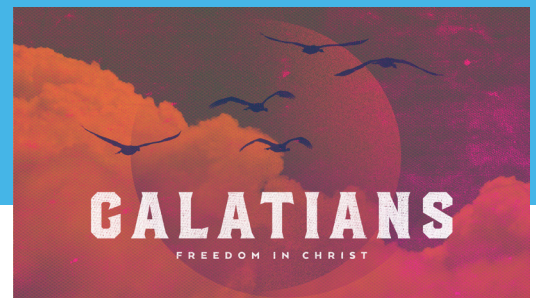


Discussion Questions

May 3, 2026



Galatians 3:15-22 - Why Then the Law?

This week we worked through Galatians 3:15-22 to answer a crucial question: if the law cannot save us, why did God give it at all? Paul explains that the law, which came 430 years later, was never meant to cancel God's original promise of grace to Abraham. The law acts like an X-ray — it exposes our brokenness and the net of sin we are caught in, pointing us toward our need for Christ. Too often, we shrink the law down into measurable rules we can keep, or we hear God's commands as a hammer meant to steal our joy. But Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fill it full, restoring it as a window into the Father's heart for human flourishing. God's commands are the protective guidance of a loving Father — like a parent reaching for a child's hand in a busy parking lot. The inheritance is a gift, and the freedom we long for comes not from trying harder to earn it, but from training alongside the Holy Spirit to receive what has already been given.

1. Think back to a rule your parents had that drove you crazy as a kid but makes complete sense to you now. What changed your perspective between then and now?
2. Read Galatians 3:15-18 and Genesis 12:1-3. Paul emphasizes that God's promise to Abraham was a ratified covenant anchored by God saying "I will" four times - with Abraham contributing nothing in return. Why is it so crucial for our faith to understand that the inheritance is a grace-gift we receive, rather than a wage we earn?
3. Read Galatians 3:19-22. The sermon compared the law to an X-ray that reveals a broken bone but cannot heal it. How does viewing the law as a diagnostic tool rather than a cure change the way you approach your own failures?
4. Read Matthew 5:17-22 and Psalm 19:7-11. The sermon argued the Pharisees didn't take the law too seriously - they made it too small. Jesus came to fill it full, and David delighted in it as "sweeter than honey." In what ways are we tempted to do what the Pharisees did - shrinking God's commands down to the things we're already good at, while missing the deeper changes God desires?
5. The image of "the Father in the parking lot reaching for your hand" reframes God's commands as protection rather than punishment. When you encounter God's commands or sense the Holy Spirit putting His finger on something, do you tend to hear it as a hammer of judgment or the hand of a Father? What has shaped that for you?
6. James shared from his own life that for years he kept certain "rooms" of his heart closed because he was afraid God was there to judge rather than heal. Are there rooms in your own life where you've been hesitant to let God in? What would it take to trust His grace in those spaces?
7. Dallas Willard said, "Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning." What's the practical difference between trying harder to defeat a sin and training for the life the Spirit is forming in you? Which of the "trellis" practices - Scripture, prayer, authentic community, or silence - do you need to engage this week?

Galatians 3:17–19, 21-22 (NLT)

This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise. Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised.

Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:15-22**2 Primary Points:**

- 1. The promise cannot be cancelled by the law.**
- 2. Then what was the law for?**

The Promise Cannot Be Cancelled**Galatians 3:15 (NLT)**

Dear brothers and sisters, here is an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case.

Galatians 3:16

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ.

- **Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman will crush the serpent...**
- **Genesis 12, 15, 22, the seed of Abraham will bless every nation...**
- **Genesis 49, the seed of Judah will hold the scepter...**
- **2 Samuel 7, the seed of David will reign forever...**

Galatians 3:17 (NLT)

This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise.

Galatians 3:18 (NLT)

*For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God **graciously gave** it to Abraham as a promise.*

charizomai = Graciously Gave**Genesis 12:2-3**

I will make you into a great nation. **I will** bless you. **I will** make your name great. **I will** bless those who bless you.

The law speaks the language of "thou shalt." The promise speaks the language of "I will."**Galatians 3:19 (NLT)**

Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised.

Galatians 3:21 (NLT)

Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not!

Matthew 5:17

Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them **but to fulfill them [to make full]**.

The law at full size is not a heavier burden. It is a more beautiful vision of human life & flourishing

Romans 7:12

But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

Psalms 19

The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul... They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.

The law is God's heart revealed

Galatians 3:21 (NLT)

If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it.

Galatians 3:22 (NLT)

But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

Dallas Willard

Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning.