who distort the Good News, are devoted to you, but not in a good way. They don't want you to associate with me so that you will be devoted only to them. ¹⁸(Devotion to a good cause is always good, even when I'm not with you.)

¹⁹My children, I am suffering birth pains for you again until Christ is formed in you. ²⁰I wish I were with you right now so that I could change the tone of my voice. I'm completely puzzled by what you've done!

YOU ARE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE

²¹Those who want to be controlled by Moses' laws should tell me something. Are you really listening to what Moses' Teachings say? ²²Scripture says that Abraham had two sons, one by a woman who was a slave and the other by

^a4:6 *Abba* is Aramaic for "father." ^b4:14 Or "an angel of God."

What kind of family was Jesus born into on earth? (4:4)

Jesus is the Son of God. He was born into a Jewish family, one that respected and obeyed Moses' Teachings. His mother, Mary, was a virgin who became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, his earthly (adoptive) father was a carpenter, a skilled laborer. After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had other children.



a free woman. ²³Now, the son of the slave woman was conceived in a natural way, but the son of the free woman was conceived through a promise made to Abraham.

²⁴I'm going to use these historical events as an illustration. The women illustrate two arrangements.^c The one woman, Hagar, is the arrangement made on Mount Sinai. Her children are born into slavery. ²⁵Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. She is like Jerusalem today because she and her children are slaves. ²⁶But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷Scripture says:

"Rejoice, women who cannot get pregnant,
who cannot give birth to any children!
Break into shouting, those who feel no pains of childbirth!
Because the deserted woman will have more children
than the woman who has a husband."

²⁸Now you, brothers and sisters, are children of the promise like Isaac.

²⁹Furthermore, at that time the son who was conceived in a natural way persecuted the son conceived in a spiritual way. That's exactly what's happening now. ³⁰But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, because the son of the slave woman must never share the inheritance with the son of the free woman." ³¹Brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave woman but of the free woman.

LIVE IN THE FREEDOM THAT CHRIST GIVES YOU

5 ¹Christ has freed us so that we may enjoy the benefits of freedom. Therefore, be firm in this freedom, and don't become slaves again.

²I, Paul, can guarantee that if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. ³Again, I insist that everyone who allows himself to be circumcised must realize that he obligates himself to do everything Moses' Teachings demand. ⁴Those of you who try to earn God's approval by obeying his laws have been cut off from Christ. You have fallen out of God's favor.^a ⁵However, in our spiritual nature, faith causes us to wait eagerly for the confidence that comes with God's approval. ⁶As far as our relationship to Christ Jesus is concerned, it doesn't matter whether we are circumcised or not. But what matters is a faith that expresses itself through love.

⁷You were doing so well. Who stopped you from being influenced by the truth? ⁸The arguments of the person who is influencing you do not come from the one who is calling you. ⁹A little yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰The Lord gives me confidence that you will not disagree with this. However, the one who is confusing you will suffer God's judgment regardless of who he is. ¹¹Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching that circumcision is necessary, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the cross wouldn't be offensive anymore. ¹²I wish those troublemakers would castrate themselves.

¹³You were indeed called to be free, brothers and sisters. Don't turn this freedom into an excuse for your corrupt nature to express itself. Rather, serve each other through love. ¹⁴All of Moses' Teachings are summarized in a single statement, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." ¹⁵But if you criticize and attack each other, be careful that you don't destroy each other.

¹⁶Let me explain further. Live your life as your spiritual nature directs you. Then you will never follow through on what your corrupt nature wants. ¹⁷What your corrupt nature wants is contrary to what your spiritual nature wants, and what your spiritual nature wants is contrary to what your corrupt nature wants. They are opposed to each other. As a result, you don't always do what you

^c4:24 Or "covenants." ^a5:4 Or "grace."

Today

Ask God to open an opportunity for a conversation with someone who doesn't believe in Jesus. Ask God to help you communicate that good actions don't earn God's approval.

NOVEMBER 13

Galatians 5:1-6:18

Paul told the Galatians to encourage each other to be faithful. A life faithful to God, Paul explained, does not happen by accident but by purposely cultivating God-honoring habits.





intend to do. ¹⁸If your spiritual nature is your guide, you are not subject to Moses' laws.

¹⁹Now, the effects of the corrupt nature are obvious: illicit sex, perversion, promiscuity, ²⁰idolatry, drug use, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, conflict, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and things like that. I've told you in the past and I'm telling you again that people who do things like that will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their corrupt nature along with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by our spiritual nature, then our lives need to conform to our spiritual nature. ²⁶We can't allow ourselves to act arrogantly and to provoke or envy each other.

HELP CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS

6 ¹Brothers and sisters, if a person gets trapped by wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should help that person turn away from doing wrong. Do it in a gentle way. At the same time watch yourself so that you also are not tempted. ²Help carry each other's burdens. In this way you will follow Christ's teachings. ³So if any one of you thinks you're important when you're really not, you're only fooling yourself. ⁴Each of you must examine your own actions. Then you can be proud of your own accomplishments without comparing yourself to others. ⁵Assume your own responsibility.

WE WILL HARVEST WHAT WE PLANT

⁶The person who is taught God's word should share all good things with his teacher. ⁷Make no mistake about this: You can never make a fool out of God. Whatever you plant is what you'll harvest. ⁸If you plant in the soil of your corrupt nature, you will harvest destruction. But if you plant in the soil of your spiritual nature, you will harvest everlasting life. ⁹We can't allow ourselves to get tired of living the right way. Certainly, each of us will receive everlasting life, at the proper time, if we don't give up. ¹⁰Whenever we have the opportunity, we have to do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers.

PAUL SUMMARIZES HIS TEACHINGS ABOUT CIRCUMCISION

¹¹Look at how large the letters in these words, are because I'm writing this myself.

¹²These people who want to make a big deal out of a physical thing are trying to force you to be circumcised. Their only aim is to avoid persecution because of the cross of Christ. ¹³It's clear that not even those who had themselves circumcised did this to follow Jewish laws. Yet, they want you to be circumcised so that they can brag about what was done to your body. ¹⁴But it's unthinkable that I could ever brag about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. By his cross my relationship to the world and its relationship to me have been crucified. ¹⁵Certainly, it doesn't matter whether a person is circumcised or not. Rather, what matters is being a new creation. ¹⁶Peace and mercy will come to rest on all those who conform to this principle. They are the Israel of God.^a

¹⁷From now on, don't make any trouble for me! After all, I carry the scars of Jesus on my body.

¹⁸May the good will^b of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters! Amen.

Today

Review 5:19-26. Confess to God any sins in that list that you struggle with. Ask for his help in overcoming them and in developing the positive qualities instead.



^a6:16 Or "Peace and mercy will come to rest on them and on the Israel of God." ^b6:18 Or "grace."