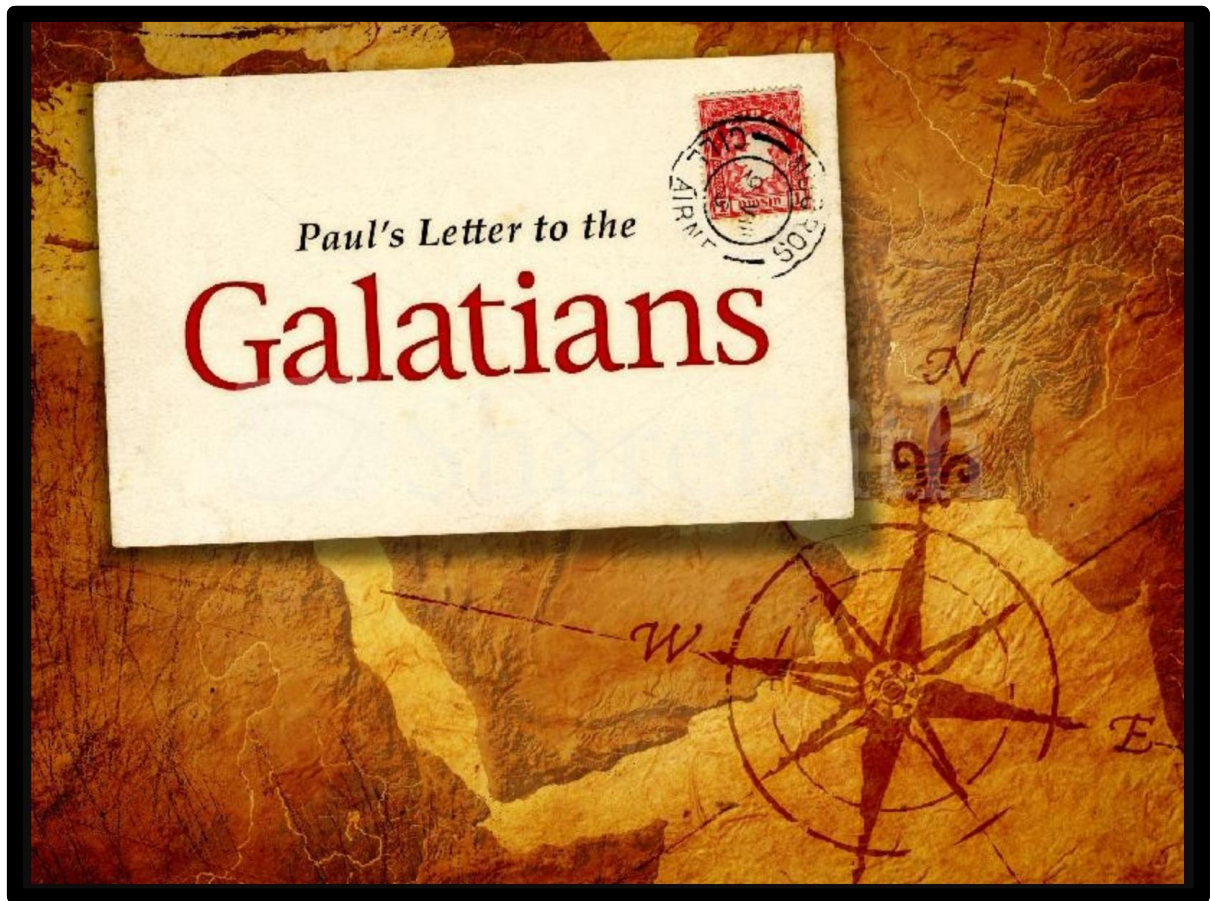


# STUDY GUIDE

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit”  
(Galatians 5:25)



“For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor  
uncircumcision, but a new creation.”  
(Galatians 6:15)

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## Using This Guide

The primary purpose of this guide is to provide you with the following.

- An overview of the book of Galatians through the table of contents.
- Relevant background information on this book from the English Standard Version Study Bible. The publisher allows for bible teachers to copy this background information provided it is used for non-commercial purposes, such as bible classes, and the information is attributed to the ESV Study Bible.
- The approximate pace of the one-quarter course on this Galatians, including an estimated start date for each chapter. The goal is to spend two weeks on each chapter for a total of 12 weeks (approximately one quarter).
- A series of questions, for each chapter, designed to walk you through the chapter, verse by verse. Questions are organized by verses that are grouped together conceptually.

A secondary purpose of the guide is to help you prepare for class. The questions in this Guide are the questions that will be asked during class after reading the chapter. There will, of course, be some deviation based on what is learned from the answers and the class discussion that ensues. But in general, the questions in this Guide are an accurate preview of what is to come in class.

In short, the Guide is designed to help you prepare for class beforehand by reading the scheduled chapter and answering the questions. When preparing for class, it may be helpful to keep in mind types of learning. As Christians, the learning goals should start with remembering, proceed to understanding, and result in applying what we remember and understand (James 1:22-25).

# Background<sup>1</sup>

## Galatians

### Author and Title

The first word of the letter to the Galatians is “Paul,” and there has been widespread agreement by scholars down through the ages that Paul is indeed the author. The title in most Greek editions of the NT is “To the Galatians,” and the main body of the letter mentions the addressees as “the churches of Galatia” (1:2) and “foolish Galatians!” (3:1). The only debate is, which Galatians? (See Purpose, Occasion, and Background.)

### Date

Although the question of the date of Galatians is related to this question of “which Galatians,” some clues can probably be found in the letter itself. The main indicator is the lack of reference to the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). Although this is an argument from silence, many commentators have regarded this as a “deafening silence.” It would have been enormously helpful to Paul’s argument if he could have mentioned the decision of the council that Gentiles should not be circumcised: this, after all, appears to be a major point of contention between Paul and the false teachers influencing the Galatians. Since the council took place in A.D. 48/49, and Paul evangelized South Galatia in A.D. 47/48, sometime around A.D. 48 is a plausible date for the composition of Galatians. However, determining dates in Paul’s life is always somewhat uncertain, and so one cannot place too much weight on the date in the interpretation of the letter.

### Theme

Christ’s death has brought in the age of the new covenant (3:23–26; 4:4–5, 24), in which believers do not have to become Jews or follow the outward ceremonies of the Mosaic law (2:3, 11–12, 14; 4:10). To require these things is to deny the heart of the gospel, which is justification by faith alone, not by obedience to the law (2:16; cf. 1:6–7). In this new age, Christians are to live in the guidance and power of the Spirit (chapters. 5–6).

### Purpose, Occasion, and Background

A crisis has hit the church in Galatia. The church came into being as a result of God’s Spirit at work in Paul’s proclamation of the gospel (3:1–5; 4:13–15). But within the short space of time since Paul

