



G A L A T I A N S



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# CONTENTS

<b>4</b>	<b>WELCOME</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>SURVEY</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>LESSON 1</b>	
	Galatians 1:1-12	
<b>17</b>	<b>LESSON 2</b>	
	Galatians 1:13-2:10	
<b>25</b>	<b>LESSON 3</b>	
	Galatians 2:11-21	
<b>33</b>	<b>LESSON 4</b>	
	Galatians 3:1-14	
<b>41</b>	<b>LESSON 5</b>	
	Galatians 3:15-25	
<b>49</b>	<b>LESSON 6</b>	
	Galatians 3:26-4:7	
<b>57</b>	<b>LESSON 7</b>	
	Galatians 4:8-20	
<b>65</b>	<b>LESSON 8</b>	
	Galatians 4:21-31	
<b>73</b>	<b>LESSON 9</b>	
	Galatians 5:1-15	
<b>81</b>	<b>LESSON 10</b>	
	Galatians 5:16-24	
<b>89</b>	<b>LESSON 11</b>	
	Galatians 5:25-6:10	
<b>97</b>	<b>LESSON 12</b>	
	Galatians 6:11-18	
<b>105</b>	<b>SYNTHESIS</b>	
<b>111</b>	<b>APPENDIX</b>	

# WELCOME

God's word, the Bible, is a unique and wonderful book. It is one of His greatest gifts to us. By reading, meditating on and studying it, we begin to see into God's heart, to hear His voice, and to know Him deeply.

This study of Galatians will guide you to:

**Connect** in authentic community as you and your group share the joys and struggles of life and pray together for big things.

**Grow** in biblical truth by searching the scripture and actively applying this truth to your life.

**Engage** joyfully in helping people find and follow Jesus by practicing simple discipleship tools that tune your heart to those who are far from God.

## PERSONAL STUDY + PRAYER

Each lesson in this study begins with personal study sections designed for individuals to walk through the book verse by verse. The Survey contains the big picture and background information for the book. Lessons 1-12 focus on studying the passages in detail. The Synthesis is a place to record an overall summary of the content and flow of the book. In each lesson, you will learn and use a number of basic Bible study methods. These methods fit under three fundamental skills that are meant to be practiced in order each week.

**Observe:** What do I see?

**Interpret:** What does it mean?

**Apply:** How does it work?

These skills are summarized in the Bible Study Tools Overview in the Appendix on page 112.

**Prayer Reminders:** We need God Himself to illuminate His word to us. As we prayerfully approach the study of His word, God shows up! Pray before, during, and at the end of each lesson for eyes to see and ears to hear the things God has planned to reveal to you.

## **MEMORY VERSES**

Each lesson suggests a verse to meditate on and memorize if possible. It is amazing to experience God's spirit remind us of His word that we have planted in our hearts.

## **GROUP DISCUSSION**

At the end of every lesson, there is a Group Discussion Guide that provides an outline of a balanced plan for the time you spend together as a group - connecting, growing and engaging.

## **RESOURCES**

**Study Tools:** Each lesson contains descriptions of tools that will help you to observe, interpret, and apply scripture. These are summarized in the appendix section on page 112. The appendix also contains a list of recommended books and online tools on page 117.

# SURVEY

Does God give us eternal life because of our work, or because of the work of Jesus? That question is at the heart of the book of Galatians. Paul, the author of Galatians, spent his early years studying and obeying the Old Testament Law. He was so zealous for the Law that he persecuted the early followers of Jesus. He believed that their faith in Jesus posed a threat to the way of life God had revealed to Moses. However, an encounter with the risen Jesus Christ changed the course of Paul's life. After meeting Jesus, he was convinced that eternal life is a free gift, provided to those who simply believe in the work of God's only Son. He spent his life preaching and writing that message.

Galatians was written after Paul's first missionary journey (AD 48-49). It was during that missionary journey that he established a number of local churches in modern day Turkey, in a region referred to as Galatia. He preached the message of salvation by grace through faith. Only a few years later, however, false teachers infiltrated the church, claiming that obedience to the Law was an essential component of the gospel. Paul sternly warned the young church to stay true to the message that eternal life is a free gift, provided to those who trust in Jesus alone rather than in human works.

## **AUTHOR**

Virtually no scholar doubts that Paul is the author of Galatians. The autobiographical sections of the letter (i.e. 1:11-2:14) make it clear that he wrote the book. Additionally, the themes and events described in Galatians coincide quite closely with the book of Acts, which tells the story of Paul's mission to the Gentiles.

## **DATE**

Paul's Missionary Journey took him through Galatia, where he founded the churches he addressed in the book of Galatians. Map from Norris, D. Thaine. Logos Deluxe Map Set. Oak Harbor, WA: Lexham Press, 1997.

Paul probably wrote this book around the Fall of AD 49, shortly after his first missionary journey (Acts 14-15). The book probably helped set the stage for the Jerusalem Council, described in Acts 15, when the apostles decided not to force Gentile Christians to keep the Old Testament Law.

## RECIPIENTS

Acts 13-14 describes Paul's ministry to the churches of Lystra, Derbe, Pisidian Antioch, and Iconium. It is most likely to those churches that he addressed the book of Galatians. During his original mission to establish churches in the region, Paul experienced extreme persecution from Jews who were opposed to the gospel. It was quite likely through their influence that false teachers began to infiltrate the church, just a few years after Paul had preached the gospel in Galatia.

## PURPOSE

The question of how Jews and Gentiles should relate in the church occupies a large portion of the New Testament. As the early church grew in size and maturity, its members wondered whether they needed to keep the Old Testament Law for salvation or simply exercise faith in Jesus. It was a difficult question because faithful Jews were accustomed to remaining absolutely separate from Gentiles, believing that association with Gentiles would make them unclean.

However, the gospel proclaims that anybody can approach God through Jesus, and that membership among God's people is a matter of faith in Christ. Circumcision and law-keeping are no longer the signs that we belong to God, but instead Christians are identified by faith in Jesus and the fruit of the Spirit. Paul wrote the book of Galatians to reiterate the fact that eternal life comes only through believing in Jesus, and that the Christian life is not a matter of keeping the law but instead obeying the Holy Spirit.

Galatians is probably the harshest of Paul's letters. The dangerous position of the Galatian church and the critical nature of Paul's message drove him to write frankly and sharply to this group of Christians. In his view, nothing is more important than preserving the idea that eternal life is a free gift of God, received through faith in Jesus alone.

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For am I now seeking the favor of men,  
or of God? Or am I striving to please  
men? If I were still trying to please men,  
I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

**GALATIANS 1:10**

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 1:1-12**

*Paul wrote this letter.*

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus

*God the Father raised  
Jesus from the dead.*

Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), <sup>2</sup> and all the brethren who

*Paul wrote this letter to  
the churches in Galatia.*

are with me, To the churches of Galatia: <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from

this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, <sup>5</sup> to whom be the glory

forevermore. Amen.

<sup>6</sup> I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ,

for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing

you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven,

should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be

accursed! <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a

gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! <sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor

of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would

not be a bond-servant of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel

which was preached by me is not according to man.<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

## **OBSERVATION SKILL: BASIC OBSERVATIONS**

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. We will learn a new observation skill each week to practice with the others we have already learned. This week, simply read the passage and write one or two observations for each verse below. Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see. The first few have been done for you.

1. Underline every time Paul uses the word “gospel” in these verses.
2. What do you learn about Paul and his ministry from the way he describes himself in this section?

# INTERPRET

## LOOK UP KEY WORDS

Our observation of Galatians will stir up some interesting and challenging questions. To answer them, we will learn a new skill each week. This week is word study. By understanding what words mean in their context, we get a better idea of what the author was trying to communicate to us. In this lesson, we will study the word “gospel” in detail.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek provides deeper understanding and is surprisingly easy, thanks to online tools such as [lumina.bible.org](http://lumina.bible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Greek” on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong’s definition in the opposite window. For even further study, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, then choose to run a “Word Search,” “Strong’s Search,” or “Word Study.” The first will provide all Biblical references that use the English term. The second will provide all Biblical references that use the Greek term. And the third will provide the full definition and derivatives of the Greek term. What used to take multiple books & many hours now takes one internet browser & a few seconds!

### 1. Walk through a word study of “gospel.”

The word “gospel” comes from the Greek word “euangelion” which means “good news.” We also get the word “evangelism” from this word. When you see the word “gospel,” ask yourself, “What good news is the writer or speaker referring to here?”

Read Matthew 4:23; Mark 13:10; Acts 14:7, 15, 21; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 1:13.  
For each reference, what is the meaning of “gospel?”

What are some synonyms for the word “gospel”?

In your own words, provide the basic meaning of the term “gospel.”

See if you can organize the meanings of “gospel” into categories of meaning. For example: “The message that Jesus the Messiah has arrived to offer His Kingdom to Israel. Matthew 4:23; 11:5.”

Which category fits Galatians 1:6-10?

2. Why is Paul so upset that the Galatian Christians have deserted the gospel?

3. Read Acts 9:1-19a. In light of Galatians 1:11-12, why is it important that Paul’s conversion experience involved a direct encounter with the resurrected Jesus?

**Bonus:** What does Paul mean by pronouncing a curse on those who preach a false gospel (1 Corinthians 16:22; Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Mark 14:71)? (Note: This could be another word study.)

# APPLY

Our Bible study is only complete once we apply what we've learned. Begin by answering a few reflection questions designed to demonstrate how each passage relates to our own lives. Next, step back and look at the passage as a whole and list potential principles. A "principle" is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. A principle is not specific to a particular person or time. Finally, decide on specific action steps that you will begin to take right away to apply the principle in your daily life and consider how the principle impacts the relationships in your life.

