

Galatians: Discipleship Lessons Handouts for Group Participants

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/galatians/galatians-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4 to 5 questions for each lesson, though there are only 2 questions in the first lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

Introduction to Galatians

1. No Other Gospel (1:1-10)
2. The Independence of Paul's Gospel (1:11-2:10)
3. Justified by Faith in Christ (2:11-21)
4. Faith Is the Key, not Law (3:1-25)
5. By the Spirit We Cry, 'Abba, Father' (3:26-4:7)
6. Freedom from the Law by the Spirit (4:8-5:12)
7. The Spirit and the Flesh (5:13-21)
8. The Spirit and Character (5:22-26)
9. Sowing to the Spirit (6:1-18)

Note: The word definitions are taken primarily from *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by Walter Bauer and Frederick William Danker, (Third Edition; based on previous English editions by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker; University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979, 2000): BDAG.

Introduction to Galatians

1. **North Galatian Theory.** Understands the churches in the ethnic Kingdom of Galatia to be the recipients of the letters.
2. **South Galatian Theory.** Understands the churches visited by Paul and Barnabas on the First Missionary Journey (mentioned in Acts 13:13-14:23, which are in the Roman Province of Galatia) as the recipients, such as Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

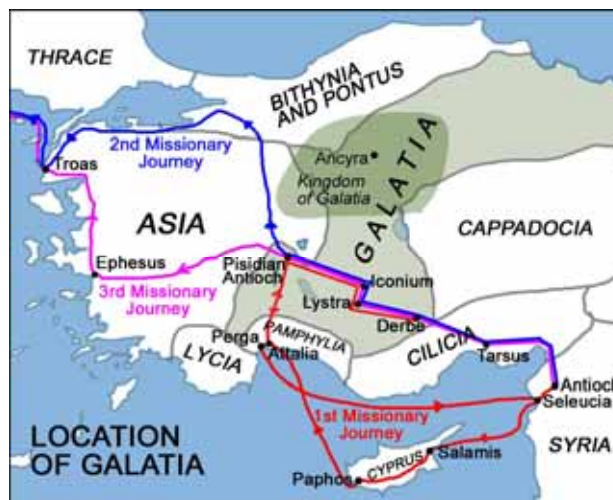
Dating of Galatians

1. Later Dating Theory, about 56 AD from Corinth.
2. Early Dating Theory, about 48 AD from Antioch (?)

Occasion and Purpose of the Letter

Clearly, some Christian Jews – led by perhaps a single individual – had gained a dominant influence in these churches. These Judaizers contended that the Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised in order to be saved, similar to the false teaching that came to Antioch and precipitated the Jerusalem Council. Paul's purposes in the letter are several-fold:

1. Reestablish his apostolic authority, which has been attacked and undermined by his opponents.
2. Show from Scripture that God's promise to Abraham was righteousness by faith, not by the law.
3. Explain that the essence of the law is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit working in the believer, not by obedience to an obsolete written code.
4. Re-teach to the gentle and humble ministry of Christ to replace the current disorder they are experiencing.



1. No Other Gospel (1:1-10)

Christ's Rescue Mission (1:3-5)

1. Action: Gave himself for our sins.
2. Problem: The present evil age.
3. Purpose: To rescue us.
4. Source: According to the will of our God and Father.
5. Praise: "to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Q1. (Galatians 1:4) According to verse 4, for what purpose did Jesus give himself? How does Jesus rescue people today? How does he keep people from falling back into their old ways?

Another "Gospel" (1:6-8)

- "Different gospel" (1:6)
- "No gospel at all" (1:7a)
- "Pervert the gospel" (1:7b)
- "Preach a gospel other" (1:8)
- "Preaching a gospel other" (1:9)

Euangelizō means, "bring good news, announce good news." *Euangelion* refers to the "good news" that is announced or proclaimed.

"Deserting" (NIV, NRSV), "removed from" (KJV) is *metatithēmi*, "to have a change of mind in allegiance, change one's mind, turn away, desert."

"Throw into confusion" (NIV), "confuse" (NRSV), "trouble" (KJV), *tarassō* means, "to cause inward turmoil, stir up, disturb, unsettle, throw into confusion."

"Trying to pervert," *metastrephō*, "to cause a change in state or condition, change, alter something into something."

"Eternally condemned" (NIV), "accursed" (NRSV, KJV) *anathema*, "that which has been cursed, accursed."

Q2. Paul called the Judaizers' message as a "different gospel," a perversion of the true gospel. How is this dangerous to the Galatian believers? How do twisted gospels (or an unbalanced interpretation of the gospel) affect Christians in our day?

Key Verse

"The Lord Jesus Christ ... gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:3b-4, NIV)

2. The Independence of Paul's Gospel (1:11-2:10)

The noun "revelation" is *apokalypsis*, literally, "uncovering," here, "making fully known, revelation, disclosure." The noun and verb are used in 1:12, 15-16; 2:2a; and 3:23.

Authoritative Sources

1. The revelation of the _____.
2. The authoritative revelation of _____. His teachings to the eleven disciples were transmitted to the church in the gospels and in the epistles.
3. The independent revelation to the _____.
4. Revelation to Apostle John in the _____.

Q1. (Galatians 1:11-12) What is the source of Paul's gospel? How do we know that it is a true revelation? How does it conform to our other foundational sources of Christian teaching? What is the danger of taking the teaching of contemporary leaders as our doctrinal basis without checking it with the Scripture?

Zeal as a Rabbinical Student (1:13-14)

Acts 22:3; 6:9; cf. 9:29; 8:3; 9:4-6.

Paul's Calling and Revelation (1:15-16)

"Set apart" (NIV, NRSV), "separated" (KJV) is *aphorizō*, "to select one person out of a group for a purpose, set apart, appoint."

"Called" is *kaleō*, "call." From the meanings 'summon' and 'invite' there develops the extended sense, "choose for receipt of a special benefit or experience, call."

"Reveal" is the verb *apokalypō*, "to cause something to be fully known, reveal, disclose, bring to light, make fully known."

Q2. (Galatians 1:13-16) What factors in Paul's background made him an ideal apostle to the Gentiles? How did God use his being different from others? To ponder: How has your unique background fitted you for ministry? What uniqueness has God given you? What will it take to see that uniqueness as a God-given strength rather than as an embarrassment?

Not Influenced by the Jerusalem Church (1:16c-17)

"Consult" (NIV), "confer with" (NRSV, cf. KJV) is *prosanatithēmi*, "to take up a matter with, consult with someone," literally, "to lay upon oneself in addition, to betake oneself to another, to confer with."

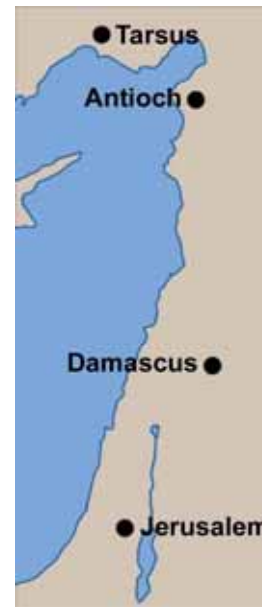
Paul's Contact with the Jerusalem Church (1:18-21; Acts 9:26-27)

James the Lord's brother (Matthew 13:55; 27:56; Galatians 2:11-12; Acts 15:13-20; James).

Paul's Time in Tarsus and Antioch (1:21; Acts 9:29-30; 11:25-26)

Paul and Barnabas Go to Jerusalem (2:1-2; Acts 11:27-30; 12:25)

The Decision Concerning Titus (2:3)



Q3. (Galatians 2:1-3) Paul is arguing that the Jerusalem leaders support his position on circumcision, rather than that of the Judaizers. What is the significance of Paul's mention that Titus was not required to be circumcised?

Dokeō, "to consider as probable," then, "to appear to one's understanding, seem, be recognized as," here, "be influential, be recognized as being something, have a reputation."

James, Peter, and John Approve Paul's Message (2:6-10)

1. Recognized theirs as _____ of God.
2. Recognized as _____ in different fields.
3. Offered _____ and _____.
4. Asked for _____ for the poor. (Acts 11:30; 12:25)

Q4. (Galatians 2:1-10) Why do you think Paul seems to distance himself from the leaders of the Jerusalem church (2:2, 6, 9)? Why does he at the same time write of their approval of his ministry? How does this further his argument to the Galatians in this letter?

Key Verse

"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."
(Galatians 1:11-12, NIV)

Answers: Sources of revelation: (1) Old Testament Scriptures, (2) Jesus, the Son of God, (3) Apostle Paul, (4) Book of Revelation. Apostolic approval: (1) legitimate calling, (2) equals, (3) friendship, fellowship, (4) relief.

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3. Justified by Faith in Christ (2:11-21)

Jewish Separatism

Though not required by the Mosaic law, separation had evolved due to two factors:

1. Danger of Syncretism.
2. Food laws (Acts 10:28a; 11:2-3; 15:28-29).

Jewish Christians from Jerusalem Cause a Schism (2:11-13; cf. Acts 15:1)

Q1. (Galatians 2:11-14) Why do you think Peter first embraced the Gentile believers in Antioch and later withdrew from them to eat only with Jews? What does this tell us about his character? Why should he have known better? What does this tell us about Barnabas? What does it tell us about the political clout of the visitors from Jerusalem? Have you ever acted like a hypocrite to impress others? What should you do when you recover your senses?

Paul Challenges Peter (2:11, 14)

Q2. (Galatians 2:14) Why do you think Paul confronted Peter publicly rather than privately? Do you expect Paul had talked with Peter about this previously? How did a public discussion of this benefit the Jewish Christians? How did it benefit the Gentile Christians? What kind of pressure do you think this put on Paul?

The Missiological Issue

What is the core of the gospel that we must transmit to converts in a new culture? How can we extract the core gospel from our own cultural baggage?

Q3. Why is it so hard to take the gospel to different peoples without wrapping it in our own cultural practices? Can you think of examples of this in Church history? What is the danger? How can we avoid such cultural faux pas in our church's missionary enterprises?

Both Jews and Gentiles Are Justified by Faith (2:15-21)

"Justified" is *dikaioō*, generally, "to render a favorable verdict, vindicate." Here, it means, "be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous" (Psalm 32:1-2; 143:2).

Christ's Death for Sin Levels the Playing Field (2:17-18)

Q4. (Galatians 2:15-21) What happens to the importance of Christ's death if circumcision is deemed necessary to salvation? Why was this issue of the sufficiency of the Messiah's death so important in Paul's day? Why was this issue important to Luther and the reformers? Why is it so important in our own day? How does it affect the relative legalism of our congregations?

I Have Been Crucified with Christ (2:20)

1. "I have been crucified with Christ" (2:20a; cf. Romans 6:3-8).
2. "Christ lives in me" (2:20b; Luke 3:16; John 3:5-7; 1 John 2:27, 20; 4:13; Romans 8:9-10).
3. "I live by faith..." (2:20c; Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 5:24-25).
4. "Loved me and gave himself for me" (2:20d; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 5:8; Matthew 26:53-54; John 15:13; Mark 10:45; Ephesians 5:2, 25).

Q5. (Galatians 2:20) In what sense have we been “crucified with Christ”? What does that mean? In what sense do “I no longer live”? Whose life now motivates us? How does this verse relate to Paul’s closing comments about the “new creation” (Galatians 6:15)? What does Galatians 2:20 teach about Christ’s attitude toward us?

Key Verses

“[We] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” (Galatians 2:16, NIV)

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NIV)

“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:21, NIV)

4. Faith Is the Key, not Law (3:1-25)

Salvation is by faith, not by the law:

1. Argument from receiving the Spirit (3:2-5).
2. Argument from Abraham's justification by faith (3:6-9).
3. Argument from the law bringing a curse (3:10-14).
4. Argument from the unchangeable nature of a covenant (3:15-18).
5. Argument from the purpose of the law (3:19-20).

Argument 1. Receiving the Spirit through Faith (3:2-5)

1. They _____ the Spirit (3:2) or were "given" the Spirit (3:4) .
2. They experienced _____ among them that were attributed to the Holy Spirit (3:4).

Q1. (Galatians 3:2-5) What argument for salvation by faith does Paul give from the presence of the Spirit? What does this tell us about the spiritual environment of the Galatian churches? How can we regain this dynamic environment in our own congregations?

Argument 2. Abraham's Justification by Faith (3:6-9)

1. Abraham was justified by _____ (Genesis 15:6). Hebrew *hāshab*, "to think, plan," here with the idea of "to impute" (a specialized sense of 'to make a judgment.'). In Greek, *logizomai* is an accounting term, referring to a calculation.
2. The Gentiles are Abraham's _____ (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).
3. Therefore, originally salvation came by faith, without _____.

Dikaiosynē, "righteousness," is "the quality of being upright." In 3:6 it is the "quality or state of juridical correctness with focus on redemptive action, righteousness."

Dikaioō, "justify," is used especially of persons, "be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous."

Q2. (Galatians 3:6-9) What is Paul's argument for salvation by faith based on Abraham? In what sense are we "children of Abraham"?

Argument 3. Redeemed from the Curse of the Law (3:10-14)

Deuteronomy 21:22-23; 27:26; Habakkuk 2:4; Leviticus 18:5. "Redeem," *exagorazō*, "to secure the rights to someone by paying a price, 'buy, acquire as property.'"

Q3. (Galatians 3:10-14) What is Paul's argument for salvation by faith based on the concept of the "curse of the law"? On what basis do the Gentiles receive "the promise of the Spirit" (3:14)?

Argument 4. An Enduring Covenant vs. a Temporary Law (3:15-18)

Paul believed that the law had three purposes:

1. To _____ fallen human nature.
2. To make wrongdoing a _____ (Romans 7:7, 13; 5:20-21; 3:20).
3. To point us to _____ as our only hope (3:21).

Argument 5. A Mediated vs. Unmediated Covenant (3:19b-20)

The Law as a Custodian (3:23-25)

The phrase, “put in charge to lead us” (NIV), “disciplinarian” (NRSV), “custodian” (RSV), “tutor” (NASB), “schoolmaster” (KJV) is *paidagōgos*, “one who has responsibility for someone who needs guidance, guardian, leader, guide.”

“The *paidagōgos* was the personal slave-attendant who accompanied the free-born boy wherever he went, from the time he left his nurse’s care. It was his duty to teach the boy good manners (with the use of the birch, if necessary), take him to school (carrying his satchel and other effects), wait for him there ... then take him home and test his memory by making him recite the lesson he had learned. During the boy’s minority the *paidagōgos* imposed a necessary restraint on his liberty until, with his coming of age, he could be trusted to use his liberty responsibly.” (F.F. Bruce)

Q4. (Galatians 3:19-25) What was the purpose of the law? Was it intended to justify a person? In what ways did it restrain sin? In what ways did it expose sin?

Key Verses

“Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?” (Galatians 3:5, NIV)

“Consider Abraham: ‘He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’” (Galatians 3:6, NIV)

“Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” (Galatians 3:11, NIV)

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” (Galatians 3:14, NIV)

“He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” (Galatians 3:14, NIV)

“So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.” (Galatians 3:24, NIV)

Answers: Receiving the Spirit: (1) received, (2) miracles. Abraham’s justification: (1) faith, (2) spiritual children, (3) law. Purposes of the law: (1) restrain, (2) legal offense, (3) faith in the Messiah.

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5. By the Spirit We Cry, 'Abba, Father' (3:26-4:7)

Baptized into Christ (3:27)

Baptism in the primitive church was *the* way one identified himself or herself with Christ (Romans 10:9; Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13, 36; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; John 4:1; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:3-5).

"Clothed" (NIV, NRSV), "put on" (KJV), *endyō*, "to put any kind of thing on oneself, clothe oneself in, wear something," metaphorically, very often, of the taking on of characteristics, virtues, intentions, etc.

One in Christ (3:28-29), Ephesians 2:14-16

Q1. (Galatians 4:26-29) Do you think Jewish Christians regarded Gentile Christians as second-class citizens? What is the basis of our unity in Christ? In what way does this unity pull down barriers? Do any groups continue to be regarded as second-class citizens in our congregations? What should we do about this?

Slavery to the Basic Principles of the *Kosmos* (4:1-3)

Stoicheion, translated as "basic (NIV), "elemental spirits" (NRSV), "elements" (KJV), the word can have two senses here, either (1) "basic components of something, elements," specifically "of things that constitute the foundation of learning, fundamental principles," or (2) "transcendent powers that are in control over events in this world, elements, elemental spirits."

When the Time Had Fully Come (4:4)

"When the time had full come" (4:4a; Genesis 49:10; Daniel 9:24-26; Malachi 3:1; Mark 1:15; Acts 1:7; Ephesians 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:10; 1 Peter 1:20). The time was right:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

"God sent his Son" (4:4b). *Exapostellō*, "to send someone off to a locality or on a mission, send away, send off, send out," for fulfillment of a mission in another place (John 1:1-3; 8:58; 17:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6b; 10:4; Colossians 1:15-17; Revelation 21:6; 22:13; John 20:21; Luke 22:42; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; see also John 1:3).

Q2. (Galatians 4:4) Why do you think it took so long to send the Messiah? What about the first century world made it fertile ground for the revelation of the Messiah and the spread of the gospel?

"Born of a woman" (4:4c; Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; Romans 1:3-4; 9:5; Philippians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 4:2).

"Born under law" (4:4d)

"To redeem those under the law" (4:5a). "Redeem" (*exagorazō*) is a commercial term and a term used in the context of slavery, "buy, buy up something" or "redeem" (literally, "buy back"), then it carries the more general idea, "to deliver someone, to secure deliverance of, liberate" (see 3:13).

Adoption or Instatement as Sons (4:5b)

“Full rights as sons” (NIV), “adoption as children” (NRSV), “adoptions as sons” (KJV), is *huiiothesia*, “adoption,” a legal technical term of ‘adoption’ of children (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11; 4:7; Romans 8:17a; Ephesians 2:6, 1:20).

Q3. (Galatians 4:3-5) In what sense were both the Gentiles and the Jews enslaved? What does “redeem” mean in verse 5? What are the implications of adoption regarding a person’s legal and spiritual rights?

The Spirit of His Son Crying ‘Abba, Father’ (4:6-7, cf. Romans 8:15-17)

Abba, a vocative form, was originally a term of endearment, later used as title and personal name (rarely used in reference to God). It means “father,” and was transliterated into Greek as “*abba*.” It was an Aramaic word used in prayer and in the family circle, later taken over by Greek-speaking Christians as a liturgical formula.

Q4. (Galatians 4:6-7) How does the Spirit’s filling demonstrate we are full sons? What is the special sense in which the Aramaic word *abba* is used to speak to one’s father? What is the significance of being heirs of God? Are we sons in the same sense that Jesus was God’s Son?

Trinity

1. **Son.** We are united to Christ by baptism and faith. We are one with him (3:26-28).
2. **Father.** We now have the same status before God as Abraham’s natural descendents (3:29). God has adopted us and changed our status from slave to fully-adopted sons and heirs.
3. **Spirit.** The Holy Spirit now lives in our hearts, establishing the relationship between us and the Father of intimate children, who call out naturally to their Daddy “Abba.”

Key Verses

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Galatians 3:26-27, NIV)

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28, NIV)

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:1-29, NIV)

“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5, NIV)

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Galatians 4:6, NIV)

Answers: The time was right: (1) religiously, (2) culturally, (3) commercially, (4) politically.

6. Freedom from the Law by the Spirit (4:8-5:12)

The Slavery of Their Gentile Past (4:8-9)

1 Corinthians 8:5-6; 10:21; Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 12:2.

The Legalism of Observing Special Days (4:10)

Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5-6a; 1 Corinthians 16:8; Acts 20:16.

Q1. (Galatians 4:10-11) Is celebrating different special worship days essentially wrong? Why did Paul grieve over the Galatians' observances? What significance did these have in terms of their movement towards Judaism? How can we be blessed by observing special days in our era? How can observance of special days become legalistic for Christian believers?

Paul's Personal Appeal to the Galatians (4:12-15)

Three illnesses have been proposed: (1) malaria, (2) epilepsy, (3) ophthalmia.

The Agony of Childbirth (4:19-20)

"The pains of childbirth" (NIV, NRSV), "travail in birth" (KJV) is *ōdinō*, "to experience pains associated with giving birth, have birth-pains," in imagery, "be in labor = suffer greatly."

"Until Christ is formed in you." The verb *morphoō*, "take on form, be formed," suggests in this context the formation of an embryo in its mother's womb.

Dr. Ralph Wilson has developed a mentor-based, video-assisted, 12-week curriculum designed for new believers: [JesusWalk Beginning the Journey](http://www.jesuswalk.com/beginning/) (JesusWalk, 2009) www.jesuswalk.com/beginning/

Q2. (Galatians 4:19-20) How is Paul's grief over his spiritual children like that of a parent seeing children stray? What does it look like when Christ is formed in a person? What is the process involved in this spiritual formation?

Allegory of Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31)

Genesis 16; 21:1-21; 17:17-19; 18:10.

Mount Sinai vs. Heavenly Mount Zion (4:24-27)

"Figuratively" (NIV), "allegory" (NRSV, KJV) is *allēgoreō*, "to use analogy or likeness to express something, speak allegorically."

The Two Jerusalems (4:25b-26)

Hebrews 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Revelation 3:12b; 21:2, 10.

Son of the Slave Woman (4:28-29)

Genesis 21:8-10.