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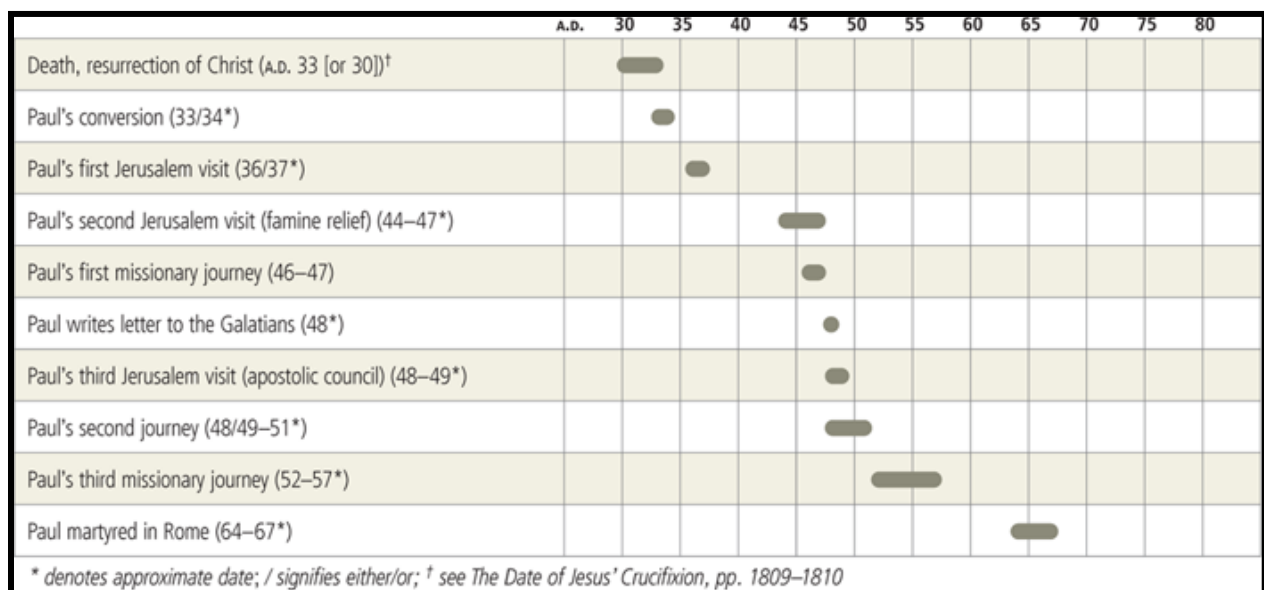
<sup>1</sup> The entire background section is from “The English Standard Version Study Bible (2007). Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Bibles.”

left (1:6), the church has been visited or infiltrated by false teachers whom Paul calls those “who trouble you” (1:7) or “those who unsettle you” (5:12). These teachers have convinced the Galatians of a false gospel which requires them to be circumcised. Paul sees that these pseudo-Christians merely want to win converts for their own prestige: they want to win approval from the Jewish authorities by showing how effective they are in converting Gentiles to a form of Judaism (6:12). Since the Jewish establishment approves of the fact that they are making Gentiles Jewish, the false teachers have the best of both worlds: they have created a sect of which they are the leaders, and they also escape any Jewish persecution. One further effect of this on the Galatians appears to have been the division within their church, presumably over these issues of circumcision and law that the false teachers have raised (5:15).

Although the Galatians appear to have come under the spell of these teachers and have become convinced of their teaching (1:6), Paul does not regard the situation as hopeless (3:4). Nevertheless, Paul is more critical of his audience here than in any other letter, and he chastises the Galatians for being foolish (3:1) and provides numerous reasons why they should return to the truth.

The less important question, which makes little difference to how one interprets the letter, is, which Galatians? There was a *people group* of Galatians who lived in the northern part of what is now Turkey, but there was a *Roman province* called Galatia that extended into southern Turkey. The Galatians in the letter are probably those in the Roman province, especially the southern part, because Paul did much less in the way of missionary activity in the north, and he usually refers to places by their Roman imperial names.

## Timeline



## Key Themes

1. **Freedom in Christ.** In his sin-bearing death, Christ is a substitute for all Christians, whom he brings into a new realm of freedom and life. (1:4; 2:20; 3:13)
2. **The Gospel is Divine.** This gospel of Christ is for humanity, but there is no sense in which it has its origin in humanity: it comes only from God. Paul is himself an illustration of this: his conversion to Christ and his apostleship were not through human consultation but through the direct revelation of Christ. (1:1, 11–12, 15–20)
3. **The Gospel is Accessed through Faith.** The gospel is appropriated not by works of law but by faith, which is the route to justification. (2:16)
4. **The Whole Law is a Curse.** To require circumcision and other Mosaic ceremonies such as dietary laws and Jewish holidays as a supplement to faith is to fall back from the realm of grace, faith, and freedom, and to come under the whole law and its curse, since comprehensive observance of the law is impossible. (2:12–14, 16; 3:10; 4:10; 5:3)
5. **Even Abraham was Justified by Faith.** OT Scripture itself testifies to the truth of justification by faith, both in the life of Abraham and in the prophecy of Habakkuk. (Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4)
6. **We Have Died to Sin in Christ.** The Christian life has its source in the believer having died with Christ to sin, and thereby having renounced the flesh. (5:24; 6:14)
7. **The Flesh Profits Nothing; The Spirit Gives Life.** The Spirit is the source of power and guidance in the Christian life, and the work of the Spirit produces love and faith. (5:6, 16, 18, 25)
8. **Please Christ Rather than Men.** The Christian life consists not in pleasing people but in pleasing Christ our master and being willing to suffer persecution for the sake of his cross. (1:10; 6:12, 14)