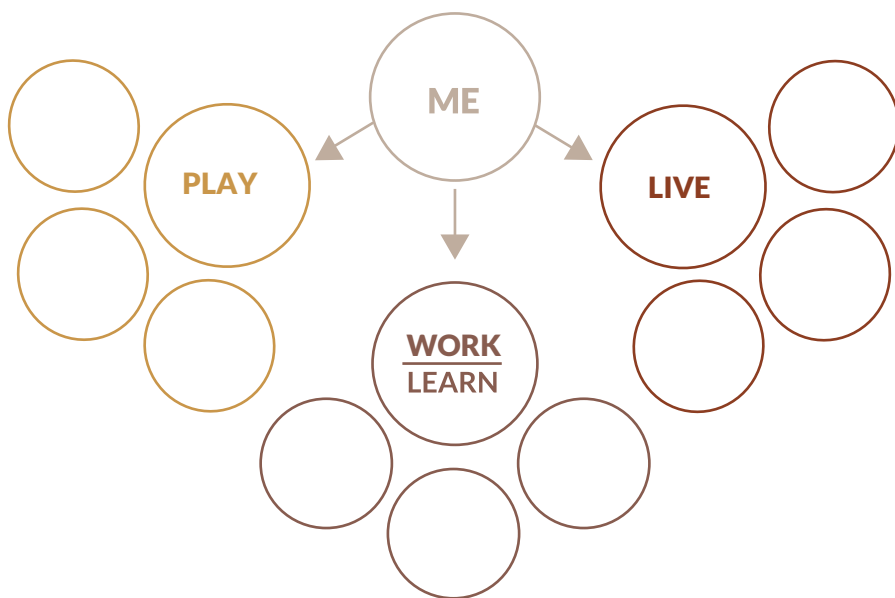
## 3 Steps to Apply -> Reflect, List Principles, Make a Plan

1. In your own words, write a summary of the gospel.

2. When did you first hear and believe the gospel?

Think about the people in your spheres of influence. With whom do you live, work, learn, and play? Be as exhaustive as possible and brainstorm away! Also, think about people that are just beyond your normal spheres. People that are that next step out- perhaps an acquaintance that you don't know well, a neighbor who is different from you ethnically, socially, or economically; a community member that the Holy Spirit has put in your path but is more a stranger than friend? Be creative and think outside the box on this one!

## EVERY NEIGHBOR MAP



3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share something you are celebrating or something that disappointed you during the last week.

Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!

## GROW

**Memorize the Word** - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of observing the text. Briefly share some observations.

Focus on Question 2

Interpret | Discuss the skill of looking up key words.

Focus on Questions 1 and 2

## ENGAGE

Apply | Review the importance of applying God's Word.

Focus on Questions 1 and 2

Review your Every Neighbor Maps.

### Pray Big

Make a list of one person from each group member's map. Spend some time praying for these friends. Ask God for opportunities to deepen friendships and practically bless them with His love. Ask God to reveal Himself to them and open their eyes to His power and freedom.

Our group is praying for these friends to find and follow Jesus:



I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that  
the gospel I preached is not of human origin.

I did not receive it from any man, nor was  
I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation  
from Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 1:11-12

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 1:13-2:10**

<sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; <sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. <sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. <sup>18</sup> Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. <sup>20</sup> (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) <sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; <sup>23</sup> but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they were glorifying God because of me. <sup>2:1</sup> Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. <sup>2</sup> It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. <sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

<sup>4</sup> But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy

out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. <sup>5</sup> But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. <sup>6</sup> But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. <sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised <sup>8</sup> (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), <sup>9</sup> and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. <sup>10</sup> They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

**OBSERVATION SKILL: INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS**

Like last week, read the passage and write down your observations. This week, we will begin to write our own questions as well. Just record the questions that naturally come to mind as you try to understand and apply the passage! If you need help getting started, you can use these examples:

WHO IS...	WHAT IS THE...	WHY DID THE AUTHOR...	HOW...
Paul talking about? accomplishing the action? benefiting from the action?	meaning of this word? significance of this phrase? implication of this statement? relationship between these phrases?	choose this word? include this phrase, statement, or command? not say _____?	was this action accomplished? will this situation occur?

1. How does Paul characterize his life before meeting Jesus? List the characteristics he uses to describe himself.
2. How does Paul characterize his life after meeting Jesus? List the characteristics he uses to describe himself.

# INTERPRET

## **INTERPRETATION SKILL: CROSS REFERENCES**

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting the online reference [lumina.bible.org](http://lumina.bible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Notes” on the right side of the screen. Now, anytime you select one of the numbered annotations above particular words or verses, you can immediately see the relevant Biblical or historical context for that term or passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

1. List in chronological order the key events of Paul’s early life and ministry. (Take a moment to examine the New Testament Chronology in Appendix C).

2. How does Paul use these events to support the argument he’s making in this section of Galatians? In other words, why does he tell his story at this point in the book?

3. Why did Paul submit his gospel for approval to the leadership of the early church (2:2)? What can we learn about his approach to authority?

4. What did Paul find objectionable about the teaching of the “false brethren” (2:3-4; Acts 15:1, 5)?

# APPLY

1. How can God use your unique story for His purposes? Pray for an opportunity to share your unique story of following Jesus with at least one other person this week.

## SHARING YOUR STORY

You have a unique story of how you came to know and follow Jesus. Your story is one of the most powerful tools you have for helping other people find and follow Jesus as well.

As you begin to let people know that you are following Jesus, simply ask, “Can I share with you the story of my spiritual journey?” Those who are interested in spiritual things are likely to demonstrate their interest in one way or another (asking questions, making a comment) and that often provides an open door to share your story.

## HOW TO BEGIN

Write out your thoughts on the following topics and questions. These ideas will help you share the story of your spiritual journey, sometimes called your “testimony.”

### My Life Before Jesus

My life revolved around \_\_\_\_\_, and I found my identity, happiness and security from \_\_\_\_\_.

Use an example from your personal life here. For instance, did your security come from money, your relationships, etc.?

How did this disappoint me? How was this unfulfilling? How did I come to realize this?

What was I struggling with (if anything) just before I believed in Jesus?

Note: Some people trusted Jesus when they were very young, and don’t have clear memories of the time before they knew Him. If that is you, simply share this as part of your story.

### How I First Believed in Jesus

This part of your story is where you came to a transition in your life.

When and how did I first hear about Jesus?

What did I learn about the life He offers all who believe in Him?

When and why did my perspective about Jesus begin to change?

Why did I decide to believe in Jesus?

Note: Some of us may be able to point to specific times or circumstances regarding how or when we believed. For others of us, we can only point to a time period or gradual understanding. Both are great. Everyone’s story is significant and the biggest point is that you now believe in Jesus.

## My Life Since I First Believed in Jesus

How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude and perspective on life.

How am I motivated differently now? What do I live for now?

How do I experience God now?

## BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

Think about your answers to the questions above, and ask yourself the following:

- Is this a continuous story that makes sense?
- Are there any consistent themes in my story?
- Can I share my story in 3-4 minutes?
- Was I clear about what I believed about Jesus?

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? Share a highlight or something that discouraged you during the last week.

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!

## GROW

**Memorize the Word** - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss your observations of Paul's life before and after meeting Jesus.

Focus on Questions 1 and 2

Interpret | Discuss the skill of using the context and cross references.

Focus on Questions 2, 3, and 4

## ENGAGE

Apply | Review the importance of applying God's Word to our lives.

Focus on Question 1

Pair up and practice Sharing Your Story.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other and the opportunity to share your story this week with at least one person.



Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

**GALATIANS 2:16**



# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 2:11-21**

<sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup> The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" <sup>15</sup> "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; <sup>16</sup> nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. <sup>17</sup> But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! <sup>18</sup> For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup> For through the Law I died to the Law, so

that I might live to God.<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.<sup>21</sup> I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

### **OBSERVATION SKILL: LIST PRIMARY THEMES**

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “suffering for the gospel” and “God’s grace and mercy”. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

1. List the themes or big ideas you see in this passage.
2. List the primary characters (individuals or groups) in 2:11-21. (Note: “Cephas” is the Aramaic word for “Peter,” or “rock.” c.f. John 1:42).
3. Circle every occurrence of the word “justified.”

# INTERPRET

## INTERPRETATION SKILL: LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This week's interpretive skill greatly improves our understanding of what a passage meant to its original readers. You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. The *IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary. In this section, some great ideas to research include: Jews and Gentiles, the Law, or circumcision.

1. The group opposing Paul's view is called the "party of the circumcision" because they taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Read Baker's *Evangelical Dictionary* article about circumcision ([bit.ly/galatians1](http://bit.ly/galatians1)) and answer the following questions about the Law and circumcision:

- a. What was the purpose of circumcision when God commanded it of Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:1-14)?
- b. What were the consequences for those who refused to be circumcised under the Law (17:14)?
- c. In light of your answers above, why do you think some people were arguing that Christians had to be circumcised?

2. What is the meaning of the word "justified"? (cf. Romans 3:20-28; Luke 10:29; Luke 16:15; Romans 8:33; Job 32:2)

3. On what basis does Paul say that we can be “justified,” or declared righteous before God? How is it possible to be justified if we haven’t done anything to earn it?

4. What does Paul mean when he says he has been “crucified with Christ”? (2:20; Romans 6:6-8)

5. Restate Galatians 2:20 in your own words.

# APPLY

1. Are you ever tempted to consider yourself righteous before God on the basis of anything other than believing in Jesus? If so, what?

2. Spend some time in prayer considering the ways you relate to God. (e.g. prayer, Bible study, worship, fasting.)

3. Which of the practices from the question above are you tempted to do in order to earn your righteousness before God? Ask God to help you trust in Him alone for righteousness.

A few questions to ask are:

Is there a truth for me to believe?

5. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? What highs or lows did you encounter this week?

