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No Other Gospel - Galatians 1:1-10

Topics: Angels, Anger, Approval, Church, Confusion, God, Gospel, Grace, Legalism, Peace

Open It

- * 1. What is your usual way of starting a letter?
- 2. When you have something difficult to share with a loved one, how can jotting down your thoughts help?
- 3. When you want to emphasize an important point to someone, how do you do it?

Explore It

- 4. How did the author of the letter identify himself? (1:1)
- * 5. How did Paul bring up two vital concerns in the beginning of his letter (1:1, 4)
- 6. Who joined Paul in sending the letter? (1:2)
- 7. To whom was the letter sent? (1:2)
- * 8. What traditional form of greeting did the apostle use in his letter? (1:3)
- 9. How did Paul conclude his salutation? (1:4-5)
- * 10. What attitude did Paul express? Why? (1:6-7)
- 11. How were the Galatian Christians being thrown “into confusion”? (1:7)
- 12. What hypothetical case did Paul present to show the purity of the gospel? (1:8-9)
- 13. How did Paul emphasize the importance of representing the gospel accurately? (1:8-9)
- 14. What accusation had been directed at Paul? (1:10)
- 15. How did Paul affirm his purpose to please God? (1:10)

Get It

- * 16. The tone of Paul’s letter is serious and abrupt; why did he write this way?
- 17. Why was it important that Paul establish his credentials?
- 18. Why do some Christians base their identity on things other than Christ?
- * 19. How did Paul assert his authority in this letter?
- 20. Why was it important for the Galatian churches to be reminded that salvation lay in the work of Christ, not in human works?
- 21. How do Christians have a tendency to bypass God’s grace in their daily experience?
- 22. What was at stake in Paul’s warning to the Galatians? (1:8-9)
- 23. How do you need to examine the doctrine of salvation you pass on to others?

Apply It

- 24. How can you prepare to respond the next time you hear a distorted message about Christ?
- 25. As a servant of Christ, what are some ways you can best share the true gospel with the unbelievers you know?
- * 26. What important letter to a struggling believer can you write today?

Paul Called by God - Galatians 1:11-24

Topics: Church, Evangelism, God, Gospel, Grace, Jesus Christ, Persecution, Praise, Religion, Traditions, Truth

Open It

- * 1. What personal accomplishment makes you feel proud?
- 2. If you could teach yourself a new hobby, skill, or line of work, what would you choose?
- 3. What kind of recognition do you want for the work you do?

Explore It

- 4. What gospel did Paul preach? (1:11-12)
- * 5. What did Paul try to establish by bringing up his personal history? (1:13-14)
- 6. Before his conversion, what was Paul's approach to Judaism? (1:14)
- 7. What three things did God do for Saul when he intervened in his life? (1:15-16)
- 8. How did Paul emphasize that his conversion and calling were none of his own doing? (1:15-16)
- * 9. What did Paul do after his conversion? (1:16-17)
- 10. How did Paul form his theology? (1:16-17)
- 11. How long did Paul wait before going to Jerusalem? (1:18)
- 12. How much time did Paul spend with Peter? (1:18)
- 13. While in Jerusalem, which other apostle did Paul meet? (1:19)
- 14. Why did Paul want his readers to know how limited his relationship was to the apostles? (1:18-19)
- 15. What did Paul say to confirm the truth of his testimony? (1:20)
- 16. How was Paul's ministry clearly not under the authority or oversight of the Jerusalem church? (1:21-22)
- * 17. What was reported to the Judean churches about Paul? (1:23-24)

Get It

- 18. Why did the Galatian church have misgivings about Paul and his message?
- 19. Why was it important for Paul to establish the independent nature of his ministry?
- 20. By what criteria did Paul establish his apostleship?
- 21. What kind of support does your pastor receive from members of your congregation?
- 22. What kind of support should a pastor receive from members of the congregation?
- * 23. Paul had a clear and unique sense of his calling; how do you feel about God's imprint on your life?
- 24. Paul knew what God wanted him to do with his life; to what line of service has God called you?
- 25. Why did the Judean churches praise God when they heard the report about Paul?
- * 26. What are your "before and after" conversion pictures like?
- 27. How has God changed you so far?

