

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**Galatians 4<sup>8</sup> – 6<sup>18</sup>**

**Leader's Guide**

# Hearing the Word Galatians 4<sup>8</sup>–6<sup>18</sup> Leader's Guide

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*Email:* [info@hearingtheword.org.uk](mailto:info@hearingtheword.org.uk)

*Website:* <https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

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*Nigel Barge, January 2014*

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## Resources

*The New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
*The New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every  
Bible book, IVP

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



## **LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise - *Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



## **LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



## **LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



## **LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God, (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).



## READING ‘LETTERS’ IN THE BIBLE

Whatever we read, we adjust to its style, sometimes without noticing. We approach a newspaper, a car manual, a cookery book, a scientific report and a Shakespeare play in different ways. We take into account the purpose for which it was written and how the writer uses words. Since the Bible also has many styles – law, poetry, history, wisdom, prophecy, letters and visions – we must allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying.

The New Testament contains letters written by five Apostles to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God and as such they not only *were* authoritative for the church then, but they *are* authoritative for the church of all time.

Since Galatians is written *as a letter*, in the first instance it must be read as such. We need to take into account that letters are:

- a) *Relational.* A letter is addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them. So in the Bible, we must first remember that Paul (or James/Peter/John/Jude) is addressing named individuals or churches, in the first century. It is only once we have grasped what they are saying to *them*, *then* that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us*, *now*. The two will *always* be consistent.
- b) *Occasional.* Letters are one side of a ‘conversation’ between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to ‘read between the lines’ to work out the other side of the story. We have to understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstance.
- c) *Dated.* Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instructions which are ‘time-bound’ from principles that are *timeless*.
- d) *To be read as a whole.* When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it as a single communication whose contents are all related. So with letters in the Bible: every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

# BACKGROUND TO GALATIANS

## The Author

Paul, first known by his Hebrew name, Saul, became the foremost preacher of the Gospel in the NT. He was born in Tarsus, (*map, p11*) with the status of free citizen of Rome, educated in Jerusalem and spoke four languages. He studied the Hebrew Scriptures under a well-respected Jewish scholar, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and as a young man was violently opposed to Christianity. While on his way to Damascus to imprison Christians, Jesus appeared to him, and his life was dramatically changed. **Read** the narrative in Acts chapter 9, and two accounts in his own words, Acts 22:4-16: 26:9-18.

Later, Paul was brought to Antioch in Syria to teach new Christians who, as Gentiles, had no background knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. The Church there was very keen to spread the Gospel to Gentiles, and they sent Barnabas and Paul on what is known as Paul's first missionary journey (**Read** Acts 13, 14). People followed Jesus in four towns in present-day Turkey: another Antioch (i.e. not the Syrian one), Iconium, Lystra & Derbe.

Luke, the author of Acts, was a doctor who met Paul on his *second* missionary journey then travelled with him (Acts 16:10). In Acts chapters 9, 11 and 15 Luke says Paul visited Jerusalem *three* times, whereas Paul in Galatians mentions only *two*. Was one mistaken? No! Obviously, Paul wrote Galatians *after* his second visit and *before* the third: that is, between vv 1 and 3 of Acts 15, or Galatians 2:10/11, soon after the end of the first missionary journey.

## The Destination of the letter

There is controversy about exactly who the Galatians are. By the *South Galatian* theory, Paul wrote to these new Christians in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. (Acts 13:14 - 14:23) The problem is that the local name for the area of this Antioch was *Pisidia*, and the others three, *Lycaonia*. The ethnic area called Galatia was further north. The *Roman* province of Galatia, however, covered a far bigger area, including Pisidia and Lycaonia.

We hold to the South Galatian theory for three reasons:

- a) Paul, the Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29), would use Roman boundaries.
- b) The Galatian letter is the least 'temperate' of all Paul's letters(!), understandable if this was his *first* reaction to serious disorder among the *first* churches he planted.
- c) His opening remark: *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ ...* (Gal 1:6) would not fit later letters, by which time bitter experience would have removed the element of surprise.

## The Date of writing

If the South theory is correct, Galatians was written after the first missionary journey and before the Council of Jerusalem, in AD 48 or 49, Acts 15:2b. Paul refers to Barnabus (2:1,9,13) as if the Galatians knew him; he was present on Paul's first missionary journey, but not later (Acts 15:39) Since the Gospels began orally, it is probably also the first written book of the NT.

## The Occasion

Initially Paul and Barnabus preached in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (13:14ff). When the Jewish leaders rejected the message, they turned to the Gentiles (13:46ff). Some Jews pursued them to the towns of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in an attempt to stifle the church. However, after the very young churches had been born, the tactic seems to have changed: *try to turn all Christian converts into Jews, and the church into a sect of Judaism.*

Paul's good news was that sinful human beings can be made right with God by grace, received by faith. Forgiveness was a free gift of God, offered on the basis of what Jesus did for sinners, not what a sinner might do to try to earn it. In particular, one could not earn it by keeping the Law or becoming a Jew. Within the church there was a Jewish lobby (*The Judaisers*). From their background as Pharisees, they were teaching Gentile believers that faith alone was *not* enough – you had to keep the Law as well. They wanted everyone to be circumcised *first*, and keep all Moses' laws, e.g. food laws. Gal 2:12; Acts 15:5. Paul and Barnabas resisted this forcibly. This letter is the first step. '**The only thing that counts is faith (in Jesus) expressing itself as love**' Gal 5:6b. They went on to argue the case at the first Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:4-29), when Apostles and church leaders had to gather to resolve the issue. They ruled in Paul's favour, and issued a letter upholding the principle, *omitting* any obligation to be circumcised or keep the Jewish law, but *asking* Gentile Christians to observe four features of it, for church unity 15:28,29.

Later Paul would begin his second missionary journey by re-visiting the four towns, delivering the Council's announcement to the churches, which were strengthened in faith and grew in numbers. (Acts 16:2).

## The tone of the letter

There is a hint of desperation. Paul, after his first, thrillingly-successful missionary foray, sees it all going 'pear shaped'. The four infant churches are like his 'baby' 4:19. His authority is being challenged and he vigorously defends it. (Note how often he uses 'I' - 18 times in 1:11-24 !)

The message of this letter is vital – it contends for the very heart of the Gospel. The letter's crude, explosive tone lends weight to the suggestion that this 'shot from the hip' is Paul's reaction to his first major doctrinal oppos-

ition – the whole future of the church seemed to be at stake.

The tone is :-

- a) Assertive (1:1) It is clearly an apostolic pronouncement from God
- b) Urgent (1:6) There is no ‘flannel’ – he cuts to the quick.
- c) Serious (1:8) It is a matter of eternal life and death.
- d) Forceful (3:1) He berates the stupidity of the Galatians
- e) Explicit!! (5:12) He speaks in the strongest (and crudest!) terms
- f) Abrupt (6:17,18). Having emphatically made his point he closes the letter ( – and hurries to post it?!)

## History

God had promised Abraham a land and ‘seed’, usually translated ‘descendants’. Abraham believed him, put his trust in him and God treated him as right with Himself (Genesis 12&15). God gave Abraham and his descendants a sign to mark this faith – circumcision of all the males (Genesis 17).

God told him that future generations would possess the land (Genesis 15:13ff). But years passed; Abraham and his wife Sarah grew old and were still childless. So aged 86 he decided to make it happen himself. He took his wife’s maid, Hagar and, as was the custom then, tried to have an heir by her. A son *was* born – Ishmael. God, however did not acknowledge him as the child of the promise and told Abraham to wait longer (Genesis 16). Eventually, aged 99, he and Sarah had a miracle son, Isaac (Genesis ch 18+21).

Isaac, his son Jacob and their family lived among the people of Canaan in the land that was promised to them. Through Jacob’s son Joseph, God moved his people from Canaan to Egypt to avoid a famine (Genesis 37-47). There they grew to become a large nation whom the Egyptians enslaved.

Centuries after Abraham, Moses was used to save his descendants from Egypt (Exodus 1-13) leading them back to take possession of the Promised Land. During their long journey through the wilderness, God met with Moses at Mount Sinai, and gave him the Law (Exodus 19 – 40).

Paul stresses: **The Promise was given *before* The Law.** It was therefore not the keeping of the Law that earned God’s favour. Instead, his promise (deliverance from Egypt etc) came from his undeserved grace.

## A commendation?!

The great reformer, Martin Luther said of it “The epistle to the Galatians is *my* epistle. To it I am as it were in wedlock. It is my Katherine (his wife).”

## A possible time-line

**'Bold'** indicates **known** dates and times; the others are deduced from Scriptural clues.

This assumes 'Galatians' was written to **Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe**.

**4BC** Death of **Herod the Great**; Jesus was born before this point, Matt 2:1,19.

**AD26** Start of Jesus' public ministry at earliest ('about 30 years old' Luke 3:23) He spent 2 Passovers in Jerusalem (John 2:23; 12:1), minimum 1 year, maximum 3.

**29** **Death of Jesus**

**30** Death of Stephen (Acts 8:1) Saul converted (Acts 9:1ff), entered Damascus, then left for Arabia, then returned there (Gal 1:17).

**33** After **3 years** (Gal 1:18) (= many days, Acts 9:23) (presumably, counting from his conversion) Saul escaped Damascus, visited Jerusalem; met Barnabas and Peter. After **2 weeks**, Saul went to Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:30, Gal 1:21).

**No data on Saul for about 13 years.**

**46** Saul from Tarsus to Antioch: '1 year' teaching (Acts 11:25, Gal 1:21).

**47** After **14 years**, Paul to Jerusalem 'following a revelation' (Gal 2:1,2) = Agabus prophesied famine (Acts 11:27ff), taking gifts (cf Gal 2:10).

**47 or 48** Barnabas and Saul *aka* Paul began 'first missionary journey' Cyprus & South Galatia = Antioch, Iconium Lystra, Derbe; back to Syrian Antioch (Acts 13,14).

**48 or 49** Peter arrives Syrian Antioch; followed by men from James (the circumcision party). Paul confronts Peter re eating with Gentiles Acts 15:1; Gal 2:11-16. Paul writes **Letter to the 'Galatians'** – 'so quickly deserting...!' (1:6)

**48 or 49** **Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:2ff)** discussing: 'Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses' 15:5.

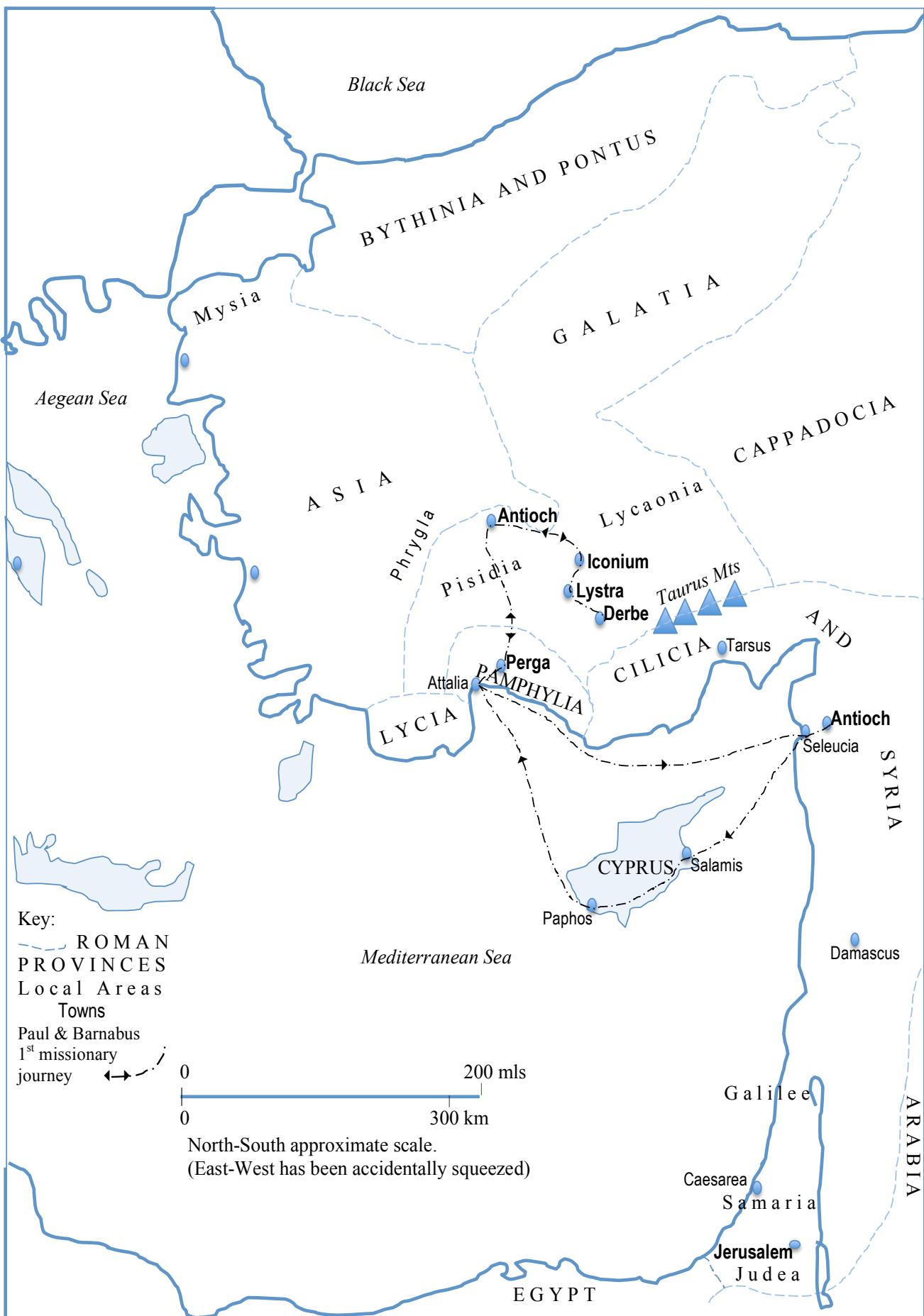
## The structure of the letter to the Galatians

Study A Page

A	An assertive address	1: 1 – 4	1
B	Paul's credentials		
	There's only one Gospel...	1: 5 – 10	
	... Given by God, agreed by Apostles,	1:11 – 24	2
	... For Jew and Gentile alike.	2: 1 – 10	3
C	Justified by faith, not by Law	2:11 – 21	4
	Spirit given in response to faith, not Law	3: 1 – 14	5
	Grace precedes Law	3:15 – 25	6
	Sons of God by faith	3:26 – 4:7	7

D	Living by faith	Study B	Page
	Free from weak and miserable principles	4: 8-20	1
	Children of freedom	4:21-31	2
	Free to love	5: 1-15	3
	Fruit of freedom in the Spirit	5:16-26	4
	Guarding freedom	6: 1-10	5
E	A potent Signature	6:11-18	6
			27

# Paul's First Missionary Journey: Cyprus and South Galatia



## Free from weak principles

### Background information and Word List

Paul sees pagan worship as a kind of slavery to beings that were not God. The new Christians were no longer slaves, but sons and heirs of God (4:7); they should not replace pagan ritual with Jewish, or it would re-enslave them.

