



**The Summit**  
Green Campus of Canton Baptist Temple

# **Resources for Your Life**

The Book of Galatians

15 Sessions

[www.thesummitgreen.com](http://www.thesummitgreen.com)  
[tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com)

## Resource Guide

This resource was compiled from the personal Bible study and blog entries created by Tom Hogsed, pastor of the Summit in Green. You can find the original blog entries at [www.tomhogsed.com](http://www.tomhogsed.com).

The **introduction** to this book has been written so the reader has a better understanding of the Biblical author, his purpose in writing, and important points to understand before reading.

Following the introduction, each new page represents a **verse by verse overview** of the Scripture passage. The best way to study is to first read the Scripture verses from your Bible relying on the Holy Spirit to provide understanding and then to support your understanding with the commentary written below.

At the end of each Scripture commentary, there is a short **prayer** written so the reader can personally apply what has been discovered; however, it is suggested that you also pray from your heart in response to God's Word.

Feel free to make your own personal notes in your Bible, on this page, or even in a journal.

If this resource has helped you or you have further questions, please send an e-mail to [tomhogsed@gmail.com](mailto:tomhogsed@gmail.com).

## **Introduction to Galatians**

Written by Paul somewhere around AD 49-50, Galatians is a letter given to many churches within the region of Galatia in order to defend the church against the false doctrine being propagated by Judaizers. These teachers had been instructing the Gentiles that they should first convert to Judaism (Mosaic system of the Old Testament) before they could become believers. In Galatians 1:7 Paul referred to their teaching as a "different gospel" because they had added many rituals and ceremonies from the Mosaic law as a prerequisite for salvation. It appears that the churches in Galatia were being deceived by this false teaching and Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to instruct and warn them about the dangers of accepting it. Paul wanted his readers to understand that justification (being declared righteous) is only by grace through faith. Paul was definitely qualified to address this issue because he also had converted from Judaism; in fact, Paul had thorough training in the Old Testament scriptures as he studied under Gamaliel, a famous rabbi in Jerusalem. Paul was a part of the Pharisees who were a group of Jews steeped in tradition and their own interpretations of the Old Testament law. They were more interested in obeying externally instead of obeying from the heart. Paul moved up in the ranks of the Pharisees and even persecuted Christians; however, after encountering God on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) Paul converted to Christianity and became a missionary who spread the gospel to many places. Galatians is a letter from Paul's heart to defend the doctrine of justification by faith.

*Dear God, provide a great understanding about justification by faith and the visible results it will produce in my life as I read the book of Galatians.*

## **Galatians 1:1-9**

Paul brings a standard greeting to the churches at Galatia as he reminds them that he is an apostle (one sent by God for a specific mission) by the will of Jesus Christ and God the Father (1:1). He is careful to explain his apostleship as something which was not set up by man and therefore what he was about to say also came from God, not from man. As we will discover later, these false teachers had been bringing Paul's apostleship into question so Paul felt like it was necessary to defend his calling. Verse 2 describes his recipients as the churches at Galatia which Paul founded during his first missionary journey. These churches were located in Derbe, Iconium, Lystra, and Pisidia. Paul greeted the readers with "grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age." Paul quickly turns his attention to the reason he was writing - the churches of Galatia had turned away from the grace of God given through Jesus Christ by accepting a "different gospel." This gospel was one of legalism and in Galatians 5:4 Paul describes it as attempting to be justified (declared righteous) by the law. Paul emphatically states that the gospel being spread by the false teachers is "another gospel." Romans 3:24 puts it like this: "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Being declared righteous is never an act of obedience to the law; however, justification takes place when a repentant sinner accepts the mercy given through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This act is done apart from works. Paul says that anyone who preaches a different gospel should be accursed, meaning they should be sentenced to eternal life in hell. When Paul had previously visited these churches, this was not the gospel he had preached so he was in essence telling them that nothing had changed (1:8-9). In our current society there are many who say that all roads lead to heaven, but according to Paul there is only one gospel and that gospel is the message of the death, burial, and resurrection for our sins.

*Dear God, thank You for providing mercy through the death of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help me to always uphold the way You have provided for salvation and to never compromise it!*

## **Galatians 1:10-24**

Paul continues his argument to his readers that his goal as an apostle is to please God not man; furthermore, he said that "the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man." Paul wanted to make sure that his readership understood that what he taught was not his own ideas, but rather "it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." These false teachers were not undermining the message of Paul, but the message of God! Paul then identifies himself with the false teachers of Judaism who persecuted the church and perverted the gospel. He wanted to remind his readers that he also used to be zealous for these false teachings that they were currently receiving (1:13-14); however, God got his attention and called him to preach Jesus to the Gentiles (1:15-16). Immediately after his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, Paul went to Arabia for 3 years to be trained by the Lord and then to begin his ministry in Damascus (1:17). Paul went to Jerusalem to see Peter, who was the most influential man during this time of the early church. Paul also was able to see James, the brother of Jesus (1:18-20). After being in Jerusalem, Paul went to churches in Syria and Cilicia where he was not known by face; however, they had heard that he was the one who formerly persecuted the church but now preached Jesus (1:21-24). Paul shared his experience with his readers so they would remember that he was formerly wrapped up in Judaism, but now he was coming to them in the name of Jesus Christ to spread the one, true gospel. No ordinary message had the ability to change the life of Paul, but only the gospel of Jesus Christ possesses the power to totally change a person. It is the message of the gospel (Jesus died and rose again for our sins) which has the ability to change us. This message is not one which has been created by man, but given by God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Those who will turn from their sin and trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ will receive new life and eternal life in heaven!

*Dear God, I thank You for the power of the gospel and its' ability to change the lives of people, even those who are far away from You. Please help us to see that this message is not from man, but directly from You. Continue to change us into Your image!*

## **Galatians 2:1-10**

Paul then recounts his return visit back to Jerusalem fourteen years after he had made his first visit. He took Barnabas and Titus with him on this visit to Jerusalem and the details are given in Acts 15:1-22. Paul, as well as the other apostles, stand before the Jerusalem Council to discuss the issue of salvation. It appears that some of the Jews were trying to add circumcision as a prerequisite for salvation. The apostles stood firmly against this belief and concluded that salvation is only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Now, the false teachers within the churches of Galatia were again trying to oppose the true message of the gospel and establish certain prerequisites in order to be saved. Paul wanted his readers to know that the gospel he preached was the same gospel of the church in Jerusalem and this message was directly from God, not man (2:2-5). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit who worked in Peter to preach the gospel to the Jews was the same Spirit which worked in Paul to preach salvation to the Gentiles (2:6-8). The only difference between Paul and Peter was that they spoke the gospel to distinct groups of people, but the message of the gospel was still the same. Peter, James, and John (the main leaders in the church at Jerusalem) detected the spirit of grace within Paul and the "right hand of fellowship" which was a sign of partnership (2:9-10) was given to him. The gospel has not changed since the time of the first sin of Adam and Eve. Salvation has been promised to be given by grace through faith. Although Jesus Christ had not yet died during the times of the Old Testament, by faith they looked forward to the One whom God had promised to save them from sin. We now are able to look back and put together God's plan from the beginning and salvation is still by grace through faith. Paul wrote to defend the purity of the gospel and guard it from those who attempted to distort its' message. We also should stand up for the gospel!

