

# Reading Through Galatians

*Faith Baptist Fellowship Bible Reading Initiative for January 2, 2012-January 31, 2012*

We recommend you have a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray. We also recommend you pray for a moment before you read God's word and ask for his illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit as you read. Be prepared to think carefully about what the author is conveying in the passage, what God's word is saying, and how you might apply it.

Abbreviations:           **TAI** – *Think About It*                                   **PP** – *Prayer Point*

## **Background/Context:**

Paul's letter to the Galatians was written to address a sudden crisis in the church. False teachers (called "Judaizers") were telling Gentiles that in order to be Christians they had to obey Jewish tradition, especially the sign of circumcision. Paul saw this teaching as a threat to God's free grace in the Gospel. We cannot receive the blessings of salvation by doing any works of the law but only by trusting in Jesus Christ. (The Doctrine of Justification by Faith). Paul passionately defends his apostolic authority to preach this Gospel of free grace and exhorts the church to live in spiritual freedom that belongs to them by God's grace.

## **Monday, January 2—Galatians 1:1-5**

**TAI:** How does Paul describe or present himself in vs 1? Is he standing alone in his position of leadership? Who does Paul associate with? If Paul was writing this as an email, who is he writing **to** (vs 2) and what does he put in the **subject** line (vs 3-5)? What is central in his opening statements? What can we learn about the qualifications or qualities needed in our spiritual leadership?

**PP:** As we enter in to a new year, praise God for the message of grace and peace found in the Gospel! Remember, it's not about you; it's all about Him. Pray He would be glorified in all we do. Pray for your spiritual leaders; that they continue to grow in their relationship with the Lord and in fellowship/accountability with other Godly people. Pray that the Gospel message be first and foremost in their lives as well as our own.

## **Tuesday, January 3—Galatians 1:6-9            Read also 1 John 4:1-6**

**TAI:** Note the similarities between Paul's admonition to the Galatians and the Apostle John's comments in 1 John 4. Do you remember what was "different" about the gospel the Judaizers were teaching in Galatia? What do you have to know to be able to tell the difference between an original and a counterfeit?

**PP:** Pray that we as people of Faith become so familiar with the key elements of the true Gospel that we not be led astray by a 'different' gospel. Pray that God would expose false teachings and lies that we may have bought in to in our own lives. Pray that God's truth would set us free!

## **Wednesday, January 4—Galatians 1:10-12**

**TAI:** What two incompatible goals is Paul presenting in these verses? Is it possible to face East and West at the same time? Apparently Paul was accused of peddling a false gospel himself and for wrong motives. How does he assure his readers that his message and motives are true?

**PP:** Pray that we would be a people of God's Word, convinced of its truth and reliability. Pray for personal boldness and courage to be faithful to serve God, no matter what kind of peer pressure we may face. Pray for our Pastoral staff and Elders to remain bold and faithful to preach and teach the whole counsel of God's word.

## **Thursday, January 5—Galatians 1:13-24**

TAI: There are three key questions to address in sharing a personal testimony: <sup>1)</sup> What was my life like before I met Christ? <sup>2)</sup> How did I meet Christ? <sup>3)</sup> How has my life changed since I met Christ? How did Paul answer each of these questions in these verses? Why do you think it was important for Paul to share that here in this letter? How would you answer these three questions in your life?

PP: If you have never written out your personal testimony to be able to share it in about three minutes, ask God to help you do that. Pray that God would provide you an opportunity to share your testimony with someone. (Perhaps someone on your Sacred 7 List.) Pray for boldness to do it when God gives you that opportunity!

## **Friday, January 6—Galatians 2:1-5**

TAI: After 14 years (from his conversion), Paul and Barnabas take Titus to Jerusalem. Who were they going to see? Who was Titus and why is he significant? Remember who the Galatians are? How was Titus treated by the Apostles in Jerusalem and why would that be an encouragement to the Galatians and to us today?

PP: Praise God that because of Paul's defense of the Gospel (justification by faith in Christ), that we have that truth preserved for us today! Pray for our missionaries who present and defend the Gospel often times in foreign cultures where they confront strange customs that enslave people. Pray for the men and women of Faith who teach our children, youth and adults-that they would be faithful in presenting and defending the Gospel in our classrooms.