Set Free for a Purpose (5:1)

The Yoke of Slavery (5:1b)

Acts 15:10; Matthew 11:30.

Submitting to Circumcision Alienates You from Christ (5:2-4)

If they are circumcised, the Galatians will:

1. Commit themselves to being _____.
2. Become _____ from Christ.
3. Fall from _____ (Isaiah 64:6).

Q3. (Galatians 5:4) Exactly what does Paul mean by “fall from grace” here? What has occurred that has caused this fall? How can present-day Christian legalism cause such a “fall from grace”?

The Value of Circumcision (5:6)

Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:26; Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 6:15; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Genesis 17:10-14, 23; Joshua 5:2-8.

Q4. (Galatians 5:5-6) Circumcision had been the primary “mark of identity” for a believer in God. In what way has the Spirit become the new “mark of identity” for the believer? What is the evidence of the Spirit’s presence in a believer’s life according to verse 6?

The Judaizers Are Spoilers (5:7-10)

Yeast (Matthew 13:33; 6:6, 11, 12).

The Penalty for Hurting the Church (5:10)

1 Corinthians 3:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10; Revelation 20:11-15.

The Accusation that Paul Is Preaching Circumcision (5:11a)

Acts 16:1-3.

The Offense of the Cross (5:11b)

“Offense” (NIV, NRSV, KJV), “stumbling block” (NASV, RSV), Greek *skandalon*. Originally, it referred to a trap, a device for catching something alive. However, the Septuagint, in translating the Hebrew, interchanged two words: *skōlon* (“stumbling block”) and *skándalon* (“trap”). Thus by assimilation *skándalon* can mean both “trap” and “stumbling block” or “cause of ruin” – either with regard to idols or to offenses against the law. Here, it has a figurative sense: “that which causes offense or revulsion and results in opposition, disapproval, or hostility, fault, stain, etc.” (1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 23; 2:2; Galatians 6:12).

Why was the cross a stumbling block to the Jews?

1. _____ died.
2. _____ reigns, not law.

Q5. (Galatians 5:11) What is “the offense of the cross” that offended the Jews? How does the cross offend people in our day? Have you noticed Christians softening their proclamation of the cross? Does this help them communicate more clearly to our age or does it compromise the true message?

Key Verses

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.”
(Galatians 4:19, NIV)

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1, NIV)

“You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.” (Galatians 5:4, NIV)

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” (Galatians 5:6, NIV)

Answers: Submitting to circumcision: (1) law-keepers, (2) alienated, (3) grace. Stumbling block: (1) Messiah, (2) grace.

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7. The Spirit and the Flesh (5:13-21)

We're Not Freed to Sin (5:13)

Matthew 7:12; 22:37-40.

The Flesh as the Sinful Nature in Paul's Writings

Paul uses the word "flesh" (*sarx*), variously translated as "the flesh" (KJV, NASB), "the sinful nature" (NIV), "self-indulgence" (NRSV, NJB), or "sinful self-interest" (*The Message*). Five basic meanings in Galatians.

1. **Flesh**, the tissue, muscle that covers the bones of a human or animal body (6:14).
2. **Physical body** (2:20; 4:13-14).
3. **Living being** (1:6; 2:16).
4. **Human, mortal** (4:23, 29).
5. **Corrupt human nature**, dominated by sin and rebellion against God. (3:3; 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24, 6:8). *Sarx*, "flesh," the unregenerate personality of man apart from God, controlled by his self-seeking whims and desires – that character which influences man to live as a god to himself.

Using Freedom with Restraint (5:13-14)

"Indulge" (NIV), "opportunity" (NRSV), "occasion" (KJV) is *aphormē*, literally, "a base or circumstance from which other action becomes possible," such as the starting-point or base of operations for an expedition.

Destructive Behavior in the Church (5:15; cf. 6:7-10)

Q1. (Galatians 5:13-15) Have you ever seen Christians act as if they were lawless? How do Spirit-led Christians fulfill the spirit of the law? What does backbiting and rudeness in a congregation say about the spiritual climate of that congregation (5:15)?

Walking in the Spirit (5:16-18)

"Live" (NIV, NRSV), "walk" (KJV), "be guided by" (NJB). The verb is *peripateō*, literally, "to walk around." Then the word takes on a figurative meaning: "to conduct one's life, comport oneself, behave, live as habit of conduct." The word is in the present imperative, thus a command to the continuous action of walking in the Spirit.

1. **The Spirit** _____ (5:16). Luke 4:1; Romans 8:14. "Desires" (NIV, NRSV), "lusteth" (KJV) is *epithymēō*, "to have a strong desire to do or secure something, desire, long for" (also found in verse 17). The word "gratify" (NIV, NRSV), "fulfill" (KJV), "carry out" (NASB), "follow through on" (GW) is *teleō*, basic meaning, "to complete an activity or process, bring to an end, finish, complete something... to carry out an obligation or demand, carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill, keep something."
2. **The Spirit** _____ (5:17-18; Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:8).

IF you walk in the Spirit,

THEN the impulses of the flesh won't find fulfillment and thus lose their power.

Q2. (Galatians 5:16-18) We are told that it's impossible for a Christian not to sin. What do *these* verses teach about that? In what way does yielding to the Spirit suppress the power of the old nature (the flesh)? If Spirit-led living *is* possible, why do people claim that it's impossible not to sin?

The Works of the Flesh, the Sinful Nature (5:19-21)

"Adultery," not found in the earliest manuscripts.

"Sexual immorality" (NIV), "fornication" (NRSV, KJV) is *porneia*, "unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication." This is a broad word, and covers all types of sexual deviancy, including homosexuality. The word is common in Paul's writings, but Jesus used it too (Mark 7:21).

"Impurity" (NIV, NRSV), "uncleanness" (KJV) is *akatharsia*, "any substance that is filthy or dirty, refuse," then figuratively, "a state of moral corruption, immorality, vileness," used especially of sexual sins.

"Debauchery" (NIV), "licentiousness" (NRSV), "lasciviousness" (KJV) is *aselgeia*, "lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, self-abandonment." The word appears in Ephesians 4:19; 5:3; Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:21; and 2 Peter 2:2, 18.

"Idolatry," of course, refers to the common practice of worship of gods using physical objects to represent them. Idolatry was an affront to the invisible God (Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27), who is Spirit not material (John 4:24; Exodus 20:4-5).

"Witchcraft" (NIV, KJV), "sorcery" (NRSV) is *pharmakeia*, "sorcery, magic," generally, "the use of any kind of drugs, potions, or spells."

Now Paul moves to a group of sins that derive from a failure to love one's neighbor.

"Hatred" (NIV, KJV), "enmities" (NRSV) is *echthra*, "enmity."

"Discord" (NIV), "strife" (NRSV), "variance" (KJV) is *eris*, "engagement in rivalry, especially with reference to positions taken in a matter, strife, discord, contention."

"Jealousy" (NIV, NRSV), "emulations" (KJV) is *zēlos*, "intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, jealousy, envy."

"Fits of rage" (NIV), "anger" (NRSV), "wrath" (KJV) is *thymos*, "a state of intense displeasure, anger, wrath, rage, indignation," here "outbursts of anger."

"Selfish ambition" (NIV), "quarrels" (NRSV), "strife" (KJV) is *eritheia*, plural, "disputes or outbreaks of selfishness."

"Dissensions" (NIV, NRSV), "seditions" (KJV) is *dichostasia*, "the state of being in factious opposition, dissension."

"Factions" (NIV, NRSV), "heresies" (KJV) is *hairesis* (from which we get our English word "heresy"), "a group that holds tenets distinctive to it, sect, party, school, faction (of schools of philosophies), here, with a negative connotation, "dissension, a faction" (also found in 1 Corinthians 11:19).

"Envy, envying" is *phthonos*, found in papyri and inscriptions, frequently associated with the 'evil eye,' "envy, jealousy."

"Murders" appears only in KJV. It isn't found in the earliest Greek manuscripts.

"Drunkeness" is *methē*, "drunkeness." Here, in connection with the next word, it may refer to a "drinking bout."

"Orgies" (NIV), "carousing" (NRSV), "revellings" (KJV) is *kōmos*. Originally, it referred to a festal procession in honor of Dionysus (such as our festival of Mardi Gras), then a joyous meal or banquet. In the New Testament, it has a negative sense, "excessive feasting." Here, in the plural, it means, "carousing, revelry" or "unrestrained revelry."

Q3. (Galatians 5:19-21) If you were to divide the works of the flesh into several groups, what would those groups be?

Failing to Inherit the Kingdom (5:21b)

“Inherit” is *klēronomeō*, which means, “acquire, obtain, come into possession of something.” See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:5; Romans 8:5-8; Galatians 6:7-8; James 2:17-18.

Q4. (5:21) Why do some Christians resist accepting Paul’s warning in 5:21 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11? What statement might these Christians desire to substitute for Paul’s warning if they could reword the Scripture?

Key Verses

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13, NIV)

“The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Galatians 5:14, NIV)

“Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Galatians 5:16, NIV)

“If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.” (Galatians 5:18, NIV)

Answers: Walking in the Spirit: (1) releases, (2) restrains.

8. The Spirit and Character (5:22-26)

The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)

Galatians 5:15; Ephesians 4:30-32

1. Love

Four words are used for “love” in Greek: (1) *eros* – passionate love, with sensual desire and longing; (2) *philia* – friendship or affectionate love that you’d find in a family, or between friends; (3) *storgē* – natural affection, like that found from a parent to offspring; (4) *agapē* – unconditional, unselfish, sacrificial love. *Agapē* love is the kind of self-giving love shown by the Father when he gave his son to bear our sin (John 3:16; 1 John 4:19; Matthew 22:36-40; 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 5:5)

2. Joy

“Joy” is *chara*, “the experience of gladness, joy.” (Ephesians 5:19-20; Acts 16:25; 1 Peter 1:8-9)

3. Peace

“Peace” is *eirēnē*, “a state of concord,” here, “harmony in personal relationships peace, harmony.” The common Jewish greeting was, “Shalom,” which has a rich, full meaning. The root idea of *shālôm* is “completion and fulfillment—of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship.” It connotes “peace, prosperity, wellness, health, completeness, safety.” (John 14:27; 16:33; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Philippians 4:4-9).

Q1. (Galatians 5:22a) Love is the first and primary fruit of the Holy Spirit, but joy and peace are inseparable from love. Why can’t joy and peace exist apart from love – love for God and love for our neighbors?

4. Patience or Forbearance

“Patience” (NIV, NRSV), “longsuffering” (KJV) is *makrothymia*, “state of being able to bear up under provocation, forbearance, patience toward others.” It has to do with “one’s long forbearance toward those who oppose or distress one in some way.”

Q2. (Galatians 5:22) The fruit of patience should be understood as forbearance, that is, putting up with people around us without exploding. Why is this patient forbearance such an important personal character element? Why is it so important for peace in the family and in the Christian community?

5. Kindness

“Kindness” (NIV, NRSV), “gentleness” (KJV) is *chrēstotēs*, with the basic idea of “usefulness, helpfulness.” Here it means, “the quality of being helpful or beneficial, goodness, kindness, generosity.” It has four aspects: **1. Friendliness** (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5; 1 Peter 2:3; Ephesians 2:7); **2. Compassion** (Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:32); **3. Helpfulness** (Mark 10:51; Matthew 11:30; Romans 11:22); **4. Forbearance** (Romans 2:4; Titus 3:4-5; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:6-7).

6. Goodness

“Goodness” (NIV, RSV, KJV), “generosity” (NRSV) is *agathōsynē*, a “positive moral quality characterized especially by interest in the welfare of others,” generally, “goodness” (Romans 15:14; Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 6:9-10).

7. Faithfulness

“Faithfulness” (NIV, NRSV), “faith” (KJV) is *pistis*, “that which evokes trust and faith,” here, “the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment.” It is also Paul’s normal word for “faith,” the “state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith,” but in a list of virtues, “faithfulness” is more likely (1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV).

8. Gentleness

“Gentleness” (NIV, NRSV), “meekness” (KJV) is *prautēs*, “the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness” in the older favorable sense. (Matthew 11:29; 2 Corinthians 10:1a; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5a.)

9. Self-Control

“Self-control” (NIV, NRSV), “temperance” (KJV) is *enkrateia*, “restraint of one’s emotions, impulses, or desires, self-control,” “the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetite. (1 Corinthians 7:9; Titus 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Ephesians 5:8; Titus 1:7; 2:3; 1 Timothy 5:23; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:3).

Q3. (Galatians 5:22-23) How does the Holy Spirit produce this fruit in our lives? What theological term would you identify this process? How can it be that a person who has been a “Christian” for years displays few or none of these fruits? Are they saved, but just immature? What does James 2:17-19 say about this? Is that too harsh?

Crucifying the Flesh (5:24)

“Crucified” is *stauroō*, figuratively, “destroy through connection with the crucifixion of Christ, crucify.” So to “crucify the flesh” means to utterly renounce and turn from a life that “sets its mind on the flesh.” (Romans 6:6; 8:13-14; Colossians 3:5-6) “Crucify” in our passage equals “put to death” (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5-6; Galatians 5:24-25).

“Passions” (NIV, NRSV), “affections” (KJV) is *pathēma*, “an inward experience of an affective nature, feeling, interest,” here, “interests, desires, (the) sinful desires (not limited to sexual interest).” “Desires” (NIV, NRSV), “lusts” (KJV) is *epithymia*, “a desire for something forbidden or simply inordinate, craving, lust.”

Q4. (Galatians 5:24-25) What does it mean to “crucify the flesh with its passions and desires”? Can a person be a Christian without “crucifying the flesh”? How have we produced such a crop of lukewarm Christians?

The Ugliness of Pride (5:26)

“Conceited” (NIV, NRSV), “desirous of vain glory” (KJV) is the adjective *kenodoxos*, “pertaining to having exaggerated self-conceptions, conceited, boastful.”

“Provoking” (NIV, KJV), “competing against” (NRSV) is *prokaleō*, “to call out to someone to come forward,” frequently in a hostile sense, “provoke, challenge someone.”

“Envying” is *phthoneō*, “envy, be jealous (of) someone.” It can also mean “dislike someone, be resentful toward someone,” without the connotation of jealousy or a grudge.

Keeping in Step with the Spirit (5:25)

“Live” is *zaō*, “live,” here, “to live in a transcendent sense.” Alternatively, it could have the sense, “to conduct oneself in a pattern of behavior, live.” (Galatians 3:2-3, 5)

This phrase, “keep in step” (NIV), “be guided” (NRSV), “walk” (KJV) isn’t the normal word for “walk” or “be led.” It is *stoicheō*, which originally meant, “be drawn up in line.” Here it has a figurative meaning, “to be in line with a person or thing considered as standard for one’s conduct, hold to, agree with, follow, conform” (6:16 and Philippians 3:16).

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit

1. **Walking.** (5:16)
2. **Being led** (5:18) “If you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under law.” (5:18, NIV)
3. **Conforming** (5:25)

Key Verses

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV)

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24, NIV)

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25, NIV)

9. Sowing to the Spirit (6:1-18)

Restoring a Fallen Brother (6:1-2)

The verb “caught” (NIV), “detected” (NRSV), “overtaken” (KJV) is *prolambanō*, originally, “take before (hand).” Here it means “to ascertain something by surprise, detect, overtake, surprise someone” (1 John 2:1-2).

1. **Who.** _____. *Pneumatikos*, here, “possessing the Spirit, the one who possesses the Spirit,” “spirit-filled people.”
2. **What.** _____. *Katartizō*, “to cause to be in a condition to function well, put in order, restore,” here, “restore to a former condition.”
3. **How.** _____. *Pneuma*, “spirit” + *prautēs*, “the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness” (1 Corinthians 4:21).

Carry Each Other’s Burdens (6:2)

Galatians 5:13-14; John 13:34; James 2:8; Luke 11:46; Exodus 23:5; Romans 15:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14. “He ain’t heavy Mister—he’s m’ brother!”