Apply It

- * 28. What change do you want to make in your life this week to reflect your walk by faith?
- 29. What kind of prayer and Bible study this week would most help you in your witness to others?

Paul Accepted by the Apostles - Galatians 2:1-10

Topics: Approval, Doctrine, Gospel, Grace, Law, Leadership, Partnerships, Poor, Truth

Open It

1. What location do you enjoy visiting?
2. If you could work in a new location among a particular group of people, where and whom would you select?
- * 3. Whose opinion of your work is very important to you?

Explore It

4. On a return trip to Jerusalem, whom did Paul take along? (2:1)
5. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? (2:2)
- * 6. Why did Paul seize the opportunity to meet with the other apostles? (2:2)
7. What was Paul's motive in bringing Titus along on the Jerusalem trip? (2:3-5)
- * 8. What did the "false brothers" do? (2:4)
9. How did Paul and his partners respond to the Judaizers? (2:5)
10. How did the Jerusalem leaders respond to Paul's message? (2:6)
- * 11. How did James, Peter, and John respond to Paul's mission? (2:7-9)
12. What was the "right hand of fellowship"? (2:9)
13. What was the only thing that the Jewish leaders requested of Paul? (2:10)

Get It

- * 14. Even though Paul asserted his independence from the apostles, how did he also show his solidarity with them?
- * 15. Why was it important for Paul to have the apostles' approval?
16. Why was it important for Paul to stand up for freedom from the Law?
17. In what ways do some Christians try to impose rules on others?
18. What does caring for the poor have to do with telling others about Christ?

Apply It

- * 19. How can you express today your appreciation and respect for older Christians who have helped you in your spiritual walk?
20. What can you do to help a poor person or family this week?

Paul Opposes Peter - Galatians 2:11-21

Topics: Compromise, Death, Doctrine, Faith, God, Gospel, Hypocrisy, Jesus Christ, Law, Life, Opposition, Righteousness

Open It

- * 1. If a colleague of yours were doing something wrong, how would you confront that person?
- 2. How do you tend to take criticism?

Explore It

- 3. When Peter visited Antioch, what did Paul do? (2:11)
- * 4. Why did Paul rebuke Peter? (2:11-13)
- 5. Why did Peter feel free to eat with Gentiles at one time? (2:12)
- 6. Who pressured Peter to stop eating with Gentiles? (2:12) Why?
- 7. How did Peter's behavior influence other Christians? (2:13)
- * 8. What did Paul say in response to Peter's hypocritical behavior? (2:14)
- 9. What did Paul say to those who were Jews by birth? (2:15)
- * 10. How is a person justified before God? (2:16)
- 11. How does a Christian avoid being a lawbreaker? (2:17-19)
- 12. How is the new life characterized by faith and not works? (2:20)
- 13. How does Christ live out His life through Christians? (2:20)
- 14. How had Peter set aside God's grace? (2:21)
- 15. If righteousness were possible by keeping the Law, why would the Cross have been absolutely useless? (2:21)

Get It

- 16. What hypocritical practices have you seen in churches you have visited?
- * 17. Why is it easier for Christians to live by rules and traditions than by faith?
- 18. If Paul hadn't spoken out against Peter's inconsistency, what could have happened among Hebrew and Gentile Christians?
- 19. How did the matter of legalism provide Paul with the opportunity to spell out the doctrine of justification by faith?
- * 20. How could addressing a problem in your congregation provide a real opportunity for spiritual growth?

Apply It

- * 21. How do you plan to confront troubling behavior the next time you see it in your local fellowship?
- 22. In the future, how can you show courage in resisting well-meaning Christians who want to impose their own rules on others?

Faith or Observance of the Law - Galatians 3:1-14

Topics: Believe, Bible, Blessing, Faith, Gospel, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Miracles, Questions, Righteousness, Suffering

Open It

1. When was the last time you were sarcastic to someone?
2. If you were trying to convince a friend to believe in what you were saying, what tone of voice would you use?
- * 3. If someone close to you displayed a lack of knowledge about a subject you knew well, what would you do about it?