Share any opportunities you had to share your story during the last week.

Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!

## GROW

**Memorize the Word** - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of listing primary themes and big ideas.

Focus on Questions 1 and 2

Interpret | Discuss the skill of looking up background information.

Focus on Questions 1, 2 and 3

## ENGAGE

Apply | Review how to develop an application statement

Discuss Questions 1 and 3

### Pray Big

Spend time praying for each other and personally applying the Word to your life.



Now that no one is justified by the Law before  
God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall  
live by faith.”

**GALATIANS 3:11**



# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 3:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? <sup>2</sup> This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup> So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

<sup>6</sup> Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.” <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. <sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” <sup>11</sup> Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” <sup>12</sup> However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary,

“He who practices them shall live by them.”<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—<sup>14</sup> in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

## **UNDERLINE ALL VERBS**

Read the passage and write down your observations, questions, and themes below. This week, we will begin to underline all of the verbs. Quick review: A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action takes place (“we will reign with Him”) or that a state or condition exists (“we are faithless”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.

1. After underlining all of the verbs, note the tense of each verb (past, present, future).
2. How many questions does Paul ask throughout this passage? What is the tone and nature of the questions?

# INTERPRET

## COMPARE MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. As you tackle the questions below, look up the passage in other translations and compare to the NASB to look for helpful clues or clearer wording. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text and, therefore, quite accurate for Bible study. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and are thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [bible.org](http://bible.org). You can find and compare numerous English translations of any Bible passage at [biblestudytools.net](http://biblestudytools.net).

1. Create and answer any two of your own interpretive questions.

a.

b.

2. How does Paul's use of rhetorical questions help to expose the false beliefs of the Galatians?

3. Categorize the major contrasts Paul makes throughout this passage:

FAITH	LAW

4. What are the end results for those who follow after these two approaches to God?

5. What is significant in Paul’s use of Abraham as an example of a life of faith (both beginning and ongoing)?

6. Evaluate the multiple uses of the word “curse.” In your own words, explain Paul’s use of the word “curse” in 3:10-14.

# APPLY

1. Evaluate each of these areas of your life. Do you tend to rely on yourself or on Christ?

School

Family

Work

Relationships

Why does it seem like we are so quick to approach God through self-effort?

2. In Lesson 2 you wrote and prepared your testimony focusing on when Christ saved you (justification). Now, continue the story by writing out two examples of how Christ is currently transforming you (sanctification).

## PRAYER STORIES

Another way to encourage people is through prayer. Most people in today's world still value prayer. Think of someone in life with a need, struggle, or unmet desire. Can you do one of the following this week?

Share how God has answered a prayer in your life, something specific and real and transforming.

Make a point to tell them that you are praying to God in Jesus' name for their need. Check back with them with the expectation that God will move!

Pray face-to-face with your friend. Again, check back and see what God has done!

4. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.
- A few questions to ask are:
- Is there a promise for me to claim?
  - Is there a truth for me to believe?
  - Is there a command for me to obey?

5. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? Did you see God working in any specific ways?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

**Memorize the Word** - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of underlining all verbs.

Focus on Question 2

Interpret | Discuss the skill of comparing multiple translations.

Focus on Questions 3, 4 and 5

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1

Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

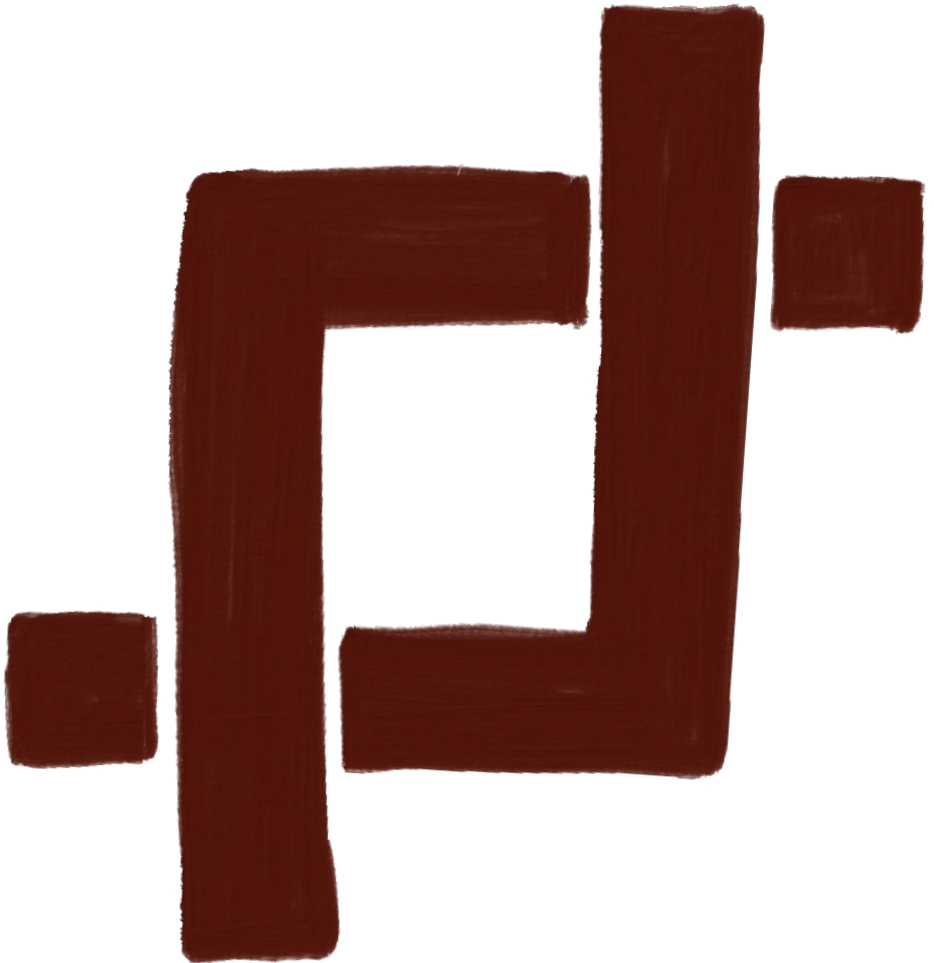
Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray boldly for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps and for opportunities to engage with them.



Therefore the Law has  
become our tutor to lead  
us to Christ, so that we  
may be justified by faith.

**GALATIANS 3:24**



# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 3:15-25**

<sup>15</sup> Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. <sup>17</sup> What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. <sup>19</sup> Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. <sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. <sup>21</sup> Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept in

custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by

faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

## **CIRCLE KEY WORDS AND PHRASES**

Write down your observations, questions, and themes; and underline all verbs. This week we will begin to circle all of the key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically or which set the theme or main idea for the passage.

1. Underline any phrases that describe the Law.

# INTERPRET

## TACKLING TOUGH QUESTIONS

How do we answer difficult interpretive questions when more than one option seems possible? This requires two skills, the first of which is listing all options with pros and cons. Always start by brainstorming, listing every possible answer to your question. Be open-minded and creative, and do not rush this process. You will often find that your third option proves better than your first. Once you have created a list of possible options, list both pros and cons for each one. You are looking for all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology. Once you have thought about it for a while individually, feel free to talk with others and to check commentaries or references to see if you have missed any options (However, do not just assume that their favorite option is necessarily correct.)

1. How does this passage relate to 3:1-14?

2. In this section Paul is connecting major events in God's unfolding work to restore man to Himself. Read the following passages, give each a title, and add each one to the timeline below.

a. Genesis 3

b. Genesis 12:1-7

c. Genesis 46:2-4

d. Exodus 19-20

3. How do believers relate to each of the above events?

4. Based on what you have observed about the Law in this section, how would you describe the purpose of the Law?

5. The spotlight moves from the Law in 15-24 to Faith in 25-29. Verse 25 says that Faith has “now come.” What are the resulting benefits and implications? In others words, how does this describe our access, relationship, and identification with God.

6. In light of the overarching context (law and faith), what is the meaning of verse 28?

# APPLY

1. Paul uses the language of family relationship in this passage (e.g. “sons of God,” “heirs,” “offspring,” “human relations”). How do those descriptors impact you in your relationship to God? How does it make you feel that you are considered a “son of God”?

2. Spend some time this week praising God for providing you with freedom from the Law’s requirements through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

Share a highlight or something that discouraged you during the last week.

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

**Memorize the Word** - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of highlighting repeated words and phrases.

Interpret | Discuss the skill of tackling tough questions step by step.

Focus on Questions 3, 4, and 5

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1

Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Share the Gospel

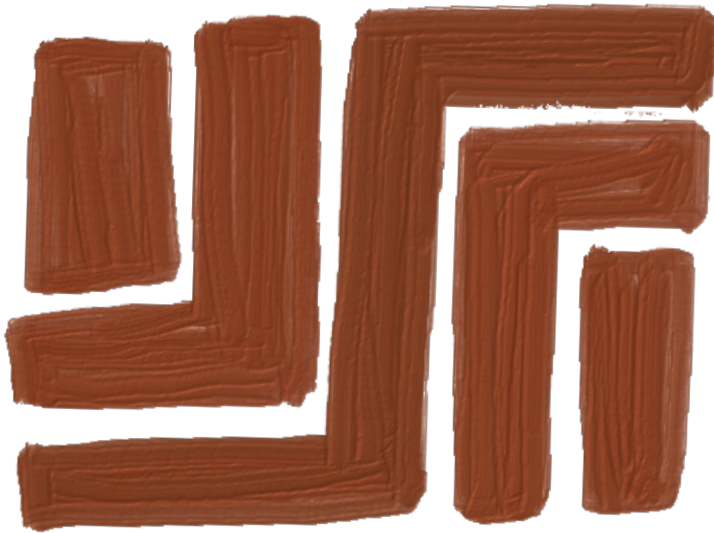
Review the Share The Gospel tool on pg. 124. Take a few minutes to practice sharing it in pairs.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps.





Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son;  
and if a son, then an heir through God.

**GALATIANS 4:7**

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 3:26 - 4:7**

<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For all of you who were baptized

into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is

neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

<sup>4:1</sup> Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he

is owner of everything, <sup>2</sup> but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the

father. <sup>3</sup> So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental

things of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born

of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law,

that we might receive the adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God has sent forth the

Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave,

but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

## HIGHLIGHT REPEATED WORDS & PHRASES

Read the passage, write down your observations, questions, and themes, and underline all verbs. This week we will begin to highlight repeated words or phrases. Include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates such as “son” and “child.” You will want to highlight things repeated in other places such as “son” in 4:23 and 4:30.

1. Circle every occurrence of the words “son” or “sons.”
2. Circle every occurrence of the word “slave.”
3. Circle every occurrence of the word “heir.”

# INTERPRET

## CHOOSE THE MOST LIKELY OPTION + DECIDE ON CERTAINTY

The second skill needed to answer difficult interpretive questions is choose the most likely option and decide on certainty. Look back at all of your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution you are looking at contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you know that option is invalid. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

1. Consider the words you circled in the observation section. What do each of those words mean in the context of Galatians 4?

2. What are the “elemental things” that Paul talks about in verse 3 and verse 9?

3. In the Old Testament, God's people could be recognized through their obedience to the Law. By what "sign" are God's people recognized in the church? (vs. 6)

# APPLY

1. Make a list of four spiritual practices (read the Bible, attend church service, etc.) that you plan to do this week. Is your attitude toward each that of a slave or that of an heir? In other words, do you engage out of obligation or out of love for God and others?

2. Spend time praying for your motives, that they will be pleasing to God and free from the desire to earn your salvation or receive approval from other people.

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? Did you see God working in any specific ways?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss your observations

Interpret | Focus on Questions 2 and 3

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1

Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Live, Work, Play maps.



But now that you have come to know God,  
or rather to be known by God, how is it that

you turn back again to the weak and worthless  
elemental things, to which you desire to be

enslaved all over again?

**GALATIANS 4:9**

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 4:8-20**

<sup>8</sup> However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. <sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? <sup>10</sup> You observe days and months and seasons and years. <sup>11</sup> I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. <sup>12</sup> I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; <sup>13</sup> but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; <sup>14</sup> and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. <sup>15</sup> Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. <sup>16</sup> So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? <sup>17</sup> They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them. <sup>18</sup> But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you. <sup>19</sup> My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—<sup>20</sup> but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

1. Continue to circle repeated words.
2. What is Paul's tone in this section?

# INTERPRET

1. Is Paul saying that celebrating special days is a sin (v. 10)? Why is he concerned about that issue here in Galatians 4 (Romans 14:5-9)?

2. Why did Paul tell the Galatians to follow his example (v. 12)?

3. What are the motives of the false teachers who are opposed to the gospel of grace (vs. 15-20)? What are Paul's motives?

# APPLY

1. Have questions about the truths of Christianity ever caused turmoil in your relationships? If so, when?

2. How has Paul's letter to his friends encouraged or challenged you?

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? Did you see God working in any specific ways?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss your observations

Interpret | Focus on Questions 1 and 2

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1

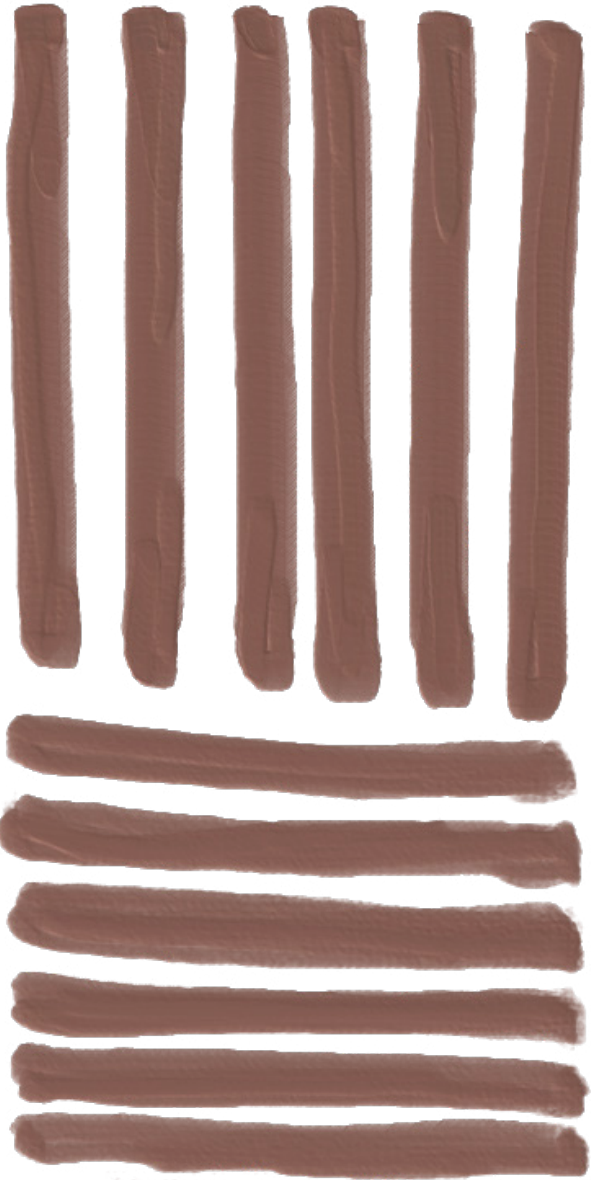
Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Live, Work, Play maps.





# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 4:21-31**

<sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written that

Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. <sup>23</sup> But the son

by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through

the promise. <sup>24</sup> This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one

proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup> Now this

Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery

with her children.

<sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. <sup>27</sup> For it is written,

“Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear;

Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor;

For more numerous are the children of the desolate

Than of the one who has a husband.”

<sup>28</sup> And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But as at that time he who was

born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now

also.<sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say?

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son,

For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.”

<sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

## BOX CONNECTING WORDS, PART 1

Read the passage and write down your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases. This week, we will begin to box connecting words. These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses.

We will learn four types of connecting words this week:

**Comparison** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so (e.g., “like the Gentiles” in 2:14).

**Contrast** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however (e.g., “No longer I... but Christ” in 2:20).

**Purpose** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that (e.g., “Christ redeemed us... in order that in Christ Jesus...” in 3:13-14).

**Result** is similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that. (e.g., “The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.” in 2:13)

1. Apply the week’s skill and box the connecting words in this passage.
2. Circle the Old Testament quotations in this passage and write down their Old Testament references.

# INTERPRET

An allegory is an extended metaphor, in which elements of a story are used to convey abstract or spiritual concepts. Famous examples are John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* or the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 (the Father represents God, the elder son the Pharisees, and the younger son the sinners and tax collectors).

1. The four main characters in this allegory are: Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael. What does each character represent?

Sarah:

Hagar:

Isaac:

Ishmael:

2. What does it mean that Ishmael ("the son of the bondwoman," Hagar) was born according to the flesh, while Isaac ("the son of the free woman," Sarah) was born according to the promise? (Note: Read Genesis 16; 21:1-3; See chart on pg. 120)

3. What is the primary contrast being made in this allegory?

4. Why does Paul use Abraham's family to defend his position that salvation does not come through the Law?

# APPLY

1. The Bible provides many promises from God to His people. What are two biblical promises that are personally significant to you? Provide the relevant Scripture references.

2. How does an understanding of those promises affect your walk with God on a daily basis? Would anything be different if you didn't have those promises?

3. In your own creative way, express your gratitude for God's promises. You might draw a picture, write a poem, rephrase the biblical promises above in your own words, or write a song of thanksgiving. Share your creative thanksgiving with your group.

Is there a promise for me to claim?  
Is there a truth for me to believe?  
Is there a command for me to obey?

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

What are you thankful for this week? What are you asking God for currently?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of boxing connecting words (Part 1).

Focus on Questions 1 and 2

Interpret | Discuss the concept of Allegory

Focus on Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1 and 3

Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps. Share about any opportunities God has given to start spiritual conversations and pray for more!



It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

**GALATIANS 5:1**



# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 5:1-15**

<sup>5</sup> It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. <sup>2</sup> Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. <sup>3</sup> Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. <sup>4</sup> You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. <sup>5</sup> For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. <sup>7</sup> You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup> That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. <sup>9</sup> "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." <sup>10</sup> I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. <sup>11</sup> Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. <sup>12</sup> As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way

and emasculate themselves! <sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

1. What are the major contrasts in this passage? (Use your connecting words.)

# INTERPRET

1. The book of Galatians focuses on the idea that Christians are justified by faith in Jesus rather than through works of the Law. Keeping that in mind, how do verses 5:1-12 connect to the previous sections of the book?

2. What does it mean to be “called to freedom” (v. 13)?

3. Read Genesis 17:1-14. What was the original purpose of circumcision for the nation of Israel? Why did God command the Israelites to circumcise their sons?

4. Why does Paul warn these Galatian Christians not to get circumcised (Note: It's important to remember that the Galatians were mostly Gentiles)?

# APPLY

1. How does the biblical idea of freedom compare and contrast to our culture's definition of freedom?

2. What difference could it make if you were to “run your race” with your attention fixed on Christ?

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

Share a highlight or something that discouraged you during the last week.

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Focus on Question 1

Interpret | Focus on Questions 1 and 2

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1

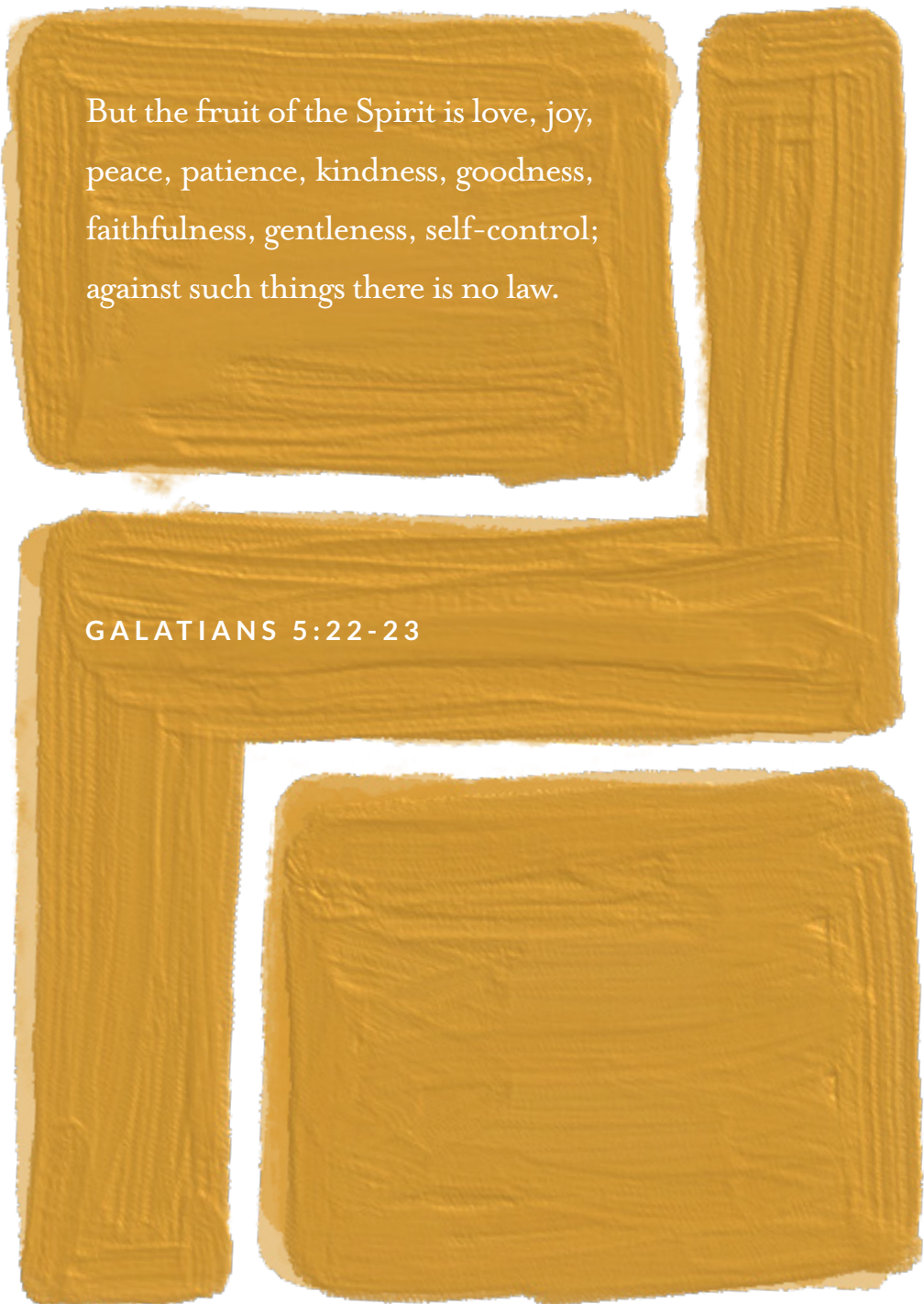
Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps.





But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,  
peace, patience, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;  
against such things there is no law.

GALATIANS 5:22-23

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 5:16-24**

<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh

sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition

to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by

the Spirit, you are not under the Law. <sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:

immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of

anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like

these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such

things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to

Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

## BOX CONNECTING WORDS, PART 2

Read the passage, then record your observations, questions, and themes on the following page. Circle all key words and highlight all repeated words or phrases and continue to box connecting words. Here are four types to box this week:

**Cause** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for. (e.g., “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions” in 3:19)

**Explanation** is what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word “for.” (e.g., “For prior to the coming of certain men from James” in 2:12)

**Inference** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion.

Inference words include: therefore, for this reason. (e.g., “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham” in 3:7)

**Condition** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is “if.” (e.g., “For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise...” in 3:18)

1. List the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

# INTERPRET

1. How do verses 16-18 describe the conflict between our outward behavior and inward desires?

2. Look up the following verses that describe the Holy Spirit's activity in a believer's life. How do each of these verses help us to understand how to walk in the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26

Ephesians 1:17-19

Ephesians 5:15-21

Romans 5:5

1 Corinthians 2:10-13

3. Why does Paul use fruit as a metaphor for the qualities produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit? How does the metaphor help us understand the spiritual life?

4. What would you say about a person who claims to be a Christian, but whose life doesn't seem to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit?

Bonus: Are the people described in 5:19-21 Christians or not?

# APPLY

1. Practically speaking, how can you eradicate the deeds of your flesh and grow with respect to the fruit of the Spirit?

2. Spend some time right now praying for those areas in your life (marriage, work, school, work, parenting) where you struggle to walk in the power of the Spirit. Each day, ask the Lord to produce the fruit of the Spirit in you as you struggle.

Is there a command for me to obey?

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? What highs or lows did you encounter this week?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of boxing connecting words (Part 2)

Interpret | Focus on Questions 1, 2 and 3

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1


Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps. Share about any opportunities God has given to start spiritual conversations.





Let us not lose heart in  
doing good, for in due  
time we will reap if we do  
not grow weary.

**GALATIANS 6:9**

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 5:25-6:10**

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful,

challenging one another, envying one another.

<sup>6:1</sup> Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one

in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks he

is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> But each one must examine his

own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in

regard to another. <sup>5</sup> For each one will bear his own load. <sup>6</sup> The one who is taught the word

is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not

mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own

flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the

Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup> Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we

do not grow weary. <sup>10</sup> So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and

especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

## MAP THE PASSAGE

This skill is a great way to discover the author's intended meaning and flow of thought. It also will help you answer many of your interpretive questions. The first rule of mapping a passage is: There is not one "right" way! However you create your map, your should be to discover the author's flow of thought by graphically laying out the passage. Before you complete the passage map, here are some rules to follow with examples from Ephesians 1:3-5.

1. First, identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence (These form the main clause of your sentence). Write the main clause at the top left of your paper. Think of your map as an outline: This would be your Roman number I.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
This is the main clause of Eph. 1:3

2. Continue writing the first sentence, placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify. A modifying phrase describes something in the main clause—how, why, when, to whom, etc. In an outline, this would be your first subheading.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing  
"who" modifies, or is talking about, God in this sentence

3. If there are multiple modifiers (several phrases or words all talking about the same thing), line them up underneath each other, under the word or phrase they are modifying.

1:3 ... who has blessed us ...  
4 just as He chose us ...  
5 ... He predestined us ...

Both of the phrases in vs. 4-5 will have modifiers in your final map, but the phrases themselves should be lined up since they both modify God's act of blessing. This is like the a., b., c. in your outline.

4. Continue writing out the phrases in your sentence, each under whatever word(s) they modify, until you reach the end of the sentence or idea being discussed.

5. Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. At that point, you would put the next main clause back to the far left of your paper and begin at step one again. Ideally, you should be able to glance down to the left side of your paper and see the main ideas of the passage you are mapping.

6. As you work, box all connecting words, and note how they are being used.

1:4 just as He chose us ... (AS implies comparison)

## MAP THE PASSAGE: GALATIANS 6:1-9

Use a separate sheet of paper, your word processor, or a white board with your group.

# INTERPRET

1. In verse 2, Paul encourages us to “bear one another’s burdens.” Yet in verse 5, he says everybody has to bear his own load. How do you reconcile these two concepts? Are there any other passages of scripture to help you resolve this contrast?

2. In verse 4, Paul says that a man’s reason to boast is “in himself alone.” Yet in verse 14, Paul says he will only boast “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How do you reconcile these concepts? Are there any other passages of scripture to help you resolve this contrast?

3. What does it mean that those who sow to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit (v. 8)? Is this a reference to being justified by our works or does it mean something else?

4. What type of corruption will we reap if we sow from the flesh (v. 8)? Is it physical, spiritual, mental, or all three? Why?

5. What is the “good” that Paul exhorts his readers to keep doing? Why do you think they would be tempted to grow weary and give up?

6. What is the difference between the good works that Paul is encouraging his readers to do and the ones that the false teachers are encouraging?

# APPLY

1. When are you most tempted to “grow weary of doing good”? What is the antidote to that temptation?

2. We are presented with many opportunities to do “good deeds” (e.g. feeding the hungry, giving money to the church, going on a mission trip, etc.). How do we decide which ones we should do since we can’t do everything?



# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? What highs or lows did you encounter this week?

Share how you did applying God's Word in your daily life during the last week.

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss the skill of mapping the passage. Briefly have 1-2 people share how they mapped this specific passage.