Beware of Being Condescending (6:3-5)

“Deceives” is *phrenapataō*, a Greek word used in Christian writings primarily, “mislead concerning the truth, deceive,” from *phrēn*, “thinking” + *apataō*, “cheat, deceive, beguile.” (James 1:22-25; 3:1-2).

“Test” (NIV, NRSV), “prove” (KJV) is *dokimazō*, “to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine.” In classical Greek, the word is used of assaying metals to determine their quality. In the Septuagint, the word translates Hebrew *bāḥan*, “to examine, try, prove,” test for genuineness by fire or in a crucible, a symbol for God’s testing that carries into the New Testament (Proverbs 17:3; 1 Corinthians 3:13)

Burton: “Every man has his own burden, that is, of weakness and sin. The paradoxical antithesis to verse 2a is doubtless conscious and intentional. It is the man who knows he has a burden of his own that is willing to bear his fellow’s burden.” (Romans 14:10)

Q1. (Galatians 6:1-5) What does Paul mean, “caught in a sin”? What would restoration of a such brother or sister look like in his or her life? Who should restore this person? In what spirit should it be done? What is the result of trying to restore a person without humility?

Sharing with Your Teachers (6:6)

“Share” (NIV, NRSV), “communicate” (KJV) is *koinōneō*, “give/contribute a share” (Philippians 4:15b; 1 Corinthians 9:18; 2 Corinthians 2:7; 1 Corinthians 9:4-14; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Matthew 10:10).

A Warning against Self-Deception (6:7)

“Deceived” is *planaō*, “to proceed without a sense of proper direction, go astray, be misled, wander about aimlessly,” here, “be mistaken in one’s judgment, deceive oneself.”

“Mocked” is *myktērizō*, “turn up the nose at, treat with contempt” (from *myktēr*, “nostril, nose”), Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:5-6a.

Sowing and Reaping (6:7b-9)

Images of sowing and reaping in the Bible are used of judgment on the Last Day.

- **Parable of the Tares and the Wheat** (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
- **Harvest of the Earth** (Revelation 14:14-16; Joel 3:13)

“Destruction” (NIV), “corruption” (NRSV, KJV) is *phthora*, literally, “breakdown of organic matter, dissolution, deterioration, corruption,” here figuratively, “total destruction of an entity.” (Romans 8:5-9)

Q2. (Galatians 6:7-8) What does it mean to “sow to the flesh”? What does this look like? What synonyms does Paul use for “sow to the Spirit” in Galatians? (Hint: see 5:16, 18, 25). What does sowing to the Spirit look like in a congregation? What are the results in a congregation of sowing to the flesh?

Don't Become Weary (6:9)

“Weary” is *egkakeō*, “to lose one’s motivation in continuing a desirable pattern of conduct or activity, lose enthusiasm, be discouraged.”

“Give up” (NIV, NRSV), “faint” (KJV) is *eklyō*. In Greek literature the word frequently has the sense “loose from something, set free,” also “relax.” Here it means, “be exhausted in strength, become weary, give out” (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 6:7-8).

Doing Good (6:9-10)

Two words are used for “good” in these two verses, *kalos* (6:9) and *agathos* (6:10) but they seem to be used synonymously here (Romans 5:5; 2:7; 1 Peter 2:15; 3:17; 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; Ephesians 2:10).

Q3. (Galatians 6:9-10) Why do we tend to become weary living out our faith? What promise does Paul give us in 6:9 to forestall this weariness? Why should our “doing good” begin with our spiritual family, not with the non-Christians?

Paul's Handwriting (6:11)

2 Thessalonians 2:2; 3:17; 1 Corinthians 16:21, Colossians 4:18.

Boasting in the Cross (6:14)

“Boast” (NIV, NRSV), “glory in” (KJV) in verse 13 and 14 is *kauchaomai*, “to take pride in something, boast, glory, pride oneself, brag.” (Galatians 5:24; 2:20; Philippians 3:8-11). Isaac Watts said it well in his hymn, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (1707).

Law vs. the New Creation (6:15)

“Creation” (NIV, NRSV), “creature” (KJV) is *ktisis*, “the result of a creative act, that which is created” (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:13-16).

Q4. (Galatians 6:15) What characterizes this “new creation” that Paul talks about? What does the “old creation” look like in contrast? What does the old creation lack that the new creation possesses? How does Jesus’ saying, “You must be born again” (John 3:3-8) relate to this concept of the new creation?

The Church and the Israel of God (6:16)

Psalms 125:5; Matthew 21:33-44; Philippians 3:3; Romans 11:17-18; Galatians 3:7, 7-12; Romans 4:12, 16; 9:6-8; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Hosea 1:10; Ephesians 2:15.

Q5. (Galatians 6:16) Who comprises “the Israel of God” today? Who is excluded from this group? How is Romans 11:17-25 designed to temper Gentile pride?

The Marks of Jesus (6:17)

“Trouble” is *kopos*, “a state of discomfort or distress, trouble, difficulty,” a transferred sense of *kopos* = “beating.”

“Marks” (Greek plural, *stigmata*) is the noun *stigma* (from which derive our English word), “mark, brand,” from *stizō*, “tattoo.” Such brands were given to slaves – especially runaway slaves who had been returned to their master. The brand was the master’s mark, permanently identifying the slave as his property. (2 Corinthians 11:21-29; Acts 14:19; Romans 14:4)

Key Verses

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:1-2)

“Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.” (Galatians 6:6)

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” (Galatians 6:7)

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:10)

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.” (Galatians 6:15)

“Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16)

Answers: (1) spiritual people, (2) restoration, (3) gently.