Explore It

- * 4. Why did Paul scold the Galatians? (3:1)
5. What rhetorical question did Paul ask? (3:2)
6. How did Paul expect the Galatians to answer his question? (3:2)
7. Based on Paul's second question to the Christians, how did he think the Galatians felt the Law could help them? (3:3)
8. Why did Paul ask the Galatians if their suffering had been for nothing? (3:4)
9. On what basis did the Holy Spirit perform miracles? (3:5)
- * 10. How did Paul's use of Abraham as an example of faith strike a blow to the champions of the Law? (3:6-8)
11. How did Paul link the past with the present? (3:9)
12. What is the curse of the law? (3:10)
13. How does a person become justified before God? (3:11)
- * 14. Why is combining faith and Law impossible? (3:11-12)
15. How does Christ save people from the curse of the Law? (3:13)
16. Why is Christ's redemptive work effective for both Jews and Gentiles? (3:14)

Get It

- * 17. When has your pastor corrected the congregation?
18. What rules have become very important in your church?
19. How much of your righteousness is self-righteous behavior?
20. If you were to write a two-line summary of the doctrine of justification, what would you say?
- * 21. In your view, what is the biggest difference between Law and faith?
22. What is your relationship to Abraham?
23. What has Christ done for you?

Apply It

24. In what situation can you share the blessings of Christ with someone else this week?
- * 25. How can you help new Christians get a clear understanding of their position in Christ?

The Law and the Promise - Galatians 3:15-25

Topics: Believe, Bible, Covenant, Faith, God, Jesus Christ, Law, Mediator, Promises, Righteousness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. Where do you keep important personal or family documents?
- 2. If you lost all your legal papers, what would you do?
- 3. What is the oldest legal document you possess?

Explore It

- 4. What spiritual truth did Paul explain by using an everyday example? (3:15-16)
- * 5. Through whom were the promises of Abraham fulfilled? (3:16)
- 6. How long after the promises to Abraham was the Law given? (3:17)
- 7. What was the relationship of the Law to the covenant? (3:17)
- * 8. What was the promised inheritance? (3:18)
- 9. What was the purpose of the Law? (3:19)
- 10. How was the Law put into effect? (3:19)
- 11. The Law required a mediator; how was the promise given to humanity without a mediator? (3:20)
- * 12. Why did God give both the Law and promises? (3:21-22)
- 13. How did the Law pave the way for the gospel? (3:22-23)
- 14. What freedom did faith in Christ bring? (3:23-25)
- 15. How did Christ's coming change the role of the Law? (3:24-25)

Get It

- 16. Why did Paul go to such lengths to explain Law and grace?
- 17. When have you perceived God as a harsh disciplinarian?
- 18. How much of your experience as a Christian is based on a set of rules?
- 19. If you had lived in Old Testament times, how would you have benefited from living under the Law?
- * 20. How does faith in Christ set us free from legalism?
- * 21. How has faith in Christ set you free from legalism?
- 22. How does God fulfill His promises in your life?

Apply It

- * 23. How can you help an unbelieving friend understand that being a good, law-abiding person is not enough to get right with God?
- 24. What life-changing promise of God do you want to hold on to this week?
- 25. For what spiritual inheritance can you praise God today?

Sons of God - Galatians 3:26-4:7

Topics: Children, Faith, Family, God, Heart, Heritage, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Promises, Slavery

Open It

1. What would be the advantages of growing up in a multiethnic neighborhood?
- * 2. If you could become part of another family, which family would you choose?

Explore It

- * 3. What was the family status of the Galatian believers? (3:26)
4. How are Christians joined to Christ? (3:27)
5. What new garments did the Galatians put on? (3:27)
6. How does God cut across cultural and human distinctions in the family of faith? (3:28)
- * 7. How were the Galatians heirs of the promise to Abraham? (3:29)
8. How are those who live under the Law immature? (4:1-2)
9. Before the Galatians became Christians, how were they like slaves? (4:3)
10. How did the coming of Jesus perfectly satisfy the requirements of the Law? (4:4-5)
- * 11. How did the believers benefit by becoming part of God's family? (4:5)
12. Whom did God send into the lives of the Galatian Christians? (4:6)
13. How did the Spirit move the believers to address God? (4:6)
14. Since the Galatians were no longer slaves, what had they become? (4:7)

Get It

15. How would you describe your spiritual clothing?
16. What is your favorite way to address God?
17. If you were a Galatian Christian, how would you feel after learning of your position in God's family?
- * 18. As a child of God, do you behave like a slave or more like an heir?
19. In what ways do even Christians discriminate or value some types of people over others?
- * 20. How do many churches hold on to cultural barriers even as they represent Christ?
21. In what ways should churches work to break down barriers between groups?