Interpret | Focus on Questions 1, 2 and 6

## ENGAGE

Apply | Focus on Question 1 and 2

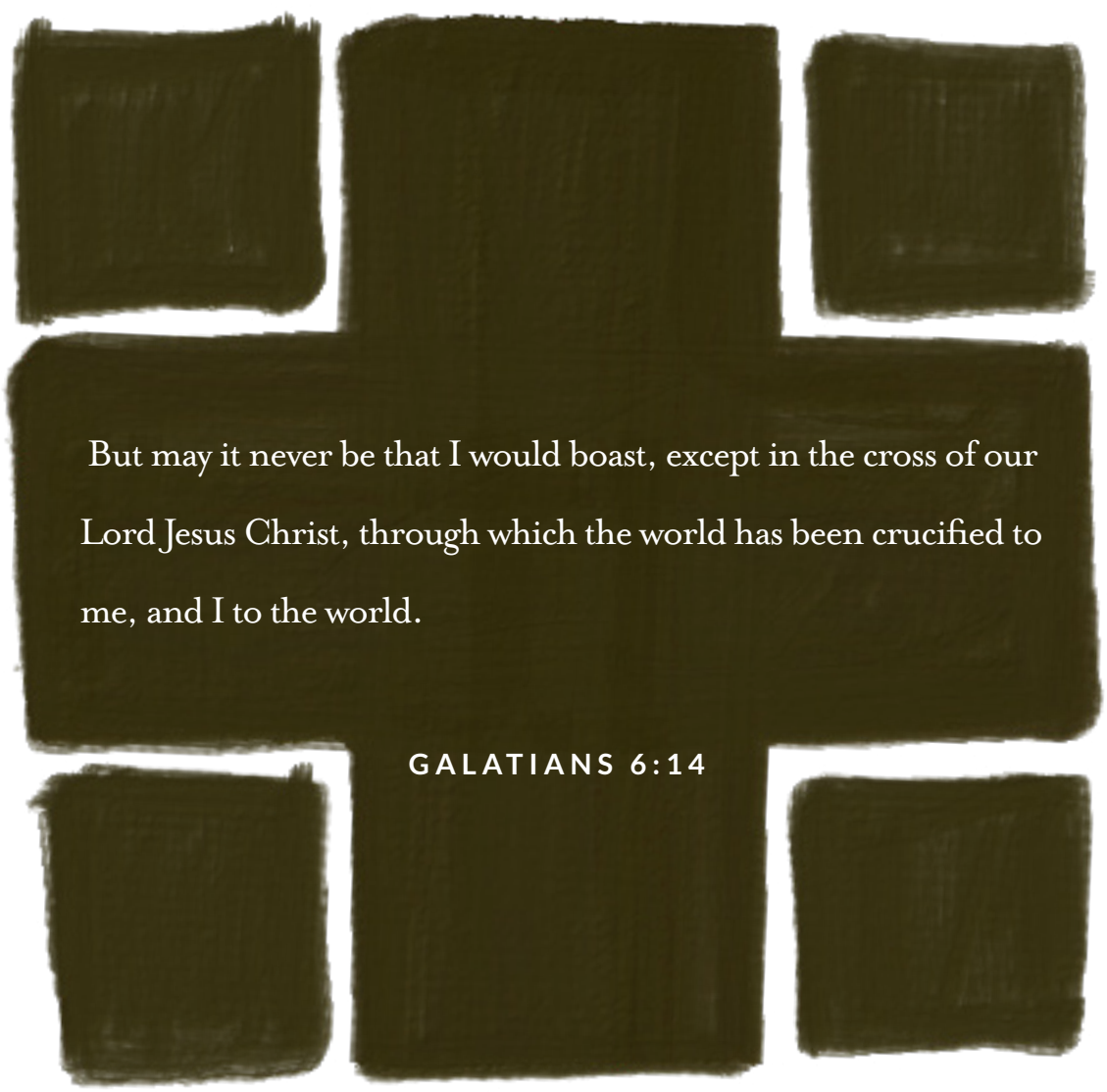
Take some time to share one another's personal application statements and their plans to follow through with it.

### Pray Big

Spend some time praying for each other - primarily about personal applications.

Continue to pray for the people from your group's Every Neighbor maps. Share about any opportunities God has given to start spiritual conversations.





But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**GALATIANS 6:14**

# OBSERVE

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

## **GALATIANS 6:11-18**

<sup>11</sup> See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. <sup>12</sup> Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup> For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. <sup>14</sup> But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. <sup>16</sup> And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. <sup>17</sup> From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus. <sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

1. List everything you see about Paul.

# INTERPRET

1. Explain the motivations of the false teachers who were urging the Galatian Christians to get circumcised.

2. What does Paul mean when he says that through the cross, “the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (v. 14)?

3. How would you describe the tone of Paul's benediction to the Galatians?

# APPLY

1. In what areas of your life do you have a tendency to boast?

2. What are some ways you can live as a new creation in Christ this week?

3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study.

A few questions to ask are:

- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a truth for me to believe?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in our life where you live, work, and play.

In the box below, create a personal application statement, expressing how you will apply this truth in your life.

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CONNECT

How was your week? What highs or lows did you encounter this week?

## GROW

Memorize the Word - spend a few minutes reviewing the verses you are memorizing.

### Discuss the Passage

Observe | Discuss what you have learned about Paul.

Interpret | Focus on Questions 1 and 2

## ENGAGE

Apply | Discuss Question 1

### Pray Big

Spend time praying for each other and personally applying the Word to your life.



# SYNTHESIS

## **PUT IT BACK TOGETHER**

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word and asking for His Spirit to guide your study.

Review your memory verses for each of the previous lessons.

Before we get to the synthesis, one word of encouragement: Please realize how much you have grown as a student of God's Word through your study of Galatians! Each week, you've learned more about how to observe, interpret, and apply the Scripture. Those three steps will serve you well as you continue to study God's Word in the future. Continue to practice and refine those skills so that you become, "a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

1. What was the primary problem facing the churches in Galatia?
2. How did Paul address this problem? In other words, what was his primary solution to their struggles?

During the past nine lessons, we have observed, interpreted, and applied the entire book of Galatians. Now it is time to draw our detailed study to a useful conclusion, a process known as synthesis. Our goal is to create an overall summary of the book of Philippians that we can quickly review in the future to remind us of the structure and content of the book.

## OUTLINE THE BOOK

1. What was the primary problem facing the churches in Galatia?
2. How did Paul address this problem? In other words, what was his primary solution to their struggles?

The first step of this synthesis is to create your own outline of the book. Review the work you completed each week. Then, create your own brief outline on the next page. Feel free to use any outlining style, but here is an example of how you might start:

1. Introduction (1:1-10)
  - a) Greeting (1:1-5)
  - b) Repudiation of false gospels (1:6-10)
2. Paul Defends His Ministry (1:11-2:10)
  - a)
  - b)



The second step of this synthesis is to record what you learned or were reminded of. This is more personal than your outline. Create a list of the theological truths and life lessons you have either learned for the first time or been reminded of from your study of Galatians. As an example of a theological truth, you might write “I was reminded that nobody can earn his or her salvation with works.” As an example of a life lesson, you might write “Galatians reminded me that I need to examine my motives for ‘good works,’ to make sure I’m not trying to earn God’s love.” List at least ten theological truths and ten life lessons on this page that you learned from your study of Galatians, and record the verses where each one is addressed.

## **THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS I’VE LEARNED**

## **LIFE LESSONS I’VE LEARNED**

The final step of this synthesis is to prayerfully choose two applications to practice. These can be applications that you developed and began to practice during previous lessons, or you can create entirely new applications. Whatever your choice, two things must be true about them:

1. Both applications should relate to areas of your life where you are currently in need of growth. Do not choose “be kind to others” if this is already something you do very well.
2. Both applications should be specific with a clear plan for growth and the name of someone who will hold you accountable. “Study the Word more” is not specific enough. Instead, develop a specific plan, such as, “I will read through Romans this month and write down my observations, interpretive questions, and applications in a journal. Steve will hold me accountable on a weekly basis.”

## APPLICATION #1

Principle from Galatians:

Verses where it's discussed:

Plan of Action: *I will...*

Who will hold me accountable:

## APPLICATION #2

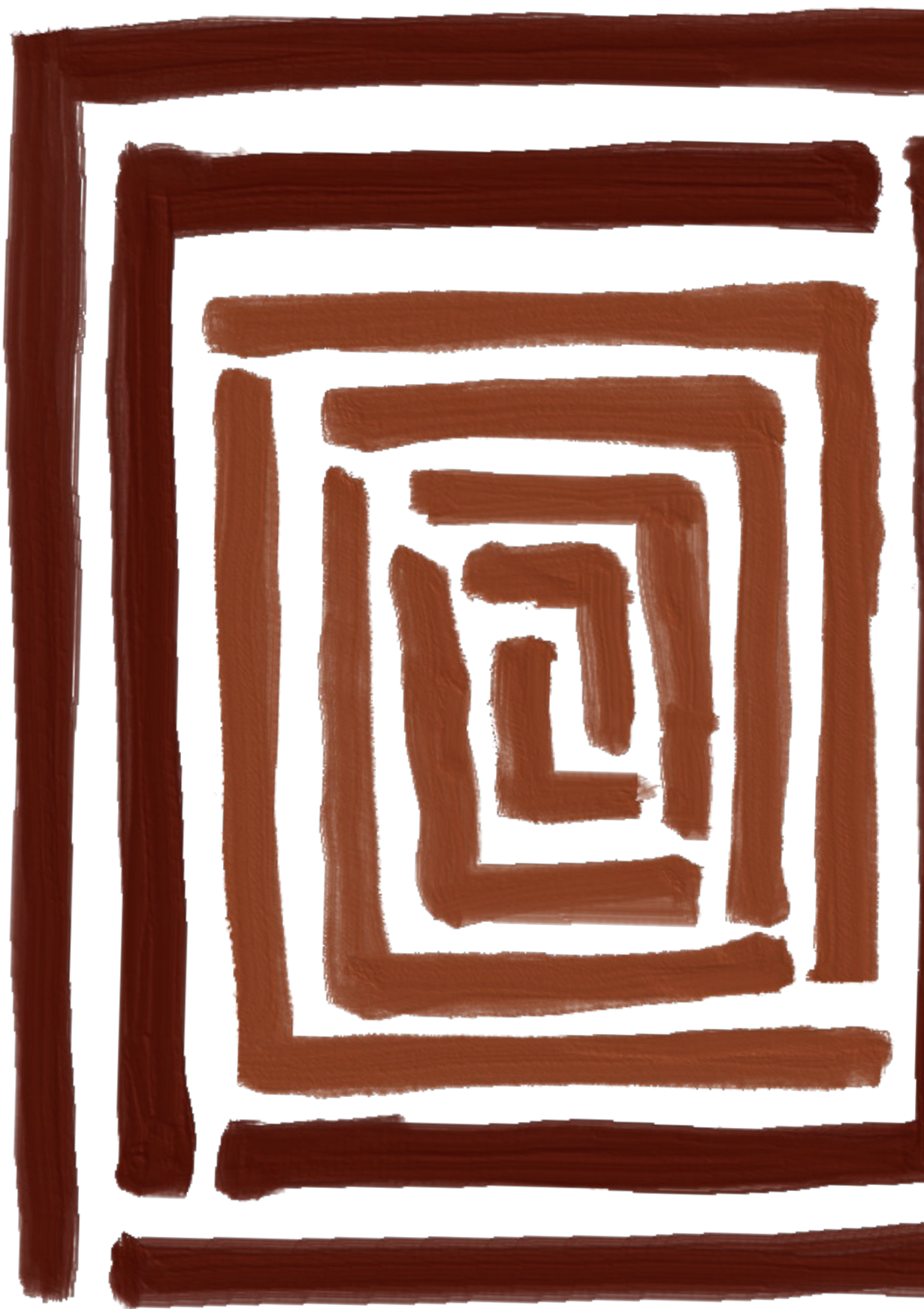
Principle from Galatians:

Verses where it's discussed:

Plan of Action: *I will...*

Who will hold me accountable:

End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow group members.



# APPENDIX

**112** A. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

**117** B. ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

**118** C. NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

**120** D. ALLEGORY OF HAGAR & SARAH

**121** E. ENGAGE TOOLBOX

# A. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

## OBSERVE

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below:

**Observation Task 1** | Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

**Underline all verbs.** A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action is taking place (“we will reign with Him”) or that a state or condition exists (“we are faithless”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.

**Circle key words or phrases.** These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “word of truth” in 2:15) or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage, such as “approved” and “worldly and empty chatter” in 2:15,16).

**Highlight repeated words or phrases.** Also, include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “suffer hardship” and “endure suffering”). You’ll also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages (such as “son” in 4:23 and 4:30)

**Box connecting words.** These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:

1. Comparison either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so (e.g., “like a Gentiles” in 2:14).
2. Contrast points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however (e.g., “No longer I... but Christ” in 2:20).
3. Purpose indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that (e.g., “Christ redeemed us... in order that in Christ Jesus...” in 3:13-14).
4. Result is similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that (e.g., “The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy” in 2:13).
5. Cause expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for. (e.g., “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions” in 3:19)
6. Explanation is what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word “for.” (e.g., “For prior to the coming of certain men from James” in 2:12).
7. Inference provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: therefore, for this reason. (e.g., “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.” in 3:7)
8. Condition presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is “if.” (e.g., “For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise...” in 3:18)

**Observation Task 2** | List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week.

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such



as “humility” in 2:1-11. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

**Observation Task 3** | Write two or more observations per verse

Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

**Observation Task 4** | Record your own interpretive questions.

Here are a few examples:

WHO IS...	WHAT IS THE...	WHY DID THE AUTHOR...	HOW...
Paul talking about? accomplishing the action? benefiting from the action?	meaning of this word? significance of this phrase? implication of this statement? relationship between these phrases?	choose this word? include this phrase, statement, or command? not say _____?	was this action accomplished? will this situation occur?

# INTERPRET

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions. Also, make sure to familiarize yourself with the three “Principles of Interpretation” that appear in the Appendix at the end of this study.

## INTERPRETATION METHODS

**Interpretation Method 1** | Use the context.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead in Philippians for clues.

**Interpretation Method 2** | Study cross-references (XRefs).

XRefs are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such XRefs can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting the online reference [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com). Simply type in “Philippians 1” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 1 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to “Cross References” so that numbers appear throughout the passage. Clicking any of these will move your screen to the bottom of the page where you will find a series of XRefs for specific verses within the passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

### **Interpretation Method 3** | Look up key words.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek is far better and is surprisingly easy, thanks to the internet. Simply log onto [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com), and as an example, type in “Philippians 2” in the box to the left of the “Search” button and then click “Search.” All of Philippians 2 will appear on the screen. Be sure that “New American Standard” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then click the box next to “Strong Numbers” so that most of the words will be highlighted in blue. Clicking on any of these will bring up a new screen that will tell you the Greek word used here, its possible definitions, and the total number of times it is used in each book of the New Testament (NT). Click on any of the other NT books (under the title “NAS Verse Count”), and get a list of every verse in that book that uses this Greek word. What used to take hours now takes seconds!

### **Interpretation Method 4** | Look up background information.

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is The New Bible Dictionary by Wood & Marshall. The IVP Bible Background Commentary by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

### **Interpretation Method 5** | Tackle tough questions step-by-step.

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four-step process:

1. List all the options. Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question.
2. List pros and cons for each option. See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology.
3. Choose the most likely option. Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option.
4. Decide on your certainty level. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

### **Interpretation Method 6** | Compare multiple translations.

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org). You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

## INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES

There are three fundamental principles of interpretation that help us to use our interpretive skills accurately.

### **Interpretation Principle 1** | Discern the author's intended meaning.

Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning to the original audience. Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, "What does this passage mean to me?" While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author's intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps:

1. Always start your study with prayer, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Avoid inserting your 21st century circumstances and theological issues into the text as they can skew understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text from the point of view of the original readers. To do this: (a) dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and (b) spend a few moments thinking about the original audience's religious understanding by asking, "What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? about Jesus? about salvation? etc."

### **Interpretation Principle 2** | Assume a "Normal" Use of Language

The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for "hidden" meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the "normal" techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. Study the grammar. Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.
2. Remember that chapter divisions came later. When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

### **Interpretation Principle 3** | Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

This is the third and last principle of interpretation. Because God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. Check your conclusions. Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of scripture as a whole. If you find your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.
2. Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages. Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution: remember that God revealed scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the New Testament era, we must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

# APPLY

Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And lest we underestimate the value of this last step, remember that in God's eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obeys His Word that truly loves Him (see John 14:21). So how do we apply a passage to our lives? Application involves the following two tasks:

## APPLICATION TASK 1

**List potential principles from your passage.**

A "principle" is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g., Philippians 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g., "do not leave Jerusalem" in Acts 1:4). An example from Philippians would be, "We should rejoice when Christ is proclaimed." It is often helpful when listing principles to consider the following questions:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

## APPLICATION TASK 2

**Choose one principle, and create a plan to apply it to your life this week.**

Once you complete your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (Do not just choose the easiest to apply!). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the principle God is leading you to apply. Once you have chosen a specific principle, answer these two questions:

1. What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

2. Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

# B. ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

## ONLINE RESOURCES

biblestudytools.net | word studies

blueletterbible.org | word studies

planobiblechapel.org/soniclight | commentary

bestcommentaries.com | commentary database

## RECOMMENDED GALATIANS RESOURCES

<http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/galatians.pdf> | online commentary by Dr. Thomas Constable

*The New American Commentary: Galatians* by Timothy George

*The Message of Galatians* by John Stott

*The NIV Application Commentary: Galatians* by Scot McKnight

## DISCIPLESHIP/BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

*Living By the Book* by Howard Hendricks and Charles Swindoll

A more in-depth book on how to study the Bible using the tools discussed in this packet.

*The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman

A highly motivational analysis of Jesus' own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

*The Lost Art of Disciple Making* by Leroy Eims

This practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

*A Survey of Bible Doctrine* by Charles Ryrie

An easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

*Essentials of the Faith* by Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX

This small group Bible study packet walks a new believer through the fundamental trusts and practices of the Christian faith in ten self-paced lessons.

*Grace Bible Church does not always agree with the views of these commentaries. These are good tools to help understand hard passages, but the particular theological views reflect the author of the commentary and not those of Grace Bible Church.*

# C. NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

EVENT	DATE
Crucifixion of Jesus	April 3, 33
Pentecost (Acts 2)	May 24, 33
Paul's conversion (Acts 9)	Summer 35
Paul in Jerusalem, 1st visit (Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18-20)	35-43
Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)	Spring 43
Epistle of James written	45
Paul in Jerusalem, relief visit (Acts 11:30; Gal. 2:1-10)	Autumn 47
Paul to Antioch (Acts 12:25-13:1)	Autumn 47 – Spring 48
Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14)	April 48 – September 49
Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-16)	Autumn 49
Galatians written from Antioch	Autumn 49
Paul in Jerusalem, Jerusalem council (Acts 15)	Autumn 49
Paul in Antioch (Acts 15:30-35)	Winter 49/50
Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)	April 50 – September 52
1 & 2 Thessalonians written	Spring – Summer 51
Paul in Jerusalem and Antioch	End of September 52; Winter 52/53
Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:16)	Spring 53 – May 57
1 & 2 Corinthians written	Spring – Fall 56
Romans written	Winter 56/57
Ephesian elders visit Paul at Miletus (Acts 20)	May 57
Paul in Jerusalem	Eve of Pentecost, May 27, 57
Paul's arrest and trial before Felix (Acts 21:26-24:22)	June 57
Paul's appearance before Felix ^Drusilla (Acts 24:24-26)	June 57
Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24:27)	June 57 – Aug 59
Paul's trial before Festus (Acts 25:7-12) & Agrippa (Acts 26)	July 59; Aug 59

Paul's voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:29)	Aug 59 – Feb 60
Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30)	Feb 60 – Mar 62
Luke written	60
Acts Written	60
Ephesians written	Autumn 60
Colossians and Philemon written	Autumn 61
Philippians written	Spring 62
Paul's release	Spring 62
Mark Written	62
Paul in Ephesus and Colossae	Spring – Autumn 62
Peter in Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	Summer 62 – Winter 62/63
1 Timothy Written	Autumn 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 62 –
Peter martyred	Summer 64 (67?)
Paul in Spain and Crete	Spring 64 – Spring 66; Summer 66
Titus written	Summer 66
Paul arrested and taken to Rome	Autumn 67
2 Timothy written	Autumn 67
Paul's death	Spring 68
Matthew written	60's
Hebrews written	60's
Destruction of Jerusalem	September 2, 70
Jude written	60's or 70's
John written	80's or 90's
1,2,3 John written	80's or 90's
Revelation written	Early 90's

*Adapted from Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Harold H. Hoehner, Zondervan, 1978.*

# D. ALLEGORY OF HAGAR & SARAH

Galatians 4:21-31: An Allegory of Hagar and Sarah.

