

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Faith—The Only Way
Galatians 3:1-18

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Have a brightly wrapped gift box containing an assortment of odds and ends. Include in the box a paper with "Some assembly required" written in large letters. Ask someone to open the box to introduce the study.

Bible Study Leader:

Copy the following statement on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard: **Faith, not doing good works or keeping the rules, is the way to a genuine relationship with God.**

Each youth will need a blank sheet of notebook paper and a pen for their Study application time.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Amazing Grace. Various hymnals. *The Worship Hymnal* #104; CCLI # 22025 (Public Domain)

Jesus Loves Me. Various hymnals. *The Worship Hymnal* # 652; CCLI # 58415 (Public Domain)

Grace Alone. *The Worship Hymnal* # 112; CCLI #2335524

Behold What Manner of Love . *Maranatha Praise!* 3rd Edition. #15; CCLI #1596

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus. Various sources. *The Worship Hymnal* #434; CCLI # 5077724 or 2151540

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Faith—The Only Way

Focal Text

Galatians 3:1-18

Background Text

Galatians 3:1-18

Main Idea

A genuine relationship with God comes by faith, not by doing good works or keeping the rules.

Question to Explore

How can a person—any person—have a genuine relationship with God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to understand and be able to explain why faith, not doing good works or keeping the rules, is the way to a genuine relationship with God.

Gathering together:

Sing **Amazing Grace**. Various hymnals. *The Worship Hymnal* #104; CCLI # 22025 (Public Domain).

First thoughts:

Devotion: Have you ever shopped for a child's birthday gift? You may find the perfect gift. A sales assistant may hand you the boxed gift and you may note to your surprise that the box was a lot smaller than the gift. If you are present when the gift is opened you may read the most dreaded statement of our day: "some assembly required!" (If you have wrapped a gift as suggested in the "Gathering Time" ideas, use the gift to introduce the study.)

What if you were in charge of new arrival processing for heaven? What kind of paperwork would you require? Would you present an instruction sheet that would be as

confusing as the one we use to assemble the gift. We should know that God only requires one line to be filled in, “**Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? Yes or no?**” Today we shall see how the Galatians were tempted to add works to God’s requirement for new life.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Faith—The Only Way

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Background Text

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Question to Explore

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Teaching Aim

To lead participants to understand and be able to explain why faith, not doing good works or keeping the rules, is the way to a genuine relationship with God.

Introduction to your personal study:

How can a person have a genuine relationship with God? Ask this question of people and you will receive varied answers such as these: go to church, be good to your family and neighbors, love God, try to obey the Ten Commandments, give to provide food for the hungry, be concerned for the environment, protest for world peace, have a family heritage of belonging to a church, performing certain rituals such as being baptized, observing communion, going to confession. The answers are many. This lesson seeks to answer the question.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Questions About Faith and Works Galatians 3:1-5

Paul now moves from defending his apostleship. He emphasizes the supreme place of faith and explains the role of the law in God’s relations with man. The Galatian Christians had introduced Jewish festivals and ceremonies trying to combine Jewish law with the Gospel. Paul is overwhelmed with their behavior and calls them foolish. He illustrates how a right standing with God by keeping the law is totally opposite to how they really became Christians.

He begins by asking four questions. In the first question he asks if they received the Holy Spirit by observing the law or by believing what they had heard. He questions why they should go back to the Law when it was hearing and faith that brought them into a relationship with Christ. They had become Christians by hearing the gospel and accepting it. They had not become Christians because of observance of the law.

In the second question he asks the Galatians if they are trying with human effort to finish something that was begun supernaturally by God. Paul is emphasizing this relationship to God that was provided by God. He pursues this further. The Galatians had begun this relationship by accepting Christ as Savior. Now, are they trying to complete it with mere human effort and behavior. The Judaizers believed that faith in Christ was the beginning and that it was completed by being circumcised. Paul refutes this.

Paul in the third question asks whether the Galatians had learned anything from their experience. Did the Galatians learn anything from this or was the experience just wasted?

In the fourth question he asks them why God gives his spirit and why he worked miracles among them. Was it their obedience to the law and what they had done? Or, was it because of what they had heard and believed? It was not because of their keeping the law, but because they had reacted in faith to the gospel of Jesus.