They were observing (13) probably - days (Sabbaths) months (new moons) seasons (Feast of Passover, Pentecost tabernacles) years (sabbatic every 7<sup>th</sup> Year)

The illness in v13 may refer to an event at Perga near the coast (Acts 13:13). *Something* seems to have prevented Paul preaching there, and persuaded John Mark to go home. Some think the area was swampy and malarial, giving fever and migraine. If it had something to do with Paul's eyesight (4:15 see also Acts 23:1-5; Gal 6:11). Whatever it was, the party immediately moved inland, to Antioch.

9	<i>know God</i>	Scripture uses 'know' in a far deeper way than intellectual knowledge alone, e.g. of the intimate marriage bond between husband and wife.
	<i>principles</i>	Basic beliefs
11	<i>wasted</i>	<i>lit</i> in vain, to no purpose.
12	<i>brothers</i>	i.e. brothers in Christ. (Cf 1:11; 3:15)
13	<i>illness</i>	<i>lit</i> bodily weakness, unspecified. See above
19	<i>little children</i>	diminutives in Greek and Latin show deep affection

### Bible Connections (But remember, the rest of the NT was *not yet written!*)

8	<i>"Remember you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you"</i> (Deut 15:15) {sign above John Newtons mantle piece!}	
9	<i>principles</i>	see v3
10	<i>special days etc</i>	see Colossians 2:16
13	<i>first preached</i>	Acts 13:16-49
	<i>first</i>	On first missionary journey, Paul retraced his steps, so Lystra, Iconium and Antioch got a second visit Acts 14:21.
	<i>illness</i>	although Paul was used in miraculous healing Acts 14:8
19	<i>childbirth metaphor</i>	- later used 1 Thessalonians 2:11,12; 1 Peter 2:2

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 8 *When was formerly?*  
*How did they come to 'know God'?*  
*Who were they slaves to?*
- 9 *How can 'know God' and 'be known by God' be interchangeable?*  
*What are the weak and miserable principles?*  
*When were they enslaved by them first?*
- 10 *How is observing special days etc a problem?*
- 11 *Why does he fear for them?*  
*What were 'his efforts'?*
- 12 *How are they to become like him?*  
*How did he become like them?*
- 13 *What illness?*  
*Why didn't he rest up!!*
- 14 *Why might they have treated him with scorn or contempt?*  
*Why did they welcome him so?*
- 15 *What joy...?*  
*Why would they have 'torn out their eyes for him'?*
- 16 *What truth?*
- 17 *Who is 'us'?*
- 18 *What did 'being zealous' involve?*
- 19 *What does he mean 'again in the pains of childbirth'?*
- 20 *What does 'perplexed' mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 13 *Why should they have treated him with contempt for being ill*

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
- 8 *slaves (4:3,7)*
- 9 *weak and miserable principles (4:3)*

b) individual book,

8    *slaves versus freedom (2:4; 5:1)*

14    *an angel (1:8)*

15    *joy (5:22)*

d) whole bible,

8    *slaves now of God (Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 7:22,23; 2 Cor 4:5)*  
*The prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)*

9    *Knowing God means the eternal God. (John 17:3)*

12    *Plead with Eoudia and Syntche (Philippians 4:3)*  
*Become like me (Acts 26:28,29)*  
*To those outside the Law I became as outside the Law (1Cor 9:20-22)*

14    *receives you receives me (Jesus) (Matthew 10:40)*

15    *The disciples were filled with joy amidst persecution (Acts 13:52)*

16    *The Truth (John 14:6; 17:17)*

17    *Zealous + - (Acts 22:3; Romans 10:2; 2 Cor 8:22; Galatians 1:14)*  
*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. (Romans 12:1)*

19    *My dear children (1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 John 2:1)*  
*Pains of childbirth (Romans 8:22)*

20    *Perplexed but not in despair (2 Corinthians 4:12)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

8    *'Formerly' was before they had heard and believed the grace that there is in Jesus.*  
*They came to 'know God' by believing the message of Jesus.*  
*They were slaves to the ruler of this world.*

9    *They are interchangeable but being known by God comes first?*

*The miserable principles are ‘elemental spirits’ who ruled those who couldn’t keep the Law.*

*They were enslaved by them when they had not believed in Jesus.*

10 *It is a problem if by doing so you think you gain merit with God.*

11 *He fears for them that they reverted to trying to earn merit with God.*

*‘His efforts’ were to present to them in word and deed, Christ crucified.*

12 *He gave up living by the demands of the Law, as a Jew.*

*He became like them ‘free’ from the Law.*

13 *An illness associated with the eyes (15)?*

*He didn’t ‘rest up’ because sharing the Gospel was a way of life not an activity or a ‘profession.’*

14 *Contempt because he was a healer /worker of miracles yet he was sick?*

*They welcomed him for they believed his message of Jesus*

15 *joy (Acts 13:52)*

*They would have ‘torn out their eyes for him’ because he had an eye disease?*

16 *Truth about the grace of God in Jesus.*

17 *‘Us’ is Paul , Barnabus etc*

18 *‘Being zealous’ involved being keen.*

19 *‘The pains of childbirth’ are the cost / self denial etc. of bringing others to faith in Jesus*

20 *‘Perplexed’ means in pain?*

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*They might have treated him as a fraud – “Physician heal thyself !”*

4) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Having been delivered from slavery you I am worried that you now seem to reverting to observing church rules. (8-11)*

*Please remember how you received me and the message of Jesus whole heartedly caring for me when I was sick. Am I now an enemy for reminding you of that truth. (12-16)*

*The ‘circumcision group’ are very keen to win you over. Remember that my desire is that Jesus above all should be your Lord. How I long for personal fellowship. (17-20)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*The choice is that either you know God's grace or you are enslaved by religious rules.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 9**

*But now that you know God or are known by God – How is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

**8 God doesn't want slaves He wants children.**

b) His grace?

**9 God is the initiator of a relationship with man .**

**15 God know us which is our joy.**

c) Jesus and His salvation?

**19 The hope of the Gospel is that the Messiah, Jesus is formed in us.**

2) What should I do?

**8 Note - Before we received Jesus we were slaves**

**9 Hold on to God's initiative in your life**

*It is possible for Christian brothers to revert to 'slavery' under the Law*

*To serve God is 'perfect freedom' (St Augustine)*

**10 Beware 'religiously' keeping festivals i.e. thinking that it will improve your standing with God.**

**11 Be explicit about your fears for others in Christ**

**12 Plead with others, putting yourself on the line**

**13 Christian leaders be willing to show vulnerability.**

**14 Welcome /care for Christian leaders as you would an angel or Jesus**

*Himself.*

- 15 *Joy should be the expectation of every Christian  
Legalistic believers are miserable!  
Self-sacrifice is the evidence of the grace of God in a Christian life.*
- 16 *Beware seeing anyone as an enemy who is a brother in Christ.*
- 17 *Beware a cause at the expense of brotherly love.*
- 18 *Note - Godly zeal is permanent and good.*
- 19 *Note - Christian evangelism and nurture is costly.  
Note - Christian evangelism and nurture is a process no an event.*
- 20 *Note - Christian evangelism and nurture is personal.*

#### Background information

Paul uses a style of argument familiar to Rabbis. He refers again to Abraham. In 3:6-9 he stressed his faith, in 3:16-18 his 'seed'. Now 4:22 Paul refers to his two sons, but only one born as a result of God's promise (see History on p 4, and Genesis 15; 16; 17:15-19; 21:1-21). Hagar and Ishmael did not share in the promise and were excluded. Those who believe in Christ are in succession to the freeborn child.

A Covenant is an agreement between two people, or a king and the subjects, usually with one side superior. God made covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Israelites, and David. Abraham made one with Abimelech Gen 21:27, Joshua with the Israelites Josh 24:25, David with Jonathan 1 Sam 18:3 etc. God promised a New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31 whereby he would write his law in his peoples' hearts.

#### Word List

22 <i>born in ordinary way</i>	i.e. Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar.
23 <i>born...of a promise</i>	i.e. Isaac, Abraham's son by Sarah.
24 <i>Mt Sinai</i>	The Israelites went here after leaving slavery in Egypt (Exodus 19 ff) where God gave Moses the law (10 commandments etc). Located in Arabian peninsula, exact site uncertain.
25, 26 <i>Jerusalem</i>	Literally, a city in Israel, central to Judaism. Figuratively, a picture of all the people of God, Heaven, Revelation 21:2.

#### Bible Connections

22 <i>Abraham</i>	Genesis chapters 12:1 - 25:11.
29 <i>persecuted</i>	Ishmael 'mocked' Sarah and Isaac. Genesis 21:9
30 <i>get rid...</i>	Genesis 21:10

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 21 *Why does he want them to tell him?*  
*Who wants to be under the Law?*
- 22 *What does he mean ‘it is written’?*  
*What is a free woman?*
- 23 *What is the ordinary way?*  
*What was the promise he was born under?*
- 24 *What things are ‘these things’?*  
*What is a covenant?*  
*What covenants do they represent?*  
*What is the covenant from Mt Sinai?*  
*Who is Hagar?*
- 25 *How does Hagar stand for Mt Sinai?*  
*Where does it say the Mt Sinai corresponds to Jerusalem?*  
*What does it mean Hagar IS in slavery?*
- 26 *Where is Jerusalem who is above?*  
*Who is ‘our’?*
- 27 *Why is this quote here?*
- 28 *Who are brothers?*
- 29 *What time was it at?*  
*How was Isaac born by the power of the Spirit?*
- 30 *Where does Scripture say get rid of the slave woman and her son?*
- 31 *How does ‘therefore’ work?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why is he appealing to young Gentiles believers by quoting Genesis and Exodus?*

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 21 *subject to the Law / elemental spirits (4:9)*

b) individual book,

28/31 *brothers (1:2,11; 3:15; 4:12)*

28 *the Israel of God (6:16)*

c) whole bible,

21 *Tell me... (Acts 22:27)*

22 *proud to be descendants of Abraham (Matt 3:9; John 8:31-35)*

22/27 *It is written... (Matthew 4:4,7,10)*

22 *the true sons of Abraham –by faith (3:14; Romans 4:16)*

*true sons – heirs (Galatians 3:29)*

23 *the promise of Abraham (Hebrews 11:11)*

26 *Jerusalem above (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12; 21:2)*

*We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 2:6)*

27 *Be glad O barren woman. (Isaiah 54:1)*

28 *the true circumcision (Philippians 3:3)*

29 *Ishmael mocked (Genesis 21:9)*

*Jesus followers were persecuted by the religious. (Acts 2:47; 4:1-21; 5:13; 5:17; 6:7; 8:1)*

*paradox in honour and dishonour.... (2Corinthians 6:8-10)*

30 *Get rid of the slave woman and her son. (Genesis 21:10)*

*Oh that Ishmael —I will establish my covenant (with Isaac) (Genesis 17:18-21; 21:10-13))*

31 *heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ (Romans 8:17)*

*Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body... (2 Corinthians 7:1)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

21 *He wants them to tell him what the Law says.*

*The Galatians who at first received the grace of God want to be under the Law.*

22 *'it is written' means 'God has said...'.*

*A free woman is one who is not owned by 'another'.*

23 *'the ordinary way' is out with God's miraculous intervention*

*The promise he was born under was to his parents who were beyond child bearing.*

24 *'These things' are the natural son of a slave woman vs the miraculous son of the free woman.*

*A covenant is a binding contract.*

*Covenants represent slavery and freedom.*

*The covenant from Mt Sinai is the Law.*

*Hagar was Abrahams wife Sarah's Slave.*

25 *Hagar was a slave to Sarah; we born as slaves to the Law.*

*Mt Sinai, the earthly symbol of the Law, corresponds to Jerusalem, the situation of the Temple, the centre of the Jewish nation.*

*Hagar represents all those who are currently in slavery to the Law.*

26 *Jerusalem which is above is heaven.*

*'Our' are the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, who are 'free'.*

27 *This quote shows:*

*Covenant 1 = Mount Sinai (Law), Hagar,(natural) earthly city of Jerusalem, slaves*

*Covenant 2 = Grace, Sarah (promise), Jerusalem above, free.*

28 *Brothers are sons of Sarah / promise / free/ faith*

29 *The time was of Hagar and Sarah.*

*Isaac born by the power of the Spirit because Sarah was past child bearing age.*

30 *Scripture says get rid of the slave woman and her son. (Genesis 21:10)*

31 *'Therefore' i.e. Because you are of the promise get rid of slavery to the Law*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*He is appealing to young Gentiles believers by quoting Genesis and Exodus*

because they are key to understanding who we are in Christ.

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*In the Law God says, Abraham had two son – one born from Hagar in the natural way and one born by Sarah miraculously as a result of God’s promise. (21-23)*

*There are two covenants -1) Mount Sinai (Law), Hagar,(natural) earthly city of Jerusalem, slaves 2) Grace, Sarah (promise), Jerusalem above, free. (24-26).*

*As the OT prophesied, the latter is the fruitful one. (27)*

*As children of promise you will be opposed by legalists. Have nothing to do with it. Live in freedom. (28-31)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Reckon that you are not slave to the Law but children of God by grace*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 31**

*Therefore, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

22 *God is committed to His Word – He writes it down.*

23 *God makes and keeps his promises.*

29 *God works miracles by the power of His Spirit.*

b) His grace?

26 *Life of God’s children is free!*

28 *We receive it by a promise not by our works.*

29 *We inherit from God.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

30 *Jesus share His inheritance with us*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should we do?

21 *Chose this day whom you will serve as to who we will serve. (Josh 24:15)*

25 Note: We are born as 'slaves' to the Law.

26 Know that you are FREE in Jesus.

27 Note: Bible prophecy applies to its time and the time of Christ / his second coming.

29 Christians: expect persecution especially from the 'religious'.

30 Listen to what the Scriptures says.

Actively 'get rid of' legalism.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Freed to be free!

### Background information

Freedom has a long history in the minds of the people of God. When Israel was enslaved in Egypt, God sent Moses to set them free. If, later, an Israelite found himself enslaved, e.g. to a creditor for not paying debts, the law provided for the *Goel*, the kinsman redeemer, to pay the debt and set the relation free. So freedom from slavery, oppression and exploitation is the obvious usage.