Apply It

- * 22. How can you take action to step beyond your cultural boundaries in befriending Christians who are different from you?
23. How can you develop more intimacy with and trust in your heavenly Father during the coming days?

Paul's Concern for the Galatians - Galatians 4:8-20

Topics: Children, Choices, God, Gospel, Idolatry, Influence, Jesus Christ, Joy, Legalism, Rejection, Sickness, Slavery, Truth

Open It

1. How have you become estranged from a former friend?
- * 2. In what ways have you switched alliances among your circle of friends during the past few years?
3. Are you more or less joyful than you used to be? Why?

Explore It

4. Before becoming Christians, to what were the Galatians enslaved? (4:8)
- * 5. After they became believers, how did the Galatians turn back to their paganism? (4:9-10)
6. Why did these Christians go back to observing the Mosaic calendar? (4:9-10)
7. How did Paul express his concern for the Galatians? (4:11)
- * 8. Why did Paul tell the Christians to follow his example? (4:12)
9. What had been Paul's experience with the Galatian believers? (4:12-14)
10. How had the Galatians esteemed Paul? (4:15)
11. Why did the believers turn away from Paul? (4:16)
- * 12. What motivated the Judaizers to turn the Galatians against Paul? (4:17)
13. What did Paul say in defense of zealousness? (4:18)
14. How did Paul express his attitude toward the Galatians? (4:19-20)
15. How did Paul want his "dear children" to change? (4:19)
16. Why did Paul want to be with the believers? (4:20)

Get It

17. What are some of the "weak and miserable principles" by which non-Christians live their lives?
- * 18. After experiencing salvation, why do some Christians return to their former bad habits?
19. What bad habits are hard for you to break?
20. How have we allowed cultural practices to affect the way we celebrate Christmas and Easter?
21. How does your pastor show concern for your spiritual growth?
- * 22. When have you turned away from friends because you did not like what they had to say?
23. How can we show concern for Christians who have turned away from the truth?

Apply It

24. What is one step you can take, starting today, to increase the joy in your life?
- * 25. What friendship can you mend this week for the sake of Christ?

Hagar and Sarah - Galatians 4:21-31

Topics: Believers, Bible, Children, Covenant, Freedom, Holy Spirit, Law, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. What is unique about being the firstborn child in a family?
- 2. In your family, how were you and your siblings each treated differently?

Explore It

- 3. Before the Galatians truly gave themselves over to the Law, what did Paul ask them to consider? (4:21)
- 4. Why did Paul appeal to the example of Abraham? (4:22)
- * 5. What was the difference in status between Abraham's two sons? (4:22)
- 6. How were Abraham's sons conceived? (4:23)
- 7. How did Hagar represent the covenant at Mount Sinai? (4:24)
- 8. How did Paul refer to the birth of Abraham's sons? (4:24-27)
- 9. In what way did Hagar typify first-century Jerusalem? (4:25)
- 10. How was Sarah an example of the "Jerusalem that is above"? (4:26-27)
- 11. How did Paul apply an ancient prophecy to Sarah's history? (4:27)
- * 12. How were the Galatians like Isaac (the child of promise)? (4:28)
- 13. How were the Judaizers like Ishmael (the child of slavery)? (4:29)
- 14. Based on his illustration, how did Paul expect the Galatians to deal with the legalists? (4:28-30)
- * 15. How did Paul compare Ishmael's persecution of Isaac to the legalists' opposition to the Christians? (4:29-30)
- 16. How did Paul align himself with the Galatians and Sarah? (4:31)

Get It

- 17. Why was Paul's allegory helpful in explaining Law and grace?
- 18. In your family, do you feel like a child of Hagar or a child of Sarah? Why?
- * 19. In what ways do Christians try to impose extra-biblical standards on one another?
- * 20. Which of your own rules or personal standards are you tempted to require of others?
- 21. How does the new birth in Christ give us freedom?
- 22. What do you have in common with Isaac?
- 23. How should you treat people who try to impose their standards on you?