Abraham, Scripture and Faith Galatians 3:6-14

Paul turns from his own experience of faith to the scripture to prove the superiority of faith over the law. Paul’s training and experience as a rabbi qualified him for this. Those teachers that the Galatians were listening to had also used the scripture to try to persuade them to follow the law. Paul argues from the positive side of justification by faith in vv. 6-9. Then in vv. 10-14 he argues from the negative side against justification by works.

Paul's approach from the scripture begins with Abraham. Abraham's righteousness before God came as he accepted God's promise by faith. Abraham became righteous long before he was circumcised and years before Moses received the law. By faith Abraham was righteous by faith in God's promise. Circumcision began with Moses and the law that came later. Those spiritual ancestors of Abraham that believed received the same righteousness.

The words "the scripture foresaw" is the same as saying "the God of the scripture says." God would justify Gentiles by faith and announced it to Abraham by saying that "**all nations would be blessed through you.**" This was in anticipation of Christ's sacrificial death and his triumphant victory over death.

People of faith are enjoying the same blessings of God just as Abraham was enjoying them – all because of faith.

Paul has given a new meaning of the Abrahamic family. It was not the blood descendant of Abraham who received the blessing of God but the spiritual (faith) descendant of Abraham that was blessed.

The Curse of The Law and Jesus Galatians 3:10-14

Paul uses scriptures just as the Judaizers were also using scripture. Paul points out that Leviticus 27:29 promises that the man who does not completely obey the law is cursed.

Paul continues to cite scripture to reinforce his argument for faith. Habbakuk 2:4 promises that the "**just shall live by faith.**"

Using Leviticus 18:5, Paul points out that the Law requires words and doing, not trusting and faith. It says that one who keeps the complete law will live. Paul understood that no one could completely obey the law and because of this all were under condemnation and were cursed. The unachievable keeping of the Law was viewed as a curse.

Deuteronomy 21:23 is quoted to show that Jesus became mankind's substitute by taking upon himself the curse of the law. Jesus carried the curse but not for Himself.

The Unending and Non-cancelable Promise Galatians 3:15-18

Paul moves his argument from the scriptures to an example from life. He uses the common contract or will to illustrate the promise given to Abraham and his spiritual descendent. A contract once made was non-revocable and could not be changed without the willing participation of both contracting parties. What should happen between two humans should be even truer of God in his relationships with man.

Paul interrupts his illustration restating that God's promise was to Abraham and to his heir. The will, the promises, were made not only to Abraham but to one particular descendant, Christ, and not all his descendants. It was not to **"many people but to 'your seed'"** who Paul interprets as Christ.

Paul explains further his illustration from life. A contract or will made 430 years after the original will or contract was made does not affect the original document. In the case of the promise made to Abraham, it is not canceled by the coming of the law. God did not intend that the law should supersede the agreement he had previously made. The provisions of the will (promise) are still in effect. The giving of the law did not cancel it out.

The argument continues: If the inheritance then depends on the law which came later, then the inheritance does not depend on the original promise. Then we are reminded that God gives the inheritance to Abraham through a promise, not through the law. The Jews viewed the law as God's final revelation for his people. They had seen Jesus as the Messiah. However they did not see this as a reason for removing the necessity for keeping of the law and circumcision. They saw the promise and the law as complementary. Paul saw the promise and law as exact opposites. He states that a God of grace gave it to Abraham through a promise (not through a future law).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This Bible study presents a very strong argument for trusting one's faith in Jesus that is highly relevant today in the lives of those in your church. For the followers of Jesus, it will serve to strengthen their own faith. It will also encourage them to share with non-believers that leading a "good" life is expected by God but will not provide spiritual salvation. As the Teaching Aim of this session states, your goal is to lead participants to understand and be able to explain why faith, not doing good works or keeping the rules, is the way to a genuine relationship with God.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Faith—The Only Way

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the *Focal Text* in their Bibles. Also, share with them the *Main Idea* to be learned from the Scriptures, and the *Questions to be Explored* by the group.

Focal Text

Galatians 3:1-18

Background Text

Galatians 3:1-18

Main Idea

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Question to Explore

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Connect with Life:

Tell this story: A father and two year old son come into a restaurant. Floating against a ceiling ten feet up are a number of balloons, red, blue, green, and yellow. Hanging from each balloon is a string about three feet long so they can be pulled down off the ceiling and given to young customers. The two year old boy looks up and sees the balloons. Without making a noise he opens his arms to get one of the balloons. His little arms are far from the desired balloon on the ceiling. He opens his arms wider. He seeks to stretch to reach but is far short of his target. He keeps reaching without results. The

father reaches up above his head for the string attached to a balloon. He pulls it down and hands it to the two year old son.

How did the boy get the balloon? Was it due to his reaching and stretching? Did his own efforts cause him to obtain the coveted balloon? This is an illustration of how we obtain a relationship to God. Is it because of our efforts or is it because of actions of God?

Guide the Study:

Say: Paul questions the Galatians as to why they have turned away from faith for their salvation to trying to earn their relationship to God. He is probing to find why in the world they are changing their beliefs after they have experienced salvation. He asks them four questions in Galatians 3:1-5 to assist them in their understanding. Watch for these questions as we read.

Read Galatians 3:1-5.

Ask the group: What is the question in v. 1 (Who has bewitched you?)

Say: The Galatians had understood the gospel and had responded to it in faith. Now teachers were hoodwinking them, giving them an evil eye, so that they would believe that they must observe the law to have salvation.

Comment: Question two is in v. 2. “Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?” Paul is asking the Galatians how they received the Spirit of God. The answer is that they received the Spirit by believing the Gospel, not by observing the law.

Continue: The question in v. 4 is “Have you suffered so much for nothing?” Paul asks them, “Haven’t you learned anything from your experience?” This question can be interpreted three ways. It could be a positive one emphasizing that they received Christ as Savior. It could be used neutrally, or it could be used negatively indicating that they really had not learned anything from that experience.

Add: In v. 5 Paul asks his fourth question “Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?” Paul does not answer it.

Now question the group: If you were a Galatian, how would you answer?

Pause for answers. The answer you get from the group should be that God worked miracles and gave his Spirit because of what they heard—not because of what the Galatians did.

Say: Paul now tries to help the Galatians know how salvation comes by giving an illustration from the Old Testament.

Ask someone to read Galatians 3:6-9.

Ask: What did Abraham do to be counted righteous? (He believed).

Ask: What did the Scripture see ahead of time? (God would justify the Gentiles by faith).

Say: Verse 9 tells us that all who have faith are blessed along with Abraham.

Say: Paul continues to teach the Galatians by using the Old Testament.

Have someone read Galatians 3:10-14.

Have someone read Deuteronomy 27:26.

Point out that this is the verse quoted in Galatians 10:10 to indicate that anyone who does not do everything in the law is “cursed.”

Read Habakkuk 2:4 and say: This is the verse Paul quotes in Galatians 10:11.

Tell the class: Paul moves ahead in his reasoning. In v. 14 it says that God redeemed us in order that Abraham’s blessing might come to the Gentiles.

Read Galatians 3:15-18.

Seek answers to the following questions:

What was the event that is recorded in v. 16? (The promise was made to Abraham and to his seed).

Who was that seed? (Christ).

What happened 430 years later? (The law was introduced).

What did the inheritance depend on, the promise or the law? (The promise).

Tell the group: God gave it to Abraham through the promise.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Summarize:

One. Paul uses the Galatians' own experience to show that they gained a relationship to God through faith.

Two. Righteousness comes to us because of the promise to Abraham and not through the law given to Moses.

Three. Righteousness comes to us through faith because Christ rescued us from the curse of the law by becoming the curse himself.

Four. Righteousness comes to us because of the priority of the promise to Abraham over the law given 430 years later.

Write on whiteboard or newsprint: **Faith, not doing good works or keeping the rules, is the way to a genuine relationship with God.**

Have a Christian member pray thanking God for Christ providing this relationship to Him through faith.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Faith—The Only Way Galatians 3:1-18

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Each of you write a brief definition of faith on slips of paper. Share your definition with others in the group. Some people emphasize the important of correct belief; others are more concerned with correct behaviour. Others emphasize a relationship with Christ as the most essential element in faith. All of these are important to the faith experience. Which one is Paul emphasizing to the Galatian Christians?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Faith—The Only Way***
Galatians 3:1-18**Beginning the Service:**

Sing one or more of the following:

Jesus Loves Me. Various hymnals. *The Worship Hymnal* # 652; CCLI # 58415 (Public Domain)