But Paul saw that the Law had become a metaphorical slave-master, demanding obedience. In contrast, since Christ had fulfilled the demands of the law, by dying to redeem those who were under the law (4:4), faith in him brings pardon to sinners. In gratitude for this relationship with Christ, they express love for God and others *instinctively*, not from slavish observation of the Law.

### Word List

1	<i>yoke</i>	lit. Bar that joins two animals e.g. oxen, to pull cart or plough.
2,3	<i>circumcision</i>	The physical act, administered as a sign of the Covenant in Exodus had implications for keeping the rest of God's written laws.
4	<i>justified</i>	be put right in God's eyes
5	<i>righteousness</i>	being right with God
6	<i>love</i>	Gk <i>Agape</i> (pron. <i>a-ga-pay</i> ) Existing Gk noun given new meaning by Jesus: sacrificial love, even for an enemy.
7/8	<i>persuaded</i>	not to be persuaded by the truth. This persuasion is not-
12	<i>emasculate</i>	priests and devotees of Goddess Cybele in neighbouring Phrygia practised self-castration.
13	<i>sinful nature</i>	Gk <i>sarx</i> , lit. <i>flesh</i> ; but means human nature in its natural state of rebellion against God.

### Bible Connections

6	<i>faith... love</i>	see v23,
14	<i>Love your neighbour.</i>	Leviticus 19:18, quoted in the Gospels, by Jesus and others: Matt 5:43; 22:34-35; Luke 10:25-37; and by Paul again in Romans 13:8-10.
	<i>Love God</i>	Deuteronomy 6:5; Matt 22:37; Mark 11:30
	<i>Love one another</i>	i.e. fellow believers, John 13:34; 15:9,12,17;
	<i>Love enemy</i>	Matt 5:44; Lk 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rmns 12:17-21

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *How has Christ set us free?*
- 2 *What is the 'yoke of slavery'?*
- 3 *How might Christ 'be of value' to us?*
- 4 *How are they trying to be justified by the Law?*  
*What does it mean to 'fall away from grace'?*
- 5 *How do we wait eagerly 'through the Spirit'?*  
*What is 'the righteousness for which we hope'?*
- 6 *Faith in what?*
- 7 *When were they running a good race?*  
*Why did he use the analogy here of running a race?*  
*How did they keep them from obeying the truth?*
- 8 *What kind of persuasion?*
- 9 *What does he mean by the analogy of the yeast and the dough?*
- 10 *Why confident in the Lord?*  
*What other view might he take?*
- 11 *Why is he being persecuted?*  
*What is 'the offence of the cross'?*
- 12 *Which agitators?*
- 13 *When were they called to be free?*  
*Why does he use 'brothers' again? (cf 11)*  
*How might he use his freedom to indulge his sinful nature?*
- 14 *What about Loving God?*
- 15 *How were they biting and devouring each other?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why is he so intemperate?! (12)*

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
- 2 *behold I, Paul tell you (6:11)*
- 6 *circumcision nor uncircumcision (6:15)*

b) individual book,

- 1 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of sin. (3:13)*
- 5 *righteousness (2:21; 3:6; 3:21)*  
*the truth of the gospel (2:5)*
- 7 *race (2:2)*
- 8 *God called you by grace. (1:6)*
- 11 *The circumcisers are persecuting those who won't submit. (6:12)*  
*Ishmael persecuted Isaac. (4:29)*
- 12 *circumcision group (2:12)*

c) whole bible,

- 1 *stand (Ephesians 6:13)*  
*yoke (Leviticus 26:13; Matthew 11:29)*
- 4 *fall from (c.f. Hebrews 6:6)*
- 5 *by faith (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11:3ff)*  
*righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)*  
*Hope is certain. (Hebrews 11:1)*
- 6 *love (1 Corinthians 13:1ff)*  
*God so loved the World (John 3:16)*  
*Circumcision is not required of Christians (Acts 15:1,5)*
- 7 *race (1 Corinthians 9:24)*
- 9 *yeast (1 Corinthians 5:6,7)*  
*works through (1 Corinthians 5:6)*
- 10 *causing little ones to sin. (Luke 17:2)*
- 11 *Everyone who lives a Godly life will be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12)*
- 13 *Shall I sin that grace may abound? (Rom 6:1)*
- 14 *The second command is like it. (Matthew 22:39)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of sin. (3:13)*
- 2 *The Law is the yoke of slavery.*
- 3 *Christ will 'be of value' to us if we put our faith in Him.*
- 4 *They trying to be justified by the Law by being circumcised and keeping the Law.*  
*It means to refuse that which is graciously offered to us.*
- 5 *'Through the Spirit' means dependent on God'.*  
*The righteousness for which we hope' is that of Jesus, Himself.*
- 6 *It is faith in Jesus Christ.*
- 7 *They were running a good race when Paul first told them the Gospel.*  
*A race was a familiar spectacle.*  
*They were kept them from obeying the truth by putting obstacles eg Circumcision.*
- 8 *It was a persuasion based on law.*
- 9 *Legalism spreads like yeast.*
- 10 *Confident is in the Lord because his trust is in Him.*  
*Other view is 'keeping the Law increases righteousness'.*
- 11 *He is being persecuted because he believes righteousness come through faith in Jesus not by keeping the Law.*  
*'The offence of the cross' is that it is a gift of God's riches at Christ's Expense.*
- 12 *Agitators are the circumcision group.*
- 13 *They were called to be free when they believed in Jesus.*  
*He calls them brothers to remind them that he believes they are saved.*  
*If he is free, he could just carry on sinning.*
- 14 *Loving God is assumed in Jesus!*
- 15 *They were devouring one another by judging each other?*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Why is he so intemperate?! (12)*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*You are free from having to try to keep all the Law if you are in Christ. (1-5)*

*The only thing that matters is faith in Jesus evidenced by love for others. (6)*

*How did the devil creep in and dupe you, though I am still sue you will prevail? (7-10)*

*The ‘circumcisers’ are persecuting me because of my belief in the all sufficient death of Jesus -I wish they would cut everything off! (11,12)*

*You are free to love one another. Do it otherwise you will destroy each other. (13-15)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Faith in Jesus that sets people free is evidenced by acts of love and is completely independent of religious law keeping.*

3) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 5**

*‘The only thing that counts is faith (in Jesus) expressing itself as love’*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*10 The Lord gets His way.*

*13 God calls us.*

b) His grace?

