

Galatians Bible Study: Lesson 3

Galatians 3:1-29

Lesson Outline

Welcome/Prayer

Objectives of Lesson

By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to:

- Examine Paul's teaching that Christians grow spiritually because of God's work in us by the Holy Spirit, not by following special rules.
- Describe ways that Christians fall into traps by adding human rules and precepts to our faith.

Scripture Study (45 min.)

Application of Scripture (10 min.)

Closing Prayer

Scripture Study (from BibleGateway.com)

Galatians 3:1-29 (NLT)

Galatians 3: 1-9

³ Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. ² Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. ³ How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? ⁴ Have you experienced^[a] so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

⁵ I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

⁶ In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."^[b] ⁷ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."^[c] ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

Questions

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our conversion and ultimate transformation?
2. What are some specific ways Christians can inhibit the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?
3. What is Paul's reason for mentioning Abraham from the Old Testament? In what ways are you like Abraham?
4. How does the example of Abraham show the superiority of faith over observing the law?

Galatians 3: 10-18

¹⁰ But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."^[d] ¹¹ So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."^[e] ¹² This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life."^[f]

¹³ But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."^[g] ¹⁴ Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised^[h] Holy Spirit through faith.

¹⁵ Dear brothers and sisters,^[i] here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ God gave the promises to Abraham and his child.^[j] And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children,^[k]" as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—and that, of course, means Christ. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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.

Questions

1. Why would Paul describe those whose spirituality consists of strictly following religious rules as being under a curse?
2. What does Paul mean when he says "It is through faith that a righteous person has life"? (v. 11).

3. Think about people you know who think that being “right with God” depends on their living a good life. How can you help them see the truth of grace?

Galatians 3:19-29

¹⁹ 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. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. ²⁰ Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham.

²¹ Is there a conflict, then, between God’s law and God’s promises?^[1] Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it.

²² 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.

²³ Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

²⁴ Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. ²⁵ And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

²⁶ For you are all children^[m] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.^[n]

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile,^[o] slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children^[p] of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Questions

1. Why can’t we keep God’s law? If the law can’t save us, why did God give it?
2. What positive role does God’s law play in our spiritual lives?
3. If the law of God can’t bring spiritual life (v. 21), where does spiritual life begin?
4. What does Paul mean when he calls the law our “guardian”? (v. 24).

Application of Scripture – Falling into Traps

The following quote is taken from the Tyndale House *Life Application Study Bible* (NLT):

“Christ has set us free, but as we attempt to live by faith, we are still in danger of falling into certain traps. Wanting the security of being able to earn our salvation, we add human traditions, standards, and rules to our faith. We slip back into performing a certain way, serving or doing good deeds as if we needed to impress God or earn his approval. And wanting to feel good, we let ourselves be directed by our ever-changing emotions. The security trap makes us prisoners just as surely as if the law held us in its grip. The emotional trap can result in our becoming “outlaws,” deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong. Either way, we rob ourselves of the true joy and security we share with all who have accepted God’s promise of salvation by faith alone.”

Questions

1. What rules and regulations have Christians added to the gospel? What problems has this caused?
2. In what ways have Christians blended too much personal experience into the gospel? What problems has this caused?
3. How can Christians avoid falling into the “security trap”?
4. How can Christians avoid falling into the “emotional trap”?
5. What religious habits or acts do Christians cling to believing that God likes you better or approves of you more when you do them?

Closing Prayer

Footnotes:

1. [3:4](#) Or *Have you suffered*.
2. [3:6](#) [Gen 15:6](#).
3. [3:8](#) [Gen 12:3](#); [18:18](#); [22:18](#).
4. [3:10](#) [Deut 27:26](#).
5. [3:11](#) [Hab 2:4](#).
6. [3:12](#) [Lev 18:5](#).
7. [3:13](#) [Deut 21:23](#) (Greek version).
8. [3:14](#) Some manuscripts read *the blessing of the*.
9. [3:15](#) Greek *Brothers*.
10. [3:16a](#) Greek *seed*; also in [3:16c](#), [19](#). See notes on [Gen 12:7](#) and [13:15](#).
11. [3:16b](#) Greek *seeds*.
12. [3:21](#) Some manuscripts read *and the promises*?

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