Grace Alone. *The Worship Hymnal* # 112; CCLI #2335524

Behold What Manner of Love . *Maranatha Praise!* 3rd Edition. #15; CCLI #1596

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Pray for refugees fleeing oppression and poverty. As they journey to a new country, they may spend time in refugee camps and/or experience hunger, cold, illness and loneliness. Pray for those who minister on the “refugee highway” trying to bring hope as well as meet basic needs for food and shelter. May the refugees encounter people who express Christian love to them.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

“Do It Yourself” Salvation?
Galatians 3:1-5

Introduction:

Anna B. Warner wrote the beautiful words to *Jesus Loves Me*. The fourth verse contains the line “If I love Him, when I die He will take me home on high.” A wise Christian said: “I always change the phrase to say, ‘Since He loves me.’” I like the idea that nothing I do will help me go to heaven. All I know is that I have trusted Jesus and he needs nothing more added to his work on the cross.”

Paul reminds us, ***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).”***

Some of the Galatians made a mistake. They were certain observing the law was necessary to be saved by Christ. Paul wanted it known with no uncertainty that salvation was by faith alone. Nothing could be done to make anyone more saved!

Today, if you ask people what they have done to get to heaven, most answers will include the idea of doing more good than bad. The concept of accepting the Sacrifice of Christ seems just too simple. Scripture is clear, ours is not a “do it yourself salvation”. It is uniquely by faith alone.

I. The Cross of Christ needs no help from anyone.

The Galatians had received the Gospel and experienced salvation. Then they listened to some that said they must keep the Jewish law to be saved. The cross of Christ wouldn't be enough. Paul was so incensed by the thought of diminishing the Cross he called the Galatians foolish for entertaining the thought. He concluded they had been bewitched. No one should be that easily deceived. Persuasive false teachers sounded reasonable but were dead wrong. Paul wanted to know if the Galatians started with the Spirit but now wished to continue by the flesh.

Amazingly, many believe that works count for Salvation. They expect God to keep a sheet with two lists on each of us. One list contains all the bad things we have done. The other list includes all the good deeds credited to us. We expect that when we get to the end of our lives, if the good outweighs the bad, God will allow us into heaven. We are very careful to count every good deed we do but may not be very good at remembering all the bad. Serving man, doing what we feel is right and providing better living conditions for others will count in our favour. If we believe these ideas, do we feel foolish because we have been bewitched? We should. The Cross of Christ needs no help, period!

II. The entire Christian life is based on God's grace and the Holy Spirit's leadership.

The Spirit enters our lives when we are saved. He comes by faith. How could we ever think we could be perfected by flesh? Abraham was counted as righteous when he by faith believed God. He received salvation before the Law had been given!

Many people buy houses. They do not always have the money to pay for it. They pay some down on the house and then pay some each month until the debt is paid in full. The Galatians fell for the idea that Christ paid the down payment on their salvation and they were to pay regular amounts of good works to finally pay it in full. The Christian does not begin life by grace and then finish by works! The Cross of Christ does not need any help. It is enough.

III. One more point: A person's faith is far more important than his/her family tree.

The Jews were descendants of Abraham. They were certain that family relationship would give them special privileges. After all, they were the "chosen people." They had become spiritually arrogant. Anyone who wished to be righteous would have to follow the same rules they followed. Paul answers them in verses 7-9, "**Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed in you.'**" So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

A family tree can reveal some very interesting facts. The more we trace our ancestors, the more we know about ourselves. What a thrill it is to find a few very important people in our past. What if you find some very bad people in your family tree? What would that say about you? Many of us may need to overcome our past. A person found a German shepherd dog with no trace of its origin. No owners came forward. He was a beautiful dog without any known pedigree. After a few months, the man faked some documents so the dog could be registered with an impressive family background. All of his descendants were sold as pure German Shepherds, but their pedigrees were based on a very poor foundation.

Many Jews trusted their family trees to give them eternal life. What a tragedy! God has no grandchildren. Faith is not an inherited characteristic. Each person must respond to God for himself. Remember, Paul said, "**For it is by Grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8).**" We do not have a "do it yourself" salvation.

Call to Commitment:

Be sensitive to the needs of your group. Some may never have accepted Christ as Saviour. If that is true, give opportunity, as the Lord leads you, for that to happen today.

Concluding the Service:

Sing I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.