*4 In Christ you are ‘under grace’.*

*5 Belonging to Jesus is independent of religion.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*1 Jesus set us free to be free!*

*6 Jesus is areligious.*

*6 Jesus engenders love in His people*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Enjoy the freedom God gives in Jesus.*

*Make your choice – stand firm on the grace of Jesus OR succumb to Law.*

2 *Note: The choice is either or – grace and Jesus OR Law and rule keeping.*

3 *Note: Law keepers must achieve perfection.*

4 *Note: To choose Law is to reject Jesus.*

6 *Follow the Lord and love the world*

7 *Note: Obeying the Truth is different from Keeping the Law.*

8 *Be sure that persuasion / pressure does not come from God.*

9 *Resist the slippery slope of religious legalism*

10 *Beware - There is severe judgment for those who mislead God's children.*

11 *Be prepared - Preaching 'grace' leads to persecution by the religious.*

12 *Don't be coy about enemies of the Gospel of grace.*

13 *Be discerning-true freedom in Jesus is expressed in Love for our neighbour.*

15 *Be sure that animosity amongst believers in Jesus is self-destructive.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## The fruit of freedom in the Spirit

### Background information

Paul develops the thought of the sinful nature from v 13. There is conflict between what the sinful nature wants and what the Spirit wants. Paul encourages the Galatians to live by (*lit 'walk in'*) the Spirit (active)(16,25) and be led by the Spirit the Spirit (passive) (18). This means resisting the works of the flesh (19ff) (sinful nature) and allowing the fruit of the Spirit to grow (22ff). Crucified the flesh (25) and live by the Spirit (26)

### Word List

16

*sinful nature* Gk *sarx*, flesh; meaning human nature -rebellious to God

19 *sexual immorality* i.e. any sex outside of heterosexual, monogamous marriage

*impurity* Gk *akatharsia* - pus in unclean wound, life unfit for God

*debauchery* Gk *aselegia* –readiness for any Godless pleasure

20 *witchcraft* lit ‘use of drugs’ - +ve - could be medicinal. –ve - came to be associated with witchcraft and sourcery

*hatred* (or *enmity*) cf between Serpent and woman (Genesis 3:15)

*strife* +ve = rivalry for a prize. –ve = quarrellings, wrangling

*jealous* Gk *zelos*- +ve = desire for excellence, -ve = desire for that to which one has no right

*selfish ambition* Gk *Eristhea* (cf *Erithos* – a hired hand) Came to be used as ‘canvassing for political power’

*factions* Gk *Hairesis* meaning ‘choice’. +ve = a gp of followers, –ve = ‘tribes at war’ (eg Rangers and Celtic!)

21 *envy* Gk *Phthonos* - not ‘desire to have’ (= jealousy), but ‘grief at someone else’s good’

*orgies* Gk ‘*Komos*’ +ve group of friends accompanying a victory, –ve unrestrained revelry

*live* lit ‘*go on doing*’ – ie habitual sin rather than isolated lapse

22 *love* Gk *agape* - self giving, unilateral commitment

*joy* (Psalm 33:11Philippians 1:4,25, 4:4)

*peace* Peace with God through Jesus (Romans 5:1)

*patience* Gk *Makrothumia* eg way that Romans conquered world. Never made peace with enemy even in defeat

God with man (Romans 2:4; 9:22; 1 Peter 3:20)

*kindness* Gk *Chrestos* mellow – wine, easy – Christs yoke (Mt11:30)

*goodness* total moral rightness eg clearing of Temple (John 2:14ff)

23 *gentleness* Submissive to God's will (Mathew 21:5) / teachable (James 1:21) / considerate (Ephesians 4:2)

24 *Kingdom of God* unchallenged rule of God.

**Bible Connections** (But remember, the rest of the NT was *not yet written!*)

19 *virtues* similar lists in e.g. Rom 1:29-31, Mark 7:21,22. So maybe Jesus was in part quoting from an older, Jewish source.

22 *fruit* Jesus: Matt 7:16 – ‘A tree can be recognised by its fruit.’ John 15:1 - ‘I am the vine... in me... bear much fruit.’ Harks back to Isaiah 5:1-7 – Israel is my vineyard.

*Spirit produces* promised in Ezekiel 37:1-14; Jeremiah 31:33

*Kingdom of God* 1 Cor 6:9; Ephesians 5:5

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 16 Who does he contrast 'so I say' with?  
*How do you 'live by the Spirit'?*  
*How would you 'gratify the desires of your sinful nature'?*
- 17 What do the sinful nature and the Spirit desire?  
*How are they 'in conflict with one another'?*
- 18 How if 'led by the Spirit' are you not 'under law'?
- 19 Who are they obvious to?
- 21 When did he warn them before?  
*How do you 'inherit the Kingdom of God'?*
- 22 Why 'the fruit'?
- 23 What does *in* mean 'against such things there is no Law'?
- 24 How has the sinful nature been 'crucified'?
- 25 How do you 'live by the Spirit'?  
*What does 'keep in step with the Spirit' mean?*
- 26 Why might we become 'conceited', 'provoke each other' 'envy each other'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Are 'you' (17) separate from the 'sinful nature' and 'the Spirit'?

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 16 because you are free to chose (13) ....'so I say to you'?  
*freedom misused - turned to bondage (5:1) to indulge sinful nature (flesh) (5:13)*
- 16 begun in the spirit made perfect in the flesh (sinful nature) ..? (3:3)
- 24 crucified their sinful nature (Mark 8:34 c.f. 2:20)  
*take up his cross daily (Luke 9:23)*

c) whole bible,

- 17 'The good that I would I do not...' (Romans 7:15)
- 18 led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1; Romans 8:14)
  - c.f. led by Satan (1 Corinthians 12:2; Ephesians 2:2)
- 19 obvious (John 16:8ff)
- 21 inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9,10; 15:20)
- 25 do what is see the Father doing (John 5:19)
  - seek... set your minds... think about (Romans 8:5; Col 3:1,2, Phil 4:8)

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.  
The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.  
This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
- 16 'So I say' is in view of their freedom – they have a choice to make.
  - You 'live by the Spirit' by actively obeying / following Him.
  - You 'gratify the desires of your sinful nature' by obey him / listening to the tempter.
- 17 The sinful nature indulges self, the Spirit nature obeys God.
  - They are in conflict by who they indulge.
- 18 If 'led by the Spirit', the Law has been fulfilled by Him.
- 19 The obvious are obvious to all who are led by the Spirit
- 21 He warned them before when he was with them
  - You 'inherit the Kingdom of God' by faith.
- 22 'Fruit' is what grows naturally on a given tree.
- 23 It means that Law cannot command them.
- 24 It was 'crucified' when we died with Christ.
- 25 You 'live by the Spirit' by believing what he has done and by doing His bidding.
  - It means we do what we see Him doing.
- 26 Conceited about our own righteousness, provoking another because of their unrighteousness, envy because of another's righteousness

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*The sinful nature and the Spirit are at conflict within you. (17)*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Spirit or sinful nature, you Christians have a choice who you obey. (16-18)*

*The acts of a sinful nature are obvious to you Christians and like I said will not lead to Jesus’ Kingdom. (19-21)*

*The Spirits effect is obvious to and should be exhibited by Christians who have been ‘crucified with Jesus. (22-24)*

*Since that’s us lets us be led by the Spirit and humbly love one another. (25,26)*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*Believers in Jesus may choose which to gratify – the Spirit or the sinful nature.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 16**

*So I say live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

*16 God is incapable of sin.*

*18 God leads His children by His Spirit.*

*21 God’s Kingdom does not have any sin in it.*

b) His grace?

*16 God gives life through the Spirit.*

*22 God’s Spirit produces fruit in us not by our own efforts.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*24 Believers in Jesus have dealt with their sin on His cross.*

3) What should I do?

16 *Use your logic!*

*Employ your will not to sin.*

18 *Follow the Spirit not your flesh / sinful nature.*

*Know that you are not under the command of the Law.*

19 *Listen to what you know about acts of the sinful nature.*

21 *Heed the warning – those who live in this life style will not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

23 *You can't be ordered / compelled to love..*

24 *The power of the sinful flesh has been broken.*

25 *We have a choice to walk in step with the Spirit or not.*

*Walking in step with the Spirit is the opposite of being conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

## Guarding Freedom

### Background information

After the thrilling climax of life in the Spirit replacing the outward ritual and formality of law-keeping, Paul gives some practical applications in 6:1-10.

