



Galatians

Amazing Grace

Sample Lesson #1
and
Leader's Guide Answers

Don't Mess with the Gospel

Read—Introduction, Galatians 1:1–10; other references as given.

Paul begins his letter with a brief greeting (Galatians 1:1–5) and then rebukes the Galatian believers for drifting away from the true gospel. Using some of the strongest words of denunciation in the New Testament, Paul said they had not only left the gospel—they had left Jesus Christ Himself! This lesson reminds believers to stand up for the truth and stand against all attempts to redefine the gospel of God according to man's ideas.

Before you begin, please pray that God would reveal Himself to you through His Word and give you the grace to accept the spiritual truths He will teach you.

1. Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke said, "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their chains."
 - a. Besides the **Magna Carta of Christian Liberty**, what other title has been given to the book of Galatians (see Introduction)?
 - b. What does the name **Galatia** mean (see Introduction)?

2. Give a brief summary of the historical setting that prompted the writing of Galatians (see Introduction).

3. Several of the New Testament letters, including Galatians, were written to local churches or groups of churches to address specific problems within the assemblies. These epistles, inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21), have provided believers with God's divine instruction throughout the history of the church. Galatians addresses the problem of false teachers instructing others to do something else besides trusting in Jesus Christ alone to be saved and to grow spiritually.
 - a. *Do you think* there is still a problem in the church with false religious teachers adding other things to the doctrine of salvation by grace? YES NO SOMEWHAT
 - b. If you answered affirmatively to question #3a, what are some things *you think* religious leaders erroneously add to the doctrine of salvation by grace?

4. The phrase **grace and peace** (Galatians 1:3) is a standard greeting that appears 17 times in the New Testament (NT hereafter). It is, however, more than a standard greeting. God is the source of grace and peace, and His grace is the foundation of the believer's relationship with Him.
 - a. In all 17 NT occurrences, the word **grace** always appears before **peace** (Galatians 1:3). What *do you think* the specific order of this phrase teaches?
 - b. Give the meaning and source of each of the two gifts (Galatians 1:3).

5. Christ's death on the cross was in complete accord with the Father's will (Galatians 1:4). In addition to the provision of eternal salvation (John 3:16), what other reason is given for Christ's death (Galatians 1:4; Titus 2:14)?

6. How were the believers in Galatia (and all Christians) saved (Galatians 1:6)?

7. In the New Testament Paul often identified himself as an apostle (Galatians 1:1) when he wanted to establish apostolic authority in an effort to correct a doctrinal problem.
 - a. Describe the problem that had arisen in the churches of Galatia (Galatians 1:6–8; 3:1–3; 4:21).

 - b. Describe these false teachers who were distorting the message of salvation by grace and sanctification (spiritual growth) by grace (Galatians 1:7; 4:17; 6:12–13).

8.
 - a. Many Christians are dangerously tolerant of false teachers within the church. What are some negative results of false teaching (Galatians 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:3–4; 2 Timothy 4:3–4)?

 - b. Who or what had the Galatian believers deserted (Galatians 1:6)?

9. The word **pervert** (Galatians 1:7; Gk. *metastrepho*—to distort, pervert, to turn around, often into something opposite) is used only three times in the entire Greek NT; Galatians 1:7; Acts 2:20; James 4:9). In both other references the word indicates something being changed in an entirely opposite direction (sun to darkness, laughter into mourning).
 - a. Using the root definition of the Greek word for **pervert** as a help, explain how the gospel of Jesus Christ was being turned in an opposite (theological) direction by the false teachers.

 - b. How did the apostle Paul emphasize that the gospel of Jesus Christ must not be distorted or turned in a different direction (Galatians 1:8–9)?

10. Why *do you think* some Christians readily adopt man-made religious rules or regulations rather than accepting God's Word as their final authority and living under grace?

11.
 - a. What would be the result if Paul was more concerned about pleasing man than God (Galatians 1:10)?

 - b. What *do you think* are some indications that a Christian is more concerned with the approval of man than the approval of God?

 - c. In what areas of your life, if any, are you more concerned about man's approval (fellow workers, neighbors, family, other Christians, etc.) than pleasing God?