Apply It

- 24. What can you do this week to encourage other Christians to enjoy their freedom in Christ?
- * 25. What will help you avoid unfairly imposing your own standards on others?
- 26. How can you start drawing on your inheritance in Christ today?

Freedom in Christ - Galatians 5:1-15

Topics: Burdens, Confusion, Disobedience, Freedom, Grace, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Law, Love, Righteousness, Serving, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you took up running, would you jog for enjoyment or train to compete in races? Why?
- 2. Do you prefer group or individual sports? Why?
- 3. Do you like games with challenging instructions and rules, or games with simple instructions and few rules? Why?

Explore It

- * 4. What challenge did Paul set before the Galatians? (5:1)
- 5. Why did Paul challenge the Christians to be resolute? (5:1)
- 6. What warning did Paul issue to the Galatians? (5:2)
- 7. How would turning to the Law obligate the Galatian Christians? (5:3)
- 8. What consequence would seeking justification by Law bring? (5:4)
- 9. How did Paul contrast legalists and true believers? (5:5)
- 10. How did Paul sum up the significance of circumcision? (5:6)
- 11. What really matters? (5:6)
- * 12. How did Paul describe the Galatians' Christian experience? (5:7)
- 13. How had false teaching affected the Galatian church? (5:8-9)
- 14. Why was Paul optimistic about the Galatians? (5:10)
- 15. How did the Cross mark the end of the Law? (5:11)
- 16. What strong words did Paul have for the Judaizers? (5:12)
- * 17. How were the Galatian Christians to use their freedom? (5:14)
- 18. What were the Galatians called on to guard against? (5:15)

Get It

- * 19. What challenge does this passage set before your church?
- 20. What are the side effects of trying to be saved by keeping the Law?
- 21. What unnecessary rules and regulations do Christians tend to impose on one another?
- 22. What difference will it make if you run the Christian race with your attention on Christ?
- * 23. How do some Christians abuse their freedom in Christ?
- 24. In what ways are you hindered from loving others?
- 25. When have you been guilty of backbiting and gossip?
- 26. Why should you serve the family of God in love?

Apply It

- 27. Who is one neighbor to whom you can show a gesture of love this week?
- * 28. As you run your race for Christ today, how can you free yourself of unnecessary rules and regulations that hinder your progress?
- 29. Whom can you invite to join you in running a good race?

Life by the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-26

Topics: Believers, Conflict, Desires, Discipline, Fruit, Gentleness, Goodness, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Joy, Kindness, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Law, Love, Patience, Peace, Sin

Open It

- * 1. If you could change one personality trait in yourself, what would you change?
- 2. What do you really like about yourself?

Explore It

- 3. What would happen if the Galatians lived by the power of the Holy Spirit? (5:16)
- 4. What is the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit? (5:17)
- 5. How were the Galatians affected by the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit? (5:17)
- * 6. How could the Galatian Christians lead godly lives? (5:18)
- 7. What is one obvious feature of human nature? (5:19)
- 8. To what sexual sins are we prone? (5:19)
- * 9. What religious sins does the sinful nature produce? (5:20)
- 10. What societal evils come from our sinful nature? (5:20-21)
- 11. In what sense is Paul's list of sins incomplete? (5:21)
- 12. What warning is given to those who live sinful lives? (5:21)
- * 13. What happens to a Christian who is under the control of the Holy Spirit? (5:22-23)
- 14. What is the result of yielding to the Spirit? (5:22-23)
- 15. How do the Christian graces affect all areas of the believer's life? (5:22-23)
- 16. How is a Christian empowered to live by the Spirit? (5:24-25)
- 17. What did Paul tell the Galatian Christians not to do? (5:26)

Get It

- 18. How much should we rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and power in our lives?
- 19. How is your response of faith necessary in order for the Holy Spirit to have victory in you?
- * 20. Why do Christians tend to excuse the behavior of their old nature?
- 21. What acts of the sinful nature tend to entangle you?
- 22. What is the fruit of the Spirit?
- 23. In what sense do love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control grow in a person much the way fruit grows on a tree?
- 24. How can a person cultivate the character qualities of the Holy Spirit in his or her life?
- 25. What can a Christian do to promote the growth of godly character in his or her life?
- * 26. How do you see the character of the Holy Spirit growing in your life?
- 27. Who is kept out of the kingdom of God?
- 28. How does the warning against living a sinful life apply to someone you know?
- 29. In what ways do Christians need to guard against conceit and envy?

Apply It

- * 30. What can you do this week to nurture the character of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- 31. How can you and the Spirit get rid of the dead wood that stifles your growth?
- 32. What do you want to do the next time you encounter conceit or envy in your church?

Doing Good to All - Galatians 6:1-10

Topics: Believers, Burdens, Encouragement, Eternal Life, Holy Spirit, Money, Pastors, Restoration, Rewards, Self-centeredness, Sin

Open It

- * 1. How easily do you share your time and skills with others?
- 2. What's hardest about serving others?
- 3. How do you feel when you aren't thanked for going out of your way to help someone?

Explore It

- 4. What did Paul say about helping a Christian overtaken by sin? (6:1)
- 5. What warning about sin do strong Christians need to heed? (6:1)
- * 6. How should Christians support each other? (6:2)
- 7. What is the law of Christ? (6:2)
- * 8. What is the antidote to self-deception? (6:3-4)
- 9. How is carrying one's own load different from bearing the burdens of others? (6:5)
- 10. What is the responsibility of church members toward their teaching elders? (6:6)
- 11. How did Paul warn against a lack of financial support for the Christian workers in the Galatian churches? (6:7-8)
- 12. How did Paul encourage the Christians to endure in service? (6:9)
- 13. What did Paul say about a Christian's social responsibility? (6:10)
- * 14. What responsibility do believers have toward each other? (6:10)

Get It

- * 15. What is the best approach to helping a Christian brother or sister caught in sin?
- 16. How is your view of yourself in line with God's?
- * 17. What encourages you to keep going in Christian service even when you feel like giving up?
- 18. How would you evaluate your history of tithing?
- 19. How can you help meet the needs of others outside the church?

Apply It

- * 20. How can you help a member of your church this week with a particular burden he or she has?
- 21. This week, what can you do to support someone in missions in a way that will please the Spirit?

Not Circumcision but a New Creation - Galatians 6:11-18

Topics: Believers, Body, Grace, Jesus Christ, Law, Mercy, Peace, Persecution, World

Open It

- * 1. What family traditions are very important to you?
- 2. How willing are you to try new things?

Explore It

- 3. What kind of letters did Paul inscribe? (6:11)
- * 4. Why did certain people want the Galatians circumcised? (6:12-13)
- 5. How did the legalists practice hypocrisy? (6:13)
- 6. Who was being hypocritical? How? (6:13)
- * 7. What did the legalists boast about? (6:13)
- 8. What was Paul's only boast? (6:14)
- 9. How did Paul and the legalists view the cross of Christ differently? (6:14)
- * 10. In terms of salvation, how significant were outward religious symbols? (6:14-15)
- 11. What was the only thing that mattered? (6:14-15)
- 12. What blessing did Paul pronounce on believing Galatians and on believing Jews? (6:16)
- 13. What did Paul want ended? (6:17)
- 14. How did Paul show that he belonged to Christ? (6:17)
- 15. How would you describe the tone of Paul's benediction to the Galatians? (6:18)

Get It

- * 16. What motivates you to observe certain religious traditions in your church?
- 17. How important is it to make a good impression outwardly?
- 18. In what ways should we be "crucified" to the world?
- * 19. How did Paul show his love for the Galatians?
- 20. How do other Christians recognize your love for them?

Apply It

- 21. What sacrifices are you willing to make for the cross of Christ this week?
- * 22. How can you show to the world in the coming weeks that you are becoming a new creation?