How should the church deal with a repentant offender, perhaps those take in by the ‘circumcision group’? (2:12; 5:7-12) The keynote is getting them back into the grace of Jesus. Cf the Corinthians were to win back the erring brother 2 Cor 2:5-11

It is a plea for humble, gentle with the victims, consistent with the Gospel of grace, in a church that supports one another.

### Word List

1	<i>Someone</i>	<i>Singular</i> , so may refer to actual individual, or ‘anyone’.
	<i>caught</i>	Either detected doing something wrong, or doing wrong on a sudden impulse. The latter might fit someone persuaded to accept circumcision, if not the Judaisers.
	<i>You...spiritual</i>	Plural; probably, ‘those living by the rule of the Spirit’ = If unfallen, help lift the fallen. Or, the boasters’ self-chosen title = Since you <i>claim to be</i> spiritual, act spiritually in this by restoring....
	<i>Restore</i>	To former condition, (used of mending nets, Mt 4:21). Verb is <i>plural</i> , so applies to whole church.
	<i>Watch yourself</i>	Verb is <i>singular</i> again, ie. Be responsible for yourself.
2	<i>Carry</i>	Paul uses same verb in 6:17. Cf John would later use it of Jesus shouldering his cross, John 21:17.
	<i>Burden</i>	<i>Gk baros</i> - Oppressive, difficult weight to bear
4	<i>take pride</i>	lit ‘boast’ - a negative except ‘in the Lord’ cf 1Cor1:31
4-6	<i>‘But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbour. For each man will have to bear his own load’</i> (RSV)	
5	<i>load</i>	<i>Gk phortiov</i> = amount to carry c.f. ships freight
7	<i>mocked</i>	<i>Gk mukterizo</i> lit. ‘turn nose up’, sneer

### Bible Connections (But remember, the rest of the NT was not yet written!)

1	<i>restore</i>	<i>c.f.</i> 2 Corinthians 2:5-11
	<i>law of Christ</i>	To love... see foot of Study 3.
7	Judge and you will be judged.	(Matthew 7:1)

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why brothers?*  
*How is someone caught in a sin?*  
*Who might be caught in sin?*  
*What does 'spiritual' mean?*  
*How may you be tempted?*
- 2 *What sort of burdens might you carry?*  
*How does carrying them fulfil the Law of Christ?*
- 3 *How might he think he is something?*
- 4 *How might he test his own actions?*  
*Why pride - is it not a sin?*
- 5 *What is your load of?*
- 6 *Who is your' instructor?*  
*What sort of good things should we share with them?*
- 7 *How might God be mocked?*  
*Who ensures that a man reaps what he sows?*
- 8 *How do you sow to please you sinful nature?*  
*When will he reap destruction?*  
*Why use the word 'reap'?*
- 9 *How might we become weary in doing good?*
- 10 *How do you do people 'good'?*  
*Why especially the family of believers?*

What surprises or confuses you?

*Why does he bring this up about 'being caught in sin' – who is he thinking of?*

## 2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
  - 1 *sin means being conceited, provoking, envying (5:26)*  
*Spiritual – live in step with the Spirit (5:25)*  
*gently – same root as gentleness (5:23)*
  - 2 *The Law of Christ is to love neighbour (5:14)*

3 *do not be deceived / deceives himself (7)*  
4 *boast in His own actions (6:14)*  
8 *sinful nature (5:17, 19)*

b) individual book,

1 *brothers (6:18)*

7 *deceived – who has bewitched you (3:1)*

c) whole bible,

1 *gentle means meekly (c.f. Matthew 5:5)*

*like the father of the prodigal son (Luke 15:22)*

*like Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8)*

2 *Law of Christ (John 13:34; 15:12)*

3 *knowledge puffs up but love builds up (1 Corinthians 8:1)*

4 *burden (Matthew 11:30)*

5 *Remove the spec in own eye. (Luke 6:42,43)*

7 *Those who plough evil and those who sow trouble, reap it. (Job 4:8)*

*Sow a wind reap a whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7)*

*deceived – Devil = deceiver (John 8:44; Mark 13:5,6,22)*

*- John ‘many deceivers in world’ (2 John 7:1; 2 John 2:18ff, 4:1ff)*

*- Paul - let no one deceive you (Ephesians 5:5 cf 1 Corinthians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3)*

8 *This is eternal life, that they know you (John 17:3)*

10 *family of believers (1 Peter 2:17)*

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *‘Brothers’ because he is speaking of action within the church.*  
*The sin ‘sneaked up’ on them.*

*People who have listened to the circumcision group might be caught in sin?*

*‘Spiritual’ means those living by, walking in step with, showing the fruit.  
Tempted by pride or to share in the sin.*

- 2 *Burdens may be temptation to conform to circumcision group.  
Carrying a burden, shows love which fulfils the Law of Christ(?)*
- 3 *We might think we are above temptation to sin - better than others*
- 4 *It means – look to himself.  
Pride is a sin.*
- 5 *Carry our load, means to look to / judge your self.*
- 6 *Anyone ‘restored gently’ in the Word should share his benefit with his ‘teacher’.  
How God has been gracious to me, a sinner.*
- 7 *God is mocked when we pretend we are not sinners.  
God will ensure that a man reaps what he sows.*
- 8 *You sow to please your sinful nature by judging others.  
He will reap destruction on the day of judgement.  
He uses the word ‘reap’ to show that judge and we will be judged’*
- 9 *We might become weary in doing good if it is not recognised / appreciated.*
- 10 *Do good by not judging and speaking the truth in love.  
‘Especially the family of believers’ because that is to Jesus, Himself.*

2) What surprises or confuses you?

*He is thinking of those giving in to the circumcision group.*

3) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

*Be gentle with those ensnared by the circumcision group but watch yourself. (1)  
Recognise their situation and beware of personal pride. (2-5) Those helped,  
should in turn appreciate it. (6) Be warned – you’ll get what you deserve, so,  
judge not lest you be judged. (7,8) Do what is right whatever the reaction. (9)  
Do good to all especially to fellow Christians. (10)*

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*It is up to all who are Godly in the church to gently reintegrate those who are repentant, having been taken in by legalistic, non Gospel teaching.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 1**

*Brothers if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

7 *God is all knowing – He cannot be fooled.*

*God is just sin reaps destruction.*

b) His grace?

1 *God welcomes us back, gently.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

2 *The Law of Christ is to love one another as He has loved you'. (c.f. Galatians 5:13)*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Act gently in restoration of fellow Christians.*

*All the church is responsible for a detached brother.*

*Note: Any may be tempted and sin may overwhelmed by sin.*

2 *Love one another by sharing each other burdens.*

4 *Be ruthlessly honest with yourself.*

6 *Note: Any brother restored gently must share the blessing with his benefactor.*

8 *Note: We have a choice which to sow into – sinful nature or Spirit.*

9 *Believe that good ultimately will be rewarded.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

**Listen to me – grace not Law!****Background information**

Paul probably dictated most of this letter; by 6:11 he was writing in his own hand. Verses 11-18 looks a lot longer than our signatures nowadays, but he recaps his main points so the Galatians have no doubt the whole letter is from him.

In his own handwriting (from small and even, to big and untidy?) may have been a defining characteristic of his own writing due to faulty eyesight (c.f. 4:13; Acts 23:1-5).

**Word List**

12 <i>outwardly</i>	<i>Make a good showing</i> occurs only here in NT.
13,14 <i>boast</i>	Speak proudly of (usually) one's own achievement.
14 <i>through which crucified to me</i>	(The cross) or 'through whom' (Jesus) Now that Christ has died for me, I treat myself as dead to the appeal of merely worldly benefits.
15 <i>new creation</i>	The entirely new life that God produces when Jesus by his Spirit comes to live in a person as their Lord.
16 <i>peace</i>	A consequence of being at peace with God through Jesus dying for our sins.
<i>mercy</i>	When God out of love does <i>not</i> give us the punishment we <i>do</i> deserve for our sins. Cf <i>grace</i> below.
<i>Israel of God</i>	Unique phrase. Name given to Jacob because 'he struggled with God' and overcame (Genesis 32:28). It includes all the people who belong to God, whether in the nation and religion of Israel, or not.
17 <i>marks of Jesus</i>	<i>gk stigma</i> – very unusual word cf 'moment of time' (Lk 4:5) word for branding of a slaves. Refers to scars of stoning in Lystra as a servant of Jesus? (Acts 14:19)
18 <i>grace</i>	When God out of love <i>gives</i> us blessings we <i>don't</i> deserve.

**Bible Connections**

11 <i>own hand</i>	1 Corinthians 16:21
12 <i>outwardly</i>	Matthew 23:25

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

11 Why did he write with large letters?  
What point was he making to his reader' about his own hand?

12 Who do they want to make a good impression on?  
Who are they trying to compel to be circumcised  
Who would they be persecuted by?  
Why should they be persecuted for the cross of Jesus'?

13 Why do they not obey the Law?

14 Why boast in the cross?  
How was the world crucified to me?

15 What does it mean if circumcision counts for nothing?  
What is 'the new creation'?

16 What rule?  
Who does he mean the Israel of God?  
Why does he call them that here?

17 Who might cause him trouble?  
What are the marks of Jesus?

18 Why does he want God's grace to be with them  
Why did he call them brothers?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why grace be with your spirit and not the Spirit? (5:16,22)

## 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

14 Boast is the same word as 'take pride.' (gk *kauchaomai*) (6:4)

b) individual book,

11 large letters (because of bad eyes?) (4:13-15)

12 circumcision group (2:12)

crucified with Christ (2:20)

persecuted for the cross (5:11)

13 not able to obey the Law / unable to gain righteousness through it (2:21)

flesh is the same word as 'sinful nature' (Gk *sarx*) (5:16)

16 peace and mercy cf grace and peace (1:3)

Israel of God - Abrahams offspring (3:29)

18 grace .. in the grace of Christ (1:3,6)

c) whole bible,

11 prevention forgery (2 Thessalonians 3:17)

poor eyesight (Acts 23:1-5)

12 unless you are circumcised you cannot be saved (Acts 15:1)

Persecution for cross is inevitable. (2 Timothy 3:12)

14 Jesus is Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3)

15 new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

circumcision of the heart (Romans 2:29)

16 Israel of God (true circumcision (Philippians 3:3)

Israel – 'He struggles with God' (Genesis 32:28)

The God with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:13)

We have peace with God through Jesus. (Romans 5:1)

17 marks (2 Corinthians 11:23-25)

from stoning in Lystra (one of the places written to) (Acts 14:11)

c.f. (2 Corinthians 4:10)

18 grace (Ephesians 2:8)

your spirit {... Grace} (Philippians 4:23; 2 Timothy 4:22; Philemon 1:25)

d) Bible story

*Sin and consequently death has entered through Adam and Eve.*

*The Saviour, Jesus, has come and paid the penalty of sin, death.*

*This Good News is now being preached to the nations.*

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

11 He wrote with large letters because he had trouble with his eyesight.

He was saying – it really is me!

12 They want to make a good impression other people / Jewish authorities.

They trying to compel recent Christian converts to be circumcised.

*They would be persecuted by the Jewish authorities.*

*They be persecuted for the cross of Jesus for having faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins.*

13 *Noone can obey(keep) the Law perfectly (except Jesus)?*

14 *Boast in the cross because God has done it!*

*The world / man's attempts to reach God are useless – have been crucified to me?*

15 *They count for nothing before God.*

*'The new creation' is God's life formed in us.*

16 *'The rule' is not the regulations of man but trust in God.*

*The Israel of God means the whole people of God.*

*He call them that to emphasise that the uncircumcised gentiles too are part of the people of God who believe in Jesus.*

17 *The infiltrators into the church / the Judaisers might cause him trouble?*

*The marks of Jesus are the persecutions he has suffered for Jesus Name.*

18 *He wanted God's grace to be with them to experience and then share.*

*He call them brothers as he is writing to all who believe in Jesus.*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

*Our spirit must be a separate identity from God's Holy Spirit.*

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*This is what I think. (11) Those advocating that you get circumcised are doing it to save their own skin and boasting in their achievement. (12,13) I trust only in Jesus' death for me. Religion counts for nothing. It is the new creation through faith in Jesus. (14,15) Peace and mercy with God are for all who trust only in Him. (16) To act against me in this is to contend with Jesus (17). Fellow Christians, may you know the grace of God in Jesus the Messiah. (18)*

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

*It is not 'religion' that matters but a new life by grace through faith in Jesus*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

*What counts is a new creation (15b)*

## LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?  
a) His nature and character?

15 *God makes a New Creation, in us!*  
16 *God has His people – the Israel of God’.*

b) His grace?  
18 *God graciously gives Himself to us in Jesus as the Messiah.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?  
14 *Jesus is Lord*

15 *Our only hope is in the cross of Jesus*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

11 *Invest yourself fully in the Lord’s work.*

12 *Don’t worry about outward impressions.*

*Don’t try and constrain people into religious conformity.*

*Beware reasoning that may simply be to avoid persecution.*

13 *No one obeys the Law.*

*Beware pride in numbers conforming.*

14 *Be proud only of Jesus!*

*The power of temptation has been broken through the death of Jesus.*

15 *Note: What matters is what God has done in you through Jesus.*

*Religious practice counts as nothing before God.*

16 *To those who contend with God He gives peace.*

17 *Don’t belittle the Apostles or their witness (Scripture).*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

# *Sharing the Word*

## Use

‘Hearing the Word’ can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

## Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

## A format

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

1) Drink, bite to eat, chat	(10 mins)
2) A Bible reading	( 2 mins)
3) A Bible study	
a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) (Don’t answer any, till all questions noted!)	( 2 mins)
b. Any relevant cross references?	( 2 mins)
c. Discussion of answers	(13 mins)
d. Conclusion	(10 mins)
i. A Key verse and Main Point?	
ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?	
iii. What should I do?	
4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self)	( 5 mins)
5) Prayer	( 1 min)

## Remember!

As we gather round God’s Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing ‘Any questions’
- c) Don’t let the ‘knowledgeable’ dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others’ especially, ‘seekers’ in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called **‘An Introduction to ‘Hearing the Word’**. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)



## ***“I can read the Bible for myself!”***

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,  
the Rev Nigel Barge, minister of Torrance Parish Church,  
has devised a tool called ‘Hearing the Word’.  
The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,  
teaches them by means of an interactive course,  
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,  
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,  
which includes the next six passages in Mark,  
so they may follow on for themselves.

As the principles apply equally to all, the course will both  
instruct the novice and refresh the ‘hardened’ Bible student!