*Dear God, help me to never compromise the message of the gospel!*

## **Galatians 2:11-21**

In the previous passage (2:1-10) Paul recounted some history of his life as well as the beginnings of his interactions with the leaders in the Jerusalem church. He continues remembering some of the things which happened in the past, especially relating to his experience with the false teachers of Judaism. In verse 11 he begins to unfold an instance where Paul had a confrontation with Peter because of his association with these false teachers (2:11). Peter had been in Antioch and often fellowshiped with with Gentiles, but "certain men came from James" who had apparently lied about their beliefs in order to spy on Peter. These men were Judaizers and when they came to Peter, he withdrew himself from the Gentiles because he "feared those who were of the circumcision." Although he had given up following the Mosaic law, Peter feared what these Judaizers would think of him and his belief in the gospel of grace. Unfortunately, Peter confused many of the Jewish believers in Antioch and they to were led astray with Peter's sudden fellowship with these false teachers of legalism (2:13). Paul writes about his defense against the actions of Peter by clearly communicating the gospel of grace. Paul says "a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ...by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." Paul was standing for the true gospel which only comes through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins. Christ had abolished the dietary restrictions associated with the Old Testament law and classified all people, Jew or Gentile, who believed by faith to be a part of His family. In essence, Paul was exposing Peter's actions as deceiving because even Jesus Christ did not adhere to the Mosaic law (2:17-18). On the basis of Paul's words, he has "been crucified with Christ, 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 for me." When salvation takes place, the old man dies (sinful flesh) and the new man is born again being indwelt by the spirit of Christ who enables the new man to live through Him. Anyone who believes that righteousness comes through the law causes Christ's death to be unnecessary.

*Dear God, I thank You that Jesus' death declared me righteous and that His work on the cross is made available to anyone who will repent of their sins and have faith in His sacrifice!*

### **Galatians 3:1-18**

After having shared his background and firm stance on the gospel of grace, Paul now turns his attention to the Galatians. He begins by calling them *foolish*, meaning that they were not wise in listening to the false teachings of these Judaizers. They had caused many within the church to disobey what they knew to be the truth. Jesus Christ had permanently destroyed death and sin through His perfect sacrifice on the cross so there was no need for the Galatians to include human works into God's plan of salvation (3:1). Paul then asks them if they had received "the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" He goes on to ask if salvation began "in the Spirit" but was "now being made perfect by the flesh?" In verse 5 Paul again asks them whether Jesus Christ brings salvation "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith." Paul points all the way back to Abraham (father of the Jewish nation) and how he "believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." If this is true, only those "who are of faith are the sons of Abraham." Jews and Gentiles alike become the spiritual children of Abraham through faith because God promised that through his seed would "all the nations...be blessed." In verse 10 Paul makes a bold statement by saying that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" and then quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 where it says "cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." Keeping the law is impossible and therefore salvation can never come through the works of the law; in fact, James 2:10 says that "whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." Jesus Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Jesus Christ purchased our freedom from sin by perfectly fulfilling the demands of the law and paying the death penalty which was commanded by the law (3:13-14). God made the promise to Abraham that through him all nations would be blessed and He has kept that promise by sending Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, to die for the sins of all mankind (3:15-18); therefore, salvation could never be found in the works of the law!

*Dear God, thank You for not making salvation dependent on our works, but granting us the promise of salvation through faith!*

### **Galatians 3:19-24**

So, if following the works of the law does not result in salvation then what is the benefit of the Old Testament law? Is it even necessary? In case people accused Paul of saying that the law was not important, he revealed the purpose of the law. The purpose of the law was to expose the sinfulness of man until the Seed of Abraham (Jesus Christ) was revealed (3:19-20). If the law was only necessary to expose the sinfulness of man and could not provide salvation, was the promise of a Seed against the law? Paul says "certainly not" because the law and the promise of God are not in opposition. "If there had been a law given which could have given life...righteousness would have been by the law"; however, God's word clearly reveals that everyone is under sin and therefore cannot be brought to salvation through the law. Paul then uses an illustration of a prisoner saying that "Scripture has confined all under sin that the promise of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." The disobedience to the revealed law kept us a prisoner of sin until faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ came (who perfectly fulfilled the law) and set free those who were held captive by sin (3:23). The law only served as a *tutor* meaning that it guarded our behavior and taught us what was right. Ultimately, the law helped us understand that we could not attain salvation on our own because of our sinfulness, but it brought us to Christ who was able to declare us righteous before God the Father (3:24).

*Dear God, thank you for giving us the law to expose our true sinful condition, but thank You for providing faith through which we can have salvation!*

### **Galatians 3:25-4:7**

Since faith has now come through the grace of Jesus Christ, we are no longer under the law (3:25). Does this mean that the law is not important? No! The moral standards of the law are still in effect because they are unchanging. The ceremonial law, driven by rituals and sacrifices, have been discontinued. Listen to what Paul says in Colossians 3:14, 16-17 "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us...having nailed it to the cross.... So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." When you , by faith, believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, you become the sons of God (3:26). When this is done, all of us become one in Christ Jesus (3:27-28) and we are no longer labeled by our nationality; in fact, "if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Although non-Jews can never be physical children of Abraham, we become spiritual children through Jesus Christ and heirs of justification by faith. In Galatians 4:1-7 Paul uses an illustration of a child coming of age to serve as a comparison of our life before and after coming to faith in Jesus Christ. As children, we were slaves to the elements of the world and Paul is specifically referring to a man-made system of works which supposedly bring salvation from God (4:1-3). However, Jesus came into the world, "born under the law to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." Adoption carries the idea of bringing someone into a new family. Before Christ we were all a part of Satan's family and were condemned because of sin, but through Jesus Christ we were brought into God's family and have become His sons. Now He has "sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying out 'Abba, Father!'" The Spirit resides in our heart and gives us the ability to call God *Abba*. This word is the same as when we say "daddy" and is comparable of when children speak to their father. It is a term of endearment. What a privilege to be called the sons of God and to talk to God as our Father!

*Dear God, thank You for adopting me into Your family and giving me a right standing before You!*

## **Galatians 4:8-20**

Paul has already established that salvation is only by grace through faith and there is no need to continue following the ceremonies and rituals of the Mosaic law. The false teachers had been seeking to deceive the churches at Galatia into thinking that salvation was a mixture of works and grace, but Paul defended that it was a free gift through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus' death removed the demands and penalty of the law and brought salvation to those who believed. Now that the Galatians had believed, Paul questioned why they turned "again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" He goes on to say that they "observe days and months and seasons and years." Paul could not understand how they turned to God in faith, but then quickly were deceived into thinking that they could earn favor with Him through keeping ceremonies, traditions, and festivals (4:9-10). His fear was he had "labored for you in vain" meaning they had accepted the gospel of grace, but then returned to legalism (system of works righteousness). Paul was once a Pharisee, thinking he could attain salvation through good works, but he soon trusted in Jesus Christ and rejected his own efforts to save himself. He knew the pressures that the Galatians were facing from these false teachers because he used to be one (4:12). Paul had ministered to the Galatians the first time through some type of "physical infirmity" and they received him "as an angel of God" (4:13-14). He points out that they greatly loved him and accepted his preaching as truth (4:15-16), but now they are beginning to be influenced by the message of the Judaizers (4:17). Instead, Paul wanted them to be zealous for the message of grace, even when he was not physically with them (4:18). Paul desired that the Galatians would continue to mature spiritually "until Christ is formed in you." The goal for these Galatians was that they would continue following the truth and reject the false teachings of the Judaizers. If they kept consistent, their faith would grow and they would become more like Christ in their attitudes and actions.

*Dear God, may I never think I can earn favor with You through doing good things, but rather may I continually allow Your grace to grow within and result in Christlike character.*

### **Galatians 4:21-31**

Paul is continuing to contrast grace and works which has been motivated by false teaching from Judaizers. He has been building a case as to why grace/faith is superior to law/works. Again, the false teachers had infiltrated the churches at Galatia with prerequisites for salvation and were adding these requirements in addition to grace. Paul turns to an Old Testament illustration of Abraham and Sarah. God had promised that He would give them a son of promise through whom all the world would be blessed; however, after time had passed it seemed as though God would not fulfill His promise. So, Abraham and Sarah tried to take matters into their own hands by Abraham sleeping with Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid (Genesis 16:1-16). Hagar