

## What's God's Point in Galatians?

The following are the top Words, Themes, and Ideas we found in our study of Galatians:

1. Jesus Christ / Lord, 1:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 16, 19, 22; 2:4, 16, 17, 20, 21; 3:1, 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29; 4:4, 6, 7, 14, 19; 5:1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 24; 6:2, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18.
2. God the Father, 1:1, 3, 4-5, 6, 10, 13, 15-16, 20; 2:6, 19, 20, 21; 3:6, 8, 11, 17, 18, 20, 21, 26; 4:6, 7, 8, 9, 14; 5:8; 6:7, 14, 16.
3. Law, 2:16, 19, 21; 3:12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 4:4, 5, 10, 12, 21-31; 5:3, 4, 14, 22-23; 6:13.
4. Faith/Believe, 1:23; 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 5:4-5, 6; 6:10.
5. Bondage vs. Freedom, 1:4, 10; 2:4, 11-14, 20; 3:8-9, 13, 22-29; 4:1-7, 8-10, 12, 21-31; 5:1, 13.
6. Living life by the Spirit/Faith vs. Living life by the Flesh/Works, 2:19, 20; 3:2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12; 4:23-31; 5:16-23, 24, 25-26; 6:1, 16.

**So what's the main theme in Galatians?** Notice that aside from Jesus Christ and God (which we expect to find throughout any New Testament Gospel or epistle), the other items prevalent in Galatians have to do with the theme of the letter: life must be lived by trusting Jesus instead of your own strength.

**What does it mean to live by faith?** What if you were about to run out of money and therefore you were about to be kicked out of your apartment and had to move back into his mom's house, how would you live by faith in this situation?

**What problem was Paul addressing?** The Galatians were in danger of turning away from God to a different Gospel, 1:6. Thus, Paul was asking them, “Why are you turning away from Christ’s Gospel of Faith to a Gospel of Works? Here was Paul’s case against the Works Gospel:

Chapter 1, the Gospel Paul gave them didn’t come from man; it came directly from Jesus Christ. And Paul knows the difference: he was an expert in the Gospel of Works. In fact, he used it to try to destroy the Gospel of Faith. But God stopped him and showed him that he was born to preach the Gospel of Faith to Gentiles! Thus, he didn’t need to verify the Gospel God gave him with the Jerusalem apostles; he didn’t see them until three years later. In fact, for three years he preached the Gospel of Faith. And his fellow Jews in Judea glorified God because Paul, who previously tried to destroy the Gospel of Faith, was now its biggest proponent!

Chapter 2, after fourteen years of preaching the Faith Gospel, champions of the Works Gospel tried to enslave the Church with legalism. So God sent Paul to settle it once and for all. Instead of siding with the legalists, the Jerusalem apostles sided with Paul, refusing to circumcise Titus, a Gentile who was with him. In fact, they urged Paul to keep preaching the Faith Gospel to the Gentiles! Moreover, when the apostle Peter visited, Paul rebuked him severely because he gave the impression that the Works Gospel was right. So to pretend that you can be saved or live a godly life by the works of the Law is to insult Christ’s death. The only way to live the life you now have in Jesus is by trusting Him not your works!

Chapter 3, the Galatians know all this from personal experience: they received the Spirit, did miracles, and lived godly lives by faith. In fact, the Faith Gospel originated with Abraham; God saved him by faith and promised to save Gentiles by faith. To try it by the works of the Law is a curse since you have to keep it perfectly. But Jesus took our curse so that we would receive the same blessing as Abraham. Additionally, the promise of faith that God made to Abraham and Christ can’t be undone by a Law that came 430 years later. In fact, the Law was meant to bring us to faith in Christ by which we’re made God’s children and are clothed with Jesus’ life and identity.

Chapter 4, though we were all in bondage—Jews to the Law, Gentiles to idolatry—God sent Jesus to set us free, make us His children, and give us Jesus’ Spirit so we can call God, “Daddy.” Therefore, Paul is puzzled that the Galatians want to return to bondage. So he wishes he was there to turn them back. And he shows them undeniably that the Mosaic Law represents nothing but bondage by pointing to Abraham’s two sons: **Ishmael** = child of bondage = child of Hagar = Mt. Sinai = Mosaic Law = **bondage**. **Isaac** = child of promise/faith = child of freewoman = **freedom**. Since we’re children of God’s promise of faith, we’re free.

**But now that you don't have the Law telling you what to do, how do you overcome sin and live a successful life?** Having proven that the Gospel of Works—and thereby that the Mosaic Law—will not work to save you or enable you to live a godly life, Paul then answers the question, “Then how can we live a godly life without a Law telling us what to do?”

Chapter 5, don't go back to the Law. You'll end up in bondage and cut yourself off from Christ's power. Christ has freed you and if you're part of Christ, you don't need to “work for it.” Instead, you need to live by faith grounded in love. Therefore, the liberty Christ gave you is not for sin and conceit; it's for serving one another. You have two options: live by trusting Christ's Spirit or by the works of your flesh. The flesh will produce nothing but wickedness and misery, but the Spirit the fruit of everlasting life: joy, peace, self-control, etc. So since you live in the Spirit, which has crucified your fleshly desires, walk in the Spirit. Don't become conceited and envious.

Chapter 6, instead of comparing yourself to others and thinking highly of yourself, gently help your fellow Christians overcome their sinful struggles. This is what it means to be Christ-like and how you'll find true self-esteem because God won't ask how you compared to others. He'll ask if you carried your own load. So don't fool yourself; God will reward you based on what you sowed: MISERY for those who lived by their fleshly desires and GOODNESS for those who lived by Christ's Spirit. Therefore, don't give up; do good every chance you get. Living by the works of the Law is a life of empty boast. Instead, pursue your new life in Christ and you'll have peace and mercy.

### **Galatians Summarized Further**

Chapter 1, the Works Gospel now tempting you destroys and enslaves. I know this because I was one of its biggest proponents and used it to try to destroy Jesus' Gospel of Faith which is designed to deliver.

Chapter 2, God affirmed this; He even rebuked an apostle who temporarily sided with the Works Gospel. Thus, the only way to live the Christian life is by trusting Jesus, to do otherwise is to insult the Cross.

Chapter 3, the Galatians knew personally that faith is the key to every facet of life. It's been God's way since Abraham. In fact, the Mosaic Law was meant to lead us to a new life of faith that is lived in Christ.

Chapter 4, God sent Jesus to free the Galatians and adopt them, giving them full rights to God as Father. Thus, the two options: the Abrahamic Freedom Covenant (faith) or Mosaic Bondage Covenant (works).

Chapter 5, so live in Christ's freedom; don't go back to bondage and cut yourself off from Christ's power. Instead of being conceited and reaping misery, serve one another and reap the fruit of Christ's Spirit.

Chapter 6, thus, don't think highly of yourself. Be Christ-like and gently help those who are struggling. God rewards based on what you sow: MISERY if you live wickedly, GOODNESS if you live by Christ's Spirit.

Galatians Chapters 1-6, In order to become part of God's family and enjoy the fruits of the everlasting life God's given you—instead of living a sinful life that brings bondage and misery—this can only be done through the Spirit of Christ who dwells in you. You have to live every moment of your life by putting your trust in the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you.