



Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Galatians 1:1-24

Inductive Discovery Lesson 2

Paul was in turmoil. The news he was hearing out of Galatia disturbed him to the core. Like a father whose toddler wanders into traffic, his first instinct was to snatch his spiritual children out of danger. At the same time, he wanted to scold them for their exasperating failure to watch where they're walking. Something else was boiling up in Paul, a familiar emotion that had fueled his actions as a zealous young Pharisee. He was angry. Back then, his fury was misplaced, self-righteous. Now that he was living on the right side of grace, "self" had nothing to do with it. He fiercely opposed anyone who sought to rob believers of their freedom in Christ.

Paul's sense of urgency was so strong that he would have hopped on a plane or picked up the phone if he could have. Aren't we glad Paul didn't have that option? By God's design, his only recourse was to write a passionate letter to remind the Galatians that they were saved by grace through faith. There was nothing more they had to do in order to be full-fledged Christians. *I'm astonished!* Paul wrote. *Why are you so quick to forget the grace that was given to you in Christ? Do you really think outward observances can keep you in good standing with God?*

Paul's anxious heart wanted the matter cleared up for his Galatian friends, but God knew that every generation of believers would struggle with these same issues. Just like the Galatians, we can fall into a pattern of measuring our relationship with God based on what we do for Him, rather than what He has done for us.

So, instructed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul sent this straight-talking letter to stand up for the truth. God's grace sets us free and makes it possible to live by faith!

BACKGROUND

On his first missionary endeavor, Paul traveled through southern Galatia preaching the gospel and established churches in several cities. This journey took him through the roughest, most dangerous parts of the Roman Empire at the time.

After two grueling and gratifying years, he and Barnabas returned to Antioch. The church welcomed home their missionary friends and listened, amazed to hear all that God had done with them. God had opened a door of faith to Gentiles! This was just the beginning and Paul was eager to take the gospel far and wide. For the time being, Paul stayed in Antioch for some much needed rest and spiritual refreshment. Then some men from Jerusalem showed up in Antioch, insisting that Gentile believers aren't truly saved unless they are circumcised. Paul and Barnabas vehemently dispute this and the debate goes back to Jerusalem before it's settled. The church leaders unanimously agree that Paul's teaching is backed by the Scriptures and approved by the Holy Spirit. They send a letter and their *own* representatives back to the church in Antioch to encourage the believers to keep growing in their faith.

Paul hoped the matter was resolved once and for all; but when he returned to Antioch, he learned that the *legalists* had filtered their way into the churches of Galatia. They questioned Paul's credentials as a messenger of Christ and insisted that Gentiles must fall in line with the strict Jewish observance of the Law. Against this backdrop of unrest and confusion, Paul writes to the Galatians. This was possibly Paul's first New Testament letter, written around 49 A.D.

Tracing Paul's Steps: *The First Missionary Journey*

- The church at Antioch sends Barnabas and Saul to do missionary work in the west. (Acts 13:1-3)
- Accompanied by Mark, they sail from Selucia to Barnabas' home island of Cyprus. From Salamis to Paphos, they proclaim the gospel. Elymus opposes them; Saul (now known as Paul) rebukes him; he is struck blind. The trio sails to Perga, but Mark changes his mind and returns to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:5-13)
- Paul preaches in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch; nearly the whole city turns out to listen. Jewish leaders become jealous and confrontational. When Paul boldly states his intention to take the gospel to the Gentiles, they are run out of town. Paul & Barnabas go to Iconium. (Acts 13:15-52)
- At Iconium, Paul's message gets a mixed response. Many believe, but fierce opposition and death threats force them to leave. In Lystra, Paul is dragged out of the city, stoned and left for dead. While his companions stand over him, Paul rises and goes back into the city. Next day they go to Derbe, where they are warmly received. After a time, they retrace their steps all the way back to Antioch. (Acts 14)
- Men from Judea arrive in Antioch, insisting that Gentile believers must be circumcised. Paul sharply disagrees and the conflict is taken to the Jerusalem Council. The Council backs Paul and sends a delegation carrying their letter back to Antioch with him. (Acts 15)
- Around the same time, Paul is alarmed to discover the "circumcision party" has been discrediting his apostolic authority and pressing the same demands on his Gentile converts throughout Galatia. He writes this letter to the Galatians in response to the crisis.



Working Text for Galatians 1:1-24
English Standard Version (ESV)

1 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—**2** and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: **3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, **4** who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, **5** to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— **7** not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. **10** For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. **12** For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. **13** For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. **14** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. **15** But when he who had set

me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, **16** was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; **17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. **19** But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) **21** Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. **22** And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. **23** They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." **24** And they glorified God because of me.



OBSERVATION

Read the section and record what you see. **Use the first column to keep track of what you specifically find in the Bible passage.** (Who? What? When? Where?) Briefly describe, *in your own words*, what it says.

Use the second column to record information you gather from other sources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps, etc. You can also use this section to jot down **your thoughts, impressions or questions that come to mind.** *Do your best to follow Paul's train of thought.* Does he emphasize a particular topic? Are his words urgent? Encouraging? Commanding? What issues or problems does he address? What questions does he ask?

Galatians 1:1-5

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

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Galatians 1:6-10

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

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Galatians 1:11-17

Facts from the passage:

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My Research and Personal Observations:

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Galatians 1:18-24

Facts from the passage:

This image shows a full page of primary-ruled paper. It features multiple sets of horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are light gray and extend across the entire width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

My Research and Personal Observations:

[illegible]

Key Words and Phrases

Key words and phrases help us understand the main point the writer wants to make. How do we recognize key words and phrases? Here are some simple things to look for.

- When you see a word or phrase repeated, you can be sure Paul is using it to make his point.
- If you are unfamiliar with a word or its meaning, it becomes a key word *for you*. Take time to learn the definition so you will understand how it is being used in the sentence.

List any key words and phrases you found in Galatians 1:1-24

Write the definition of the following words or phrases. Use a regular dictionary or a concordance with a Greek Dictionary if you have one.

“**apostle**” (vs.1) _____

“some who **trouble** you” (vs.7) _____

“and want to **pervert** the gospel of Christ” (vs.7) _____



INTERPRETATION — *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: “Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLICATION — *How does it apply to me?*

We don’t study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to ***put it into action.***

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

Galatians 1:1-5

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

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Galatians 1:6-10

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

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Galatians 1:11-17

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

?

Galatians 1:18-24

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the passage is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter that will help you personally to remember it.



Take a Closer Look

**“...the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins
so that He might rescue us from this present evil age,
according to the will of our God and Father.”
Galatians 1:3-4 NAS**

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize from and re-write the verse here.

Meditate on God's Word

Look up. What does this verse teach you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, His promises.)

Look around. What does this verse teach you about the world and people in general?

Look within. What does this verse teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



Something to Think About . . .

"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

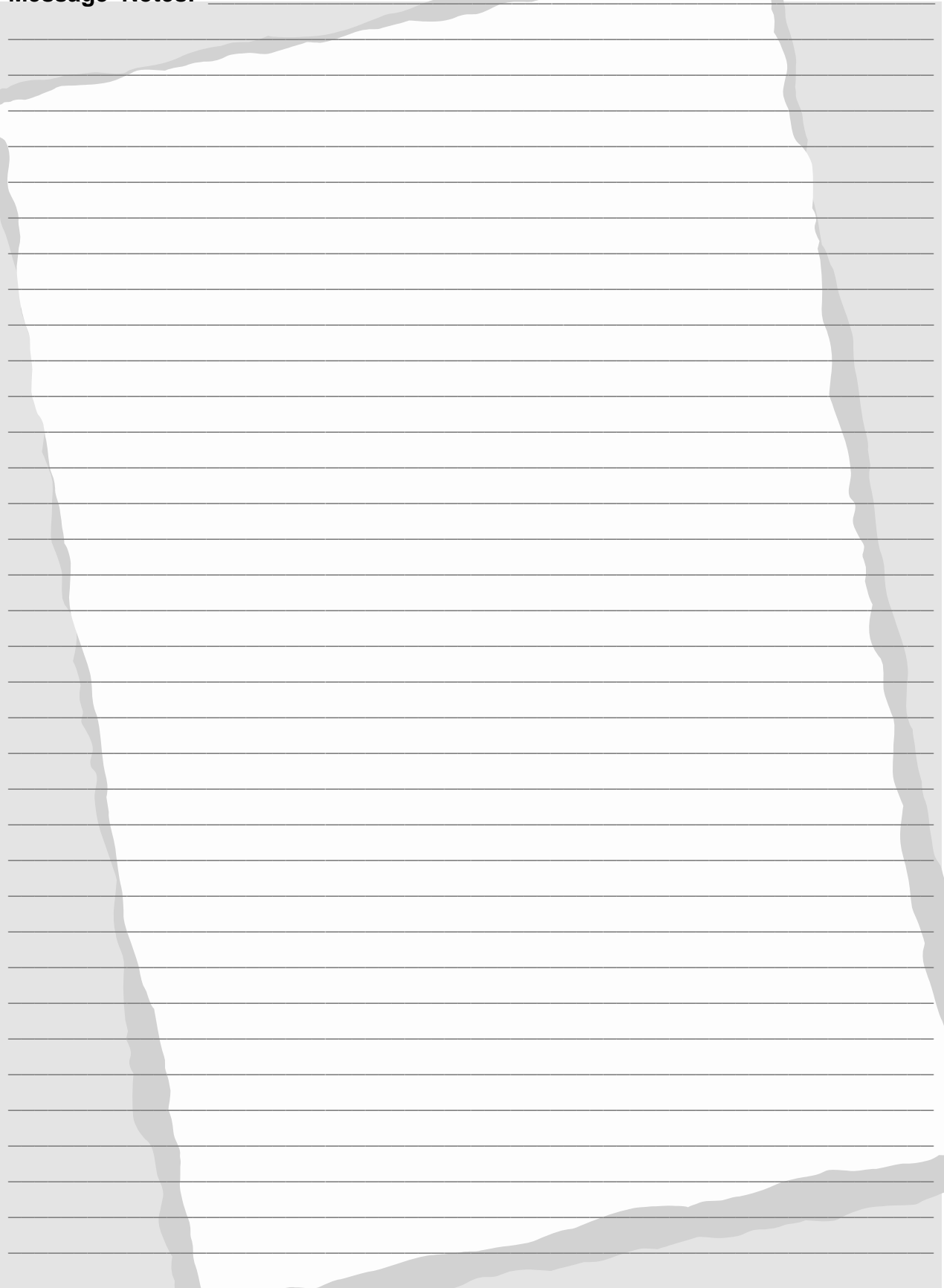
John 17:15-16



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you, personally, what has been the most important lesson from this study?
How will you put what God has shown you into practice?

Message Notes:



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