## **Weekend, January 7-8--Your Best Love Now--Loving God Through Loving His Church** Ephesians 5: 18-21 and Acts 13:1-3

TAI: We begin a new sermon series this weekend focusing on the Five Commitments of Faith Baptist. This Sunday we will focus on "Loving Gathered Worship". What does "Worship" mean to you? How many "elements of worship" can you identify in these passages? What would these elements look like here at Faith? Could you share with someone a scripture that God has used this week to speak to you?

PP: Ask God to give you a new understanding of what it means to "worship" Him. Ask God to fill your heart with praise, thanksgiving and song!

## **Monday, January 9—Galatians 2:6-10**

TAI: How would you describe Paul's response to his meeting with the leaders in Jerusalem? Who were the leaders he met with and how did he describe them? What was their response to Paul and his ministry to the Gentiles? What things did they have in common and what differences did they have? What do we learn about God and the Gospel from this encounter?

PP: Praise God that He does not show partiality! The ground is level at the foot of the cross! We all have a specific ministry God has prepared and gifted us for, ask God to lead you into that ministry wherever that may be. While we all have different gifts and abilities, pray for unity as it applies to the purpose of those gifts-to present the Gospel!

## **Tuesday, January 10—Galatians 2:11-16**

TAI: A serious disagreement arose between two spiritual giants, what caused Paul to oppose Peter? What had Peter been doing and why did he stop? Why was Peter being hypocritical in his attitude toward Gentile Christians (vs14)? What was Paul's basis for confronting Peter's behavior? (His own opinions or something with greater authority?)

PP: Pray that our behavior as professing Christians be consistent with what we claim to believe. Pray that our outward actions would be in step with the truth of the Gospel. Pray for wisdom to know how to respond when we see obvious hypocritical behavior in the life of a fellow believer.

## **Wednesday, January 11—Galatians 2:17-21**

TAI: "Justified" means "declared righteous" by God. Some difficult verses (17-18). Paul's opponents had argued that since justification by faith eliminated the Law, it encouraged sinful living. A person could believe in Christ for salvation and then do as he pleased, having no need to do good works. Paul hotly denied the charge, especially noting that this made **Christ** the promoter of **sin**. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary). What had Paul died to and with Whom? What was Paul now able to do and why?

PP: Memorize Gal. 2:20, meditate on it, a most critical verse! Paul's testimony and the Gospel in a nutshell. May it be our testimony as well. Pray that God would give you a renewed vision and understanding of the Jesus who loves you and gave Himself for you.

## **Thursday, January 12—Galatians 3:1-9**

TAI: In Galatians 1 & 2, Paul defends his apostolic authority in order to defend the one true Gospel. In chapters 3 & 4, Paul explains his doctrine of justification by faith from the Old Testament. Receiving the Holy Spirit comes in response to being justified, how did the Galatians come to receive the Holy Spirit? How did Abraham come to be declared righteous (justified) in vs 6? How can we become sons and daughters of Abraham?

PP: Do you live and think and pray as though it is your own efforts that save you and earn God's approval of you? Ask God for saving faith! Ask for God's Spirit to keep you going and growing as a Christian and not to fall back in to the trap of relying on your own efforts.

## **Friday, January 13—Galatians 3:10-14**

TAI: Paul has just talked about "those of faith" (vs 7), now he moves on to those who rely on works of the law. What do we learn about their situation? Why is it hopeless to rely on our own efforts to please God? What role does Christ play in regards to "the curse". How does that role benefit the Gentile Galatians and us?

PP: Pray for those on your Sacred Seven list for they are under "the curse". Pray that they will realize the hopelessness of relying on their own efforts to please God. Pray that God will awaken faith in them.

## **Weekend, January 14/15--Your Best Love Now-Loving God Through Loving His Church** Psalm 119: 9-16 and 129-136

TAI & PP: This Sunday we will focus on "Loving Personal Worship". According to the Psalmist, what should be the basis of our personal worship/devotions? According to these passages, what are the benefits we receive from being in God's Word? Pray God would make these evident in your life.