HAGAR	SARAH
Handmaid	Real Wife
Slave woman	Free woman
Ability to bear	Barren
Son - Ishmael	Son - Isaac
Born of the flesh	Born of the promise
Covenant from Sinai	Covenant of Christ
Children of bondage	Children of freedom
Not of the promise	According to the promise
Jerusalem now	Jerusalem above
Judaism	Christianity
Bondage	Freedom
Persecutor	Persecuted
Cast Out	Embraced
Not an Heir	Heir



# E. ENGAGE TOOLBOX

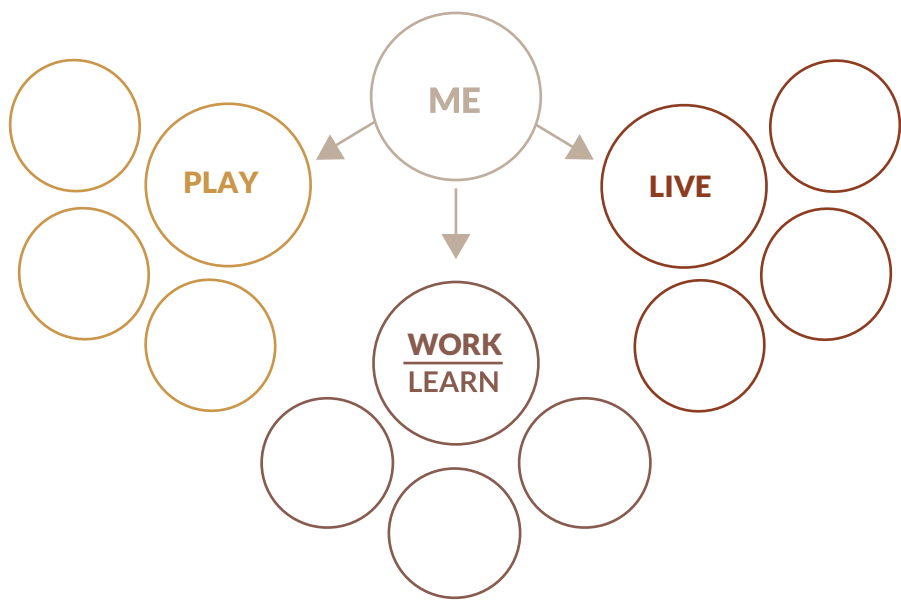
## LIVE, WORK, PLAY MAP

In Jesus’ time, a “family” would include workers, extended family, and people residing in their home. For us, our circle can also include our family, our friends, coworkers, neighbors and acquaintances. It can include the guy at the gas station that you see at each fill up or the barista that serves you that mocha latte each morning. It is anyone that we commonly encounter on a regular basis which gives us the ability to have influence in their lives.

Often when Jesus or His disciples found people that were open to the gospel, He would eventually share the message with their entire network. Jesus met the woman at the well (John 4), and after revealing His message and who He was as Messiah, she was amazed and told her whole town AND many believed! We want to see the same happen. As followers of Jesus, we are participants in a greater story of God’s plan of salvation. We are representatives of Christ wherever and with whomever we find ourselves.

Think about the people in your sphere of influence; the people with whom you live, work, and play. Write down at least three names in each of these spheres on the Live, Work, Play Map. Be ready to share it with your group.

Also, think about people that are just beyond your normal spheres. People that are that next step out- perhaps an acquaintance that you don’t know well, a neighbor who is different from you ethnically or social-economically, a community member that the Holy Spirit has put in your path but is more a stranger than friend. Be creative and think outside the box!



## EVERY NEIGHBOR PRAYER LIST

We are called to be observant, expectant, and involved with the people God is bringing across our paths where we Live, Work, and Play. He wants us to pray that many will know Him as Father and as Savior, as He draws them to Himself and His Kingdom (John 6:44). Jesus modeled prayer for those who were like “sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:32-34).” Jesus’ own ministry of compassion (Matthew 14:14, 15:32) to those who were on the fringes of society, those who had no status or reputation, was a beautiful example of who we are to be praying for and seeking to include in our daily lives- those who are outside our comfort zones, but fully loved and wanted by our God.

When we gather as a group we will pray for these people. Who is God impressing upon you from your Live, Work, and Play network? Who are the people who might be seeking His Kingdom, who are asking hard questions, who are far from Christ and need a better hope?

Using your Live, Work, and Play network, create an Every Neighbor Prayer list with a least one name from everyone in your group. This list will include the names of those you are hoping to bless with the gospel through service, acts of love, conversation, and/or Bible study. Pray boldly for God to reveal Himself to them and open their eyes to His power and freedom.

You may meet someone new this week or renew an old relationship from the past. Is this someone God is asking you to put on the Every Neighbor Prayer list, to actively pray big for their salvation? Add them to the board. Each week, take time to update your group, and let’s see what God will do!

## HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

The parables that Jesus told created an interest in His Kingdom- the characteristics, the hopes, and the realities of the gospel. Sometimes, Jesus wouldn’t even mention that He was Messiah; sometimes He did pointedly. Jesus made the gospel accessible to those who would hear and didn’t apologize for who He was. Sadly, we have become conditioned to put on a filter and not speak of Jesus because we imagine that it is awkward, pushy, or politically incorrect. We need to take off this filter and grow in boldness and love as we share stories about who He is and what He is about. There was no doubt that He was marking Himself as special, as a spiritual being, and often, much more than that!

Likewise, “marking ourselves as spiritual” can help us gauge whether others are interested in God and His message. Some people will “lean in” as you speak about such topics, asking additional questions, sharing their own beliefs, telling about their own journey. Some will not; they will “lean back” and change the topic, become silent, or shut down altogether. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you as you initiate and let Him do the work of speaking to a person’s soul.

Practice talking with your spouse, children, or a friend about two or three of the following “interest creating” topics:

1. Recently, God/Jesus has been teaching me that...
2. I am realizing more and more that God has blessed me by...
3. I used to struggle with (insert fear, stronghold, idolatry) but now I see God wants me to believe...
4. I decided to follow Jesus because...
5. Think of common topics that come up as you meet people—for example: career, living situation, family history, educational background. Pick one of these and tell how God changed your path in the past, or how He is guiding you in the present.

As you practice talking about these things, try to end with a learning question such as, “Have you ever considered God in this way before?” OR “Do you think God is teaching/blessing/asking you to believe anything right now?” Your questions are to gauge a response and to allow space for them to interact with your story. Now, be prayerful and alert as to who God wants you to share with this week!

## **PRAYER STORIES**

Another way to create interest is prayer stories. Most people in today’s world still value prayer. Think of someone in your Live, Work, and Play network has expressed a need, struggle, or unmet desire. Can you do one of the following this week?

Share how God has answered a prayer in your life, something specific and real and transforming. Make a point to tell them that you are praying to God in Jesus’ name for their need. Check back with them with the expectation that God will move!

Pray face-to-face with your friend. Again, check back and see what God has done!

# THE GOSPEL

## God's Design

God designed our world and us to live in a thriving relationship with Him!

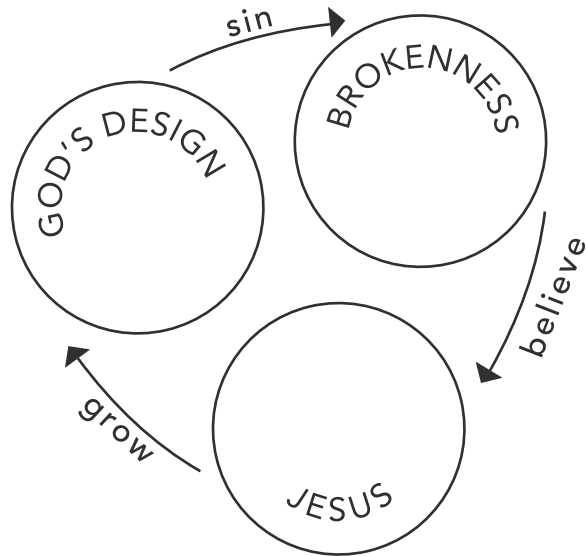
## Brokenness

Yet as we look around our world, we see brokenness—injustice, hatred, corruption. We also see brokenness inside ourselves.

We chose to reject God's design, (the Bible calls this sin) and now our relationship with God is broken (the Bible calls this death).

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23



## Jesus

Because of His great love, God did not leave us in brokenness. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to rescue us!

Jesus lived the life we could not live (without sin).

Jesus died the death we deserved.

God raised Him from the dead, defeating sin and death.

"But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

## Believe

Trust in Jesus. When we believe, our sins are forgiven, and we know we have eternal life. We can now begin to grow in our relationship with Him.

"For you are saved (rescued) by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift."

Ephesians 2:8

Where do you see yourself in this diagram? Are you living in brokenness or in God's design?