1 Don't Mess with the Gospel

1.
 - a. The Christian Emancipation Proclamation.
 - b. The country of the Gauls.
2. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church in Antioch to preach the gospel. They traveled to Cyprus and Galatia in southern Asia Minor before returning to the church at Antioch. While they were at Antioch, some Jewish teachers came to the church and began teaching the Galatian Gentiles (non-Jews) that they had to accept the Old Testament Law (or covenant) to be saved. When Paul and Barnabas could not convince these Jewish teachers that the Gentiles did not need to accept the Mosaic law to be saved, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and others (including Titus, probably as a test case) should go to Jerusalem and meet with the apostles to discuss the matter. The apostles agreed with Paul and his position, but the false teachers continued to teach their heresy throughout the churches. Paul's letter to the Galatians was written to provide a historical account of the meeting with the apostles in Jerusalem and re-instruct the believers on the necessity of living by grace.
3.
 - a. Yes.
 - b. Church membership, baptism (infant or adult, sprinkling, or immersion), denominational affiliation, religious experience, a generic belief in God without trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life, good deeds, keeping the Ten Commandments, sacraments, tithing, confirmation, confession of sins, circumcision. Other answers could apply.
4.
 - a. God must extend grace to an individual, and the individual must receive His grace before genuine peace can be experienced. Other answers could apply.
 - b. Grace is a gift from God that enables an individual to fulfill God's will for his life. God is the only source of grace. Besides being an ancient greeting, the word *peace* is used in Scripture to signify the absence of God's wrath on those who have accepted God's gift of righteousness in the person of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Peace can also refer to the divine assistance and blessing that believers experience when they live in harmony with God's will for their lives. Since the Galatian believers had already received the positional peace of salvation (i.e., the removal of God's wrath), the peace that Paul refers to in verse 3 is God's continuing endorsement and blessing on those who live according to His will.
5. Christ gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from this present evil age. Christ's deliverance is twofold—believers are delivered from the penalty of sin (eternal punishment and judgment) and the power of sin through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 7:25–8:17)
6. Everyone who is saved is saved by the grace of God.
7.
 - a. False religious leaders had infiltrated the Galatian churches and taught a continuing obligation to the Old Testament Mosaic Law. The Galatian Christians had accepted their teaching and were trying to fulfill the Law as a means of spiritual growth. While their motives were right and they thought they were being faithful to Christ, they were actually deceived and in the process of deserting Christ—the very One who had rescued them from the curse of the Law.
 - b.
 1. They were religious teachers who upset the faith of new Christians by teaching that circumcision was necessary for all believers (Galatians 1:7; 4:17; 6:12–13).
 2. They were hypocrites because they expected others to keep the law even though they did not keep it themselves (Galatians 6:12–13).
 3. They were compromisers because they wanted the believers to keep the Law so that they would not be persecuted (Galatians 6:12).
 4. They were proud because they boasted in their converts (Galatians 6:13).
 5. They were deceitful because they taught in such a manner that their listeners turned to them rather than to Christ (Galatians 4:17).
8.
 - a.
 1. False teaching disturbed or upset the faith of some (Galatians 1:7).
 2. False teaching produces wild theological speculations that cannot be proved and do not help those who hear them.
 3. False teaching causes people to turn away from the truth because they become discouraged and confused over what it right.

4. False teaching leads people to accept myths (unsubstantiated religious beliefs). The listeners have no solid basis upon which to determine what is right because false teachers often deceive by saying that they have received special revelation from God.
 - b. God the Father.
9.
 - a. Jesus Christ came to deliver man from eternal death and this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). The false religious teachers perverted or distorted the gospel of Jesus Christ that gives man the freedom to escape the bondage of a religious system that does not give peace and the assurance of sins forgiven. Rather than leading their followers to freedom in Christ, they lead them in the opposite direction into bondage, fear, guilt, and enslavement.
 - b. Paul said that if a person (any person) preached a gospel message other than salvation by grace alone, he should be accursed. The word *accursed* (Gk. *anathema*) means dedicated to destruction. Paul said the gospel must be absolutely unaltered. No one, not even an angel from heaven, has the right to change the message of salvation by grace alone. This is a frightening thought when you think of all the other things religious teachers teach about the way to get to heaven.
 10.
 1. Some Christians appear to receive a measure of spiritual security by placing themselves under a set of religious rules and regulations.
 2. Some believers seem to find it easier to continue their pattern of religious ritualism that they established before they were saved.
 3. Some believers find it difficult to believe that God will continue to direct and empower their lives through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 4. Some believers appear to lack the knowledge of how to live by God's grace.
 5. Some believers still feel they must "earn God's favor" and be "doing Christianity," rather than letting Christ live through them. When they do this, it gives them a measure of spiritual accomplishment that salves their weak consciences. Other answers could apply.
 11.
 - a. He would not be a servant of God.
 - b. Fear of witnessing for Christ, hypocritical actions, worldliness, a lack of peace and joy from God, legalism. Other answers could apply.
 - c. Answers will vary.