## **Monday, January 16—Galatians 3:15-25**

TAI: Abraham lived 430 years before Moses and the 10 Commandments. If Abraham (and we) are justified by faith, the great questions then are “Why did God give His Law then?” and “What is the point of His Law for us today?” How does Paul answer these questions in this passage?

PP: God’s Law, the 10 Commandments, not only give us a list of ‘rules’ to live by; but they also give us a picture of God and His attributes. Ask God to reveal Himself to you through His Word. Can you describe Him? Praise Him for His attributes (who He is) and for His works!

## **Tuesday, January 17—Galatians 3:23-29**

TAI: What is true of every believer? What is Paul saying in verse 28? Compare this to what Paul says in Eph 5:22-23; Eph 6:5-9 and Rom 1:26-27. Remember what the ‘false teaching’ was that Paul was addressing in his letter to the Galatians? (See Background/Context). How does verse 29 address that teaching?

PP: Praise God that there can be unity within diversity. Ask God to help us ‘put on’ Christ, to make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires (Romans 13:14). Pray also that God encourage those who haven’t taken the step of baptism to do so, as a means of identifying with Him.

## **Wednesday, January 18—Galatians 4:1-11**

TAI: In chapter 3 Paul contrasts *faith* and *works* in his explanation of the doctrine of justification; in chapter 4 the main contrast is between *slavery* and *sonship*. What are the rights of an heir as opposed to a slave? How does one become an heir of God? Can slaves become heirs? Have you been “adopted” in to God’s family? Do you realize what you will inherit?!?!?

PP: Praise God that He has adopted us in to His family! Pray that God would open our eyes to all the implications of being His sons and daughters! Pray that God would send His Spirit in to our hearts in such a way that we would cry “Abba Father” (Daddy!!)

## **Thursday, January 19—Galatians 4:12-20**

TAI: What brought Paul to the Galatians in the first place? How did they respond to Paul? What was the result? Evidently a strong relationship had developed between Paul and Galatians, what happened to that relationship and why? What was Paul’s attitude toward the Galatians now?

PP: Are you facing a bodily ailment that has changed your plans or know of someone who is? Pray for God’s will to be done even in this and that His Gospel be proclaimed as a result. Pray for wisdom and strength to minister to those who are ailing. Pray for those of us who are caretakers of someone ailing.

## **Friday, January 20—Galatians 4:21-31**

TAI: Paul has already taught the Galatians that they are fully children of Abraham the moment they believed Christ ((ch 3, vs7). Now he uses the illustration of Abraham’s two sons to make his point. What are the differences between the birth of the two sons? What do the two mothers represent? (Remember, slavery represents trusting in good works to gain God’s approval.) Note the relationship between the two sons. What was the final action taken in relation to the slave woman and her son? What conclusions can we draw from this example?

PP: Hagar and Ishmael were the result of Abraham and Sarah taking matters in to their own hands and not trusting God's promises and timing. Pray for patience and the ability to trust in God's promises and timing. Ask God to show you areas where you may be taking matters in to your own hands and not trusting Him. Repent and pray for His forgiveness.

**Weekend, January 21/22--Your Best Love Now-Loving God Through Loving His Church**  
Hebrews 10: 23-25 and also 3:13

TAI: This Sunday the message will be about "Loving Togetherness". Note all the action verbs in these verses: "exhort, hold fast, stir up, encourage." What happens when we do these things? What happens when we stop? Who and what are we to keep our eyes on?

PP: Pray that we as a church body would be faithful in meeting together. Pray for God to 'stir us up' in our love for each other and for those who don't know Christ. Pray for our Faith Groups, that relationships would develop and grow, that we can encourage each other in our walks with the Lord.

**Monday, January 23—Galatians 5:1-6**

TAI: In this chapter Paul turns his attention to practical application of what he has covered in ch 3-4. What is Paul encouraging his readers to do in vs 1? Remember who the false teachers were and what they were teaching? What have the Galatians been set free from? Keep vs 4 in context, Paul is not discussing losing salvation. What he is saying is that if you seek to be justified by the Law (good works), then you move away from grace (trusting in Christ). You cannot have both just as you cannot face East and West at the same time.

PP: A difficult passage to wrestle with, but God promises to give us wisdom when we ask and His Spirit will teach us the truth. Pray for His wisdom and His Spirit to teach us. Pray that God would give us a passion for the Truth. Pray for our Pastors, Elders and all of our teachers that we would accurately handle the Truth.

**Tuesday, January 24—Galatians 5:7-12**

TAI: What does Paul compare the Christian life to? How had the Galatians been performing in the past? In the present? Again, what are the two 'gospels' being preached here? What does Paul feel about the false teachers (vs 29)? What does that indicate about the seriousness of false teaching?

PP: Pray for yourself: that God would keep you trusting in the Gospel truth and that you would not change course for anyone or anything else. Pray for our church: that God would protect it from persuasive and subtle false teaching.

**Wednesday, January 25—Galatians 5:13-15 (Read also Matt 22:34-40)**

TAI: What is Paul reminding his readers about in vs 13 (see 5:1) concerning the status of believers? How could this freedom be misused? (see Jan 11 meditation). How should it be used? How does Paul sum up the law and who summed it up like that before him? Okay, another tough question- Christians are not obliged to obey the law in order to be saved; but now that we are saved by grace, if anything we are more obligated to obey the law! Why?

PP: Praise God purchasing freedom for us! Pray that we will gratefully want to please Him who saved us at such a cost. Ask God to show us ways that we can show love through serving others.

## **Thursday, January 26—Galatians 5:16-25 Read also Ephesians 6:10-18**

TAI: Paul acknowledges that the Christian life is a struggle—a war between the flesh and the Spirit. What are the works of the flesh? What are the works of the Spirit? For believers, what has happened to our sinful nature (vs24)? What does it mean to “walk by the Spirit”?

PP: Did you memorize Gal 2:20? It resurfaces in this passage. Praise God that our sinful nature was crucified on the cross! Ask for the Holy Spirit’s guidance when making choices and decisions. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s power to lead you in fighting against your sinful nature and to produce His fruit in those areas of your life.

## **Friday, January 27—Galatians 5:26-6:5**

TAI: What does Paul warn his readers not to become (vs26)? What are the two outcomes of this? Who should confront a fellow believer caught in sin? And how? (Spiritual = living and walking according to Holy Spirit, see 5:16). In vs 1-5 Paul gives some more practical evidences of walking in the Spirit—can you identify what they are?

PP: It’s been said that the fastest answer you will receive to a prayer is to pray for humility (or for patience), any takers? Pray that God will keep us from being conceited and thinking we are really something. Pray that God pour out upon His church a spirit of gentleness and humility.

## **Weekend, January 28/29—Your Best Love Now-Loving God Through Loving His Church 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15**

TAI: This Sunday’s message will be about “Loving Generosity”. What do we learn about God in this passage? (see how many things you can come up with, there is at least a dozen). What do we learn about those who give? What do we learn about those who are the recipients of gifts? What is God’s inexpressible gift?

PP: Give thanks to God for His inexpressible gift of surpassing grace! Pray that God would bless us with a spirit of generosity so that we may give to the saints who are in need; not for the good feeling we may get but for the praises God will receive because of our gifts! Pray that God would show us how to give gifts to our community in creative ways that brings glory to Him. Pray for our Kingdom Opportunities Ministry team as they lead us in this area.

## **Monday, January 30— Galatians 6:6-10**

TAI: Paul continues with some practical exhortations. List all the things Paul encourages his readers NOT to do. What are the things Christians are encouraged TO do? What are the rewards?

PP: Pray for opportunities to ‘do good’ to those you meet today. Pray for courage and strength to not grow weary in doing good. Pray the same for our missionaries who serve around the world.

## **Tuesday, January 31—Galatians 6:11-18**

TAI: What amazing insights does Paul give us as to the motives of the false teachers (vs 12-13)? What do we learn about Paul’s motives for ministry? What is center stage in Paul’s closing comments? It’s the same as his opening comment—see Jan 2 reading.

PP: Pray for our Pastoral Staff and Leadership, that our motives for ministry be based solely upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Pray for our church and all its ministries—that we be Cross-Centered! May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, AMEN.