## History of Salvation Summary

Through Jesus Christ, salvation and justification come to both Jew and Gentile, fulfilling the promise to Abraham of blessing to the nations (3:8; Gen. 12:3). (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the Overview of the Bible.)

## Literary Features

Like the rest of the Pauline letters, Galatians follows the conventions of letter writing in NT times. There is a salutation, a body, a *paraenesis* (set of moral exhortations), greetings, and a benediction. There is no initial thanksgiving, however, which indicates Paul’s agitation and alarm over the theological situation in Galatia. Paul gets right to the point, which is that the Galatians are in danger of turning to a different gospel, thereby risking the everlasting ruin of their souls. The main argument of the epistle is advanced by the use of autobiography, example, allegory, satiric rebuke, and exhortation.

The doctrinal thrust of Galatians gives it a strong internal unity. In one way or another, everything in the epistle is related to Paul's defense of justification by faith alone. The letter is also unified by the apostle's intensity of tone, which comes through as strongly here as it does in any of his writings—especially in his intolerance of false doctrine and his indignation with people who promote it. Stylistically, Galatians finds literary coherence in its thematic contrasts: the true gospel vs. a false gospel, faith vs. works, law vs. grace, liberty vs. legalism, sonship vs. slavery, and the fruit of the Spirit vs. the desires of the flesh.

## Ancient Galatia

“Galatia” was originally a Celtic region in north central Asia Minor (modern Turkey). It became a client kingdom of Rome under Pompey (mid-1st century B.C.). With the death of the client king Amyntas (d. 25 B.C.) an expanded Galatia came under a Roman governor. In Paul's day the province of Galatia included parts of Pontus and Paphlagonia to the east and north and encompassed portions of Phrygia, Pisidia, Isauria, Lycaonia, and Cilicia to the south. Thus, many of the cities of Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13–14) were considered part of the province of Galatia (or at least near its sphere of influence). Starting with territorial alterations under the emperor Vespasian (end of the 1st century A.D.), the province changed shape; thus, the other ethnic territories were gradually drawn off, back to their earlier affiliations, and the province of Galatia returned to its more ethnically defined northern boundaries. Some contend that these subsequent reductions to the province of Galatia influenced the later church fathers to assume that Paul wrote his epistle to residents of northern Galatia. Archaeological evidence indicates a combination of Hellenistic, Celtic, and Roman influences in the province of Paul's time.



## The Setting of Galatians

(c. A.D. 48)

Paul's letter to the Galatians was likely written to the churches he had established during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–14:28). He probably wrote the letter from his home church in Antioch in Syria, sometime before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1–31).

## Outline

It is difficult to divide Galatians into neat sections, since Paul returns to the same themes on numerous occasions and often moves gradually into different topics rather than breaking off sharply to address a new theme. The following can serve as a rough guide.

### I. Opening (1:1–9)

- A. Greeting (1:1–5)
- B. Initial rebuke (1:6–9)

### II. Indirect Appeal: Paul's Career with the Gospel (1:10–2:21)

- A. Paul's defense of himself and the gospel (1:10–24)
- B. Paul's gospel recognized by the Jerusalem apostles (2:1–10)
- C. Paul's opposition to Peter, to preserve the truth of the gospel (2:11–21)

### III. Direct Appeals to the Galatians (3:1–5:12)

- A. The Galatians' experience of conversion (3:1–5)
- B. The gospel in the OT (1): Abraham (3:6–9)
- C. The gospel in the OT (2): Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Habakkuk (3:10–14)
- D. An illustration from human law (3:15–18)
- E. Passing from slavery to sonship (3:19–4:7)
- F. Passing from idolatry to the true God (4:8–11)
- G. Appeal to the Galatians' knowledge of Paul (4:12–20)
- H. The gospel in the OT (3): Abraham's sons (4:21–31)
- I. Judgment for those who turn from the gospel (5:1–12)

### IV. Life in the Spirit and Love (5:13–6:10)

- A. The law of love (5:13–15)
- B. The desires of the flesh vs. the fruit of the Spirit (5:16–26)
- C. A Christian life of concrete love (6:1–10)

### V. Final Warning (6:11–18)



**Spring 2018 Class Schedule**  
(Approximate Pace)

Chapter and Topic	Date
Chapter 1: The One and Only Good News.....	3/14
Chapter 2: The True Temple.....	3/28
Chapter 3: Born Again.....	4/11
Chapter 4: Living Water .....	4/25
Chapter 5: Jesus is God's Son.....	5/09
Chapter 6: The Bread of Life .....	5/23

## Chapter 1: The One and Only Good News!

1. What insight does verse 1 provide regarding Paul's Apostleship?
2. What salutation to the churches in Galatia does Paul offer and what does this salutation mean?
3. What insights do verses 4 and 5 provide regarding Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?
4. What were the churches of Christ in Galatia doing that amazed Paul?
5. What warning, in verses 8 and 9, does Paul issue to these churches?
6. According to verses 10 and 11, what does Paul point to as the underlying motivation for the churches willingness to distort the Gospel of Christ?
7. How did Paul receive the Gospel, according to verse 12?

8. How did Paul summarize his former manner of life according to verses 13 and 14?

9. How did Paul describe his birth and its purpose in life, according to verses 15 and 16?

10. What is the point of verses 17-21?

11. What were the churches in Judea saying and doing because of Paul's conversion?

## Chapter 2: Paul's Spiritual Credentials

**Table 1. Paul Visits to Jerusalem in Galatians and Acts**

<b>Galatians</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Acts</b>	<b>Event</b>
1:15-17	Paul's Conversion	9:1-25	Paul's Conversion
1:18	Three years after conversion, first visit to Jerusalem	9:26-30	With Barnabas in Jerusalem
2:1-10	14 years after conversion (or after first trip?), Paul meets with "pillars" of the church	11:29-30	Famine relief visit to Jerusalem
2:11-14	Dispute in Antioch	15:1-2	Dispute in Antioch
	Paul writes Galatians		
		15:2-19	Council in Jerusalem

**Source: The English Standard Version Study Bible (2007).**

1. Why did Paul wait fourteen years to go up to Jerusalem and what was his purpose for going?
  
2. Why did Paul share the Gospel in private rather than in public?
  
3. Based on verses 3-6, what can we infer was the "popular" doctrine in Jerusalem at that time?
  
4. According to verses 7 and 8, what role did Paul have, relative to Peter, in spreading the Gospel?

5. Who extended the right-hand of fellowship to Paul, and what did this mean in the context of Chapter 2?
  
6. What did the “pillars” asked Paul and Barnabas specifically to do?
  
7. According to verses 11-13, what happened when Peter came to Antioch? How does this situation shed light, if at all, on what Paul refers to as “a little leaven leavens the whole loaf” in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:6?
  
8. According to verses 14-16, How does Paul address the situation with Peter and what does the situation say about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles (even after Jesus died on the cross and broke down the dividing wall?)

**Application Question related to verses 14-16.** Do you in your heart and actions, or both, sometimes rebuild the dividing wall either consciously or sub-consciously (e.g., consider race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other factors in daily interactions with Christians and those outside the faith?)

**Table 2. Spectrum of Early Beliefs about How Christians Should Relate to the Law of Moses**

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Gentile (professing) Christians	The law has absolutely no claim on their lives (Presupposed in Rom. 6:1,16)	
Jewish and Gentile Christians	Christians are not under the law covenant even though they are certainly not free from God's demands. Kosher food laws could be observed, and circumcision practiced as pastoral wisdom dictated.	Paul
Jewish Christians	They understood and accepted Paul's position, but their personal "comfort zone" was to be observant Jews, at least most of the time. Circumcision and kosher food laws are not necessary for salvation or maturity, and they shouldn't be imposed on Gentile believers.	
Jewish (professing) Christians	Jewish Christians should observe the Mosai code, and Gentile believers can come to Christ through faith alone. However, the spiritual should want to obey the Mosaic law code (even if it wasn't) strictly necessary for salvation).	Certain men from James? (Gal. 2:12a)
Jewish Christians	The new covenant was a renewal of the old covenant; Jesus is the Messiah, but his life, death, and resurrection restored God's people to faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant. Therefore, if Gentiles want to come to the Messiah, they must first become Jews (and be circumcised, observe kosher and Sabbath laws, etc.). (Cf. Acts 15:1-35; Titus 1:10).	
Jewish (professing) Christians	The new covenant was a renewal of the old covenant; Jesus is the Messiah, but his life, death, and resurrection restored God's people to faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant. Therefore, if Gentiles want to come to the Messiah, they must first become Jews (and be circumcised, observe kosher and Sabbath laws, etc.). (Cf. Acts 15:1-135; Titus 1:10).	Council in Jerusalem
Devout, non-Christian Jews	Christians are mistaken about the identify of Jesus, and the Jewish boundaries should not be opened to the Gentiles (Cf. Acts 21:27-23:11)	The circumcised (Rom. 4:12a)

**Source: The English Standard Version Study Bible (2007).**

9. According to verses 17-19, what was the fundamental problem with the Jews emphasizing the works of the Law, circumcision, to be justified with God?

10. According to verse 20, what is the point of being crucified with Christ? How are we today crucified with Christ (Hint: see Romans Chapter 6).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. According to verse 21, why is it illogical to assert that righteousness comes from the Law (of Moses)?

### **Chapter 2 Applications**

When you consider what was covered in the Chapter, list 2 lessons you learned and how these lessons can be applied to daily living?

### Chapter 3: Blessings Come Through Faith

1. Why does Paul use such strong language in verse 1 to rebuke the Galatian Christians (Hint: the answer is in verse 1!)?
  
2. What were the answers to questions Paul posed to the Galatians in verses 2-5:
  - a. Verse 2: Receiving the Gospel?
  
  - b. Verse 3: Perfected by the flesh?
  
  - c. Verse 4: Suffering in vain?
  
  - d. Verse 5: Works of Law or hearing by faith?
  
3. According to verse 6, why was Abraham accepted as righteous in God's sight? What was the implication of this "acceptance of righteousness" for the Galatian Christians (and for Christians today)?



4. According to verses 10-12,
  - a. Why are the works under the Law a curse?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Why is it that no one is justified by the Law?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Why is it that the Law is not of faith?
  
5. According to verses 13 and 14:
  - a. How did Christ redeem us from the Law?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Why was the way that Christ died, through crucifixion, relevant to the discussion of Abraham and the Law?
  
6. Now, review verses 15-18. What is the main point Paul is making? (Hint: focus on verses 17 and 18)

7. According to verses 19-24, if the Law does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, why the Law then?
  - a. Verse 19:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Verse 21-24:
  
8. According to verse 25, are we still under the Law? Explain your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. How are Christians Sons of God?
  - a. Verse 26:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Verse 27:
  
10. According to verses 28 and 29, what does it mean to be a Son of God?

### **Chapter 3 Applications**

When you consider what was covered in the Chapter, list 2 lessons you learned and how these lessons can be applied to daily living?

### Chapter 4: Children of Sarah

1. What is the difference between the heir, when he or she is a child, and a slave? What is the irony in this difference?
2. How long is the heir under guardians and managers?
3. What does all of this (answers to “1.” and “2.”) have to do with Christians in Galatia and with Christians today?
4. According to verse 8, in the past, what were Galatian Christians—back then and Christians today--before they came to know God?
5. According to verses 9-10, what were Galatian Christians mistakenly doing?
6. What is the main point Paul is making in verse 11?
7. What is the point Paul is making in verses 12-16?

8. Who is Paul referring to in verse 18 when he says “they”?
9. Why was Paul perplexed by the Galatians? What does he mean that he is in labor until they are fully formed?
10. Now, let’s explore the Allegory of Haggar and Sarah.

**Table 3. Contrasts in Paul’s Allegory (4:21-31)**

Slave Woman	Free Woman
Ishmael	Issac
According to the flesh	According to the Promise
Hagar	Sarah
Slavery	Freedom
Present Jerusalem--Below	Heavenly Jerusalem--Above
Persecuting	Persecuted

**Source: The English Standard Version Study Bible (2007).**

- a. Verse 23: What is the difference between the Son of the bond woman (Haggar) and the Son of the free woman (Sarah)
- b. Verse 24 and 25: What does each of them represent?

- c. Verse 26: How were the Galatian Christians like Isaac (if they did not go back under the Law)?
11. Staying with the Allegory, what did Paul say was the **solution**— to Isaac's persecution during—Old Testament times, and how did that apply to Galatian Christians back then (and to Christians today)?

#### Chapter 4 Applications

When you consider what was covered in the Chapter, list 2 lessons you learned and how these lessons can be applied to daily living?

### Chapter 5: Keep Your Freedom

1. Why did Christ set the Galatians Christians free and what is the yoke of slavery Paul is referencing?
2. How were the Galatians Christians severing themselves from Christ (Hint: see verses 4-6)?
3. What are some main takeaways from verses 7-9?
4. According to verse 11, what personal experience did Paul have that led him to conclude that circumcision is a false doctrine?
5. Now, review verses 11-13. What was the problem with the false doctrine of circumcision, and what was it preventing the Galatian Christians from doing?
6. According to verses 16 and 17, what advice does Paul give the Galatian Christians to inoculate them against the infectious disease of false doctrine?

7. What follows is a listing of the deeds of flesh from verses 19-21. Write out a definition for each one (the list is from the New American Standard version of the Bible)?

a. **Immorality:**

b. **Impurity**

c. **Sensuality:**

d. **Idolatry:**

e. **Sorcery:**

f. **Enmities:**

g. **Strife:**

h. **Jealousy:**

i. **Outbursts of anger:**

j. **Disputes**

k. **Dissensions:**

l. **Factions:**

m. **Envyng:**

n. **Drunkenness**

o. **Carousing:**

p. **Things Like These:**



8. Why are the deeds of the flesh important and so potential devastating spirituality?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What follows is a list of the fruit of the Spirit from verses 22-23. Write out a definition for each one (the list is from the New American Standard version of the Bible)?
  - a. **Love:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. **Joy:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. **Peace:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - d. **Kindness:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - e. **Goodness:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - f. **Faithfulness:**

**g. Gentleness:**

**h. Self-control:**

10. Why is there freedom in the fruit of the Spirit? What does the term “fruit of the Spirit” mean and what is the practical implication for Christians today?

11. According to verses 24 and 25, what are some indicators that a Christian is not walking by the Spirit and hence, not exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit?

## Chapter 6: Help Each Other

1. According to verse 1, what is an indicator of a Christian who is walking by the Spirit?
2. What is an indicator of a Christian who is truly obeying the Law of Christ?
3. What are the main takeaways from verses 3-5?
4. What is Paul talking about in verse 6?
5. Verse 7-8 has two extremely important ideas about life? What are they (Hint: verse 7 summarizes the two points and verse 8 give a specific example).
6. What is the encouragement and exhortation that Paul offers in verses 9 and 10?

7. According to verses 11 and 12, what has been the motivation behind the effort to promote the false doctrine of circumcision?
  
8. According to verse 13, what is the hypocrisy in promoting circumcision?
  
9. What was Paul's perspective regarding bragging?
  
10. If circumcision is not important, then what is (Hint: see verse 15)?
  
11. What behavioral change did Paul want to see from the Galatian Christians?
  
12. What evidence did Paul have that he had been a good soldier of Christ?
  
13. Ultimately, what did Paul leave the Galatians Christians with?

### Chapter 6 Applications

When you consider what was covered in the Chapter, list 2 lessons you learned and how these lessons can be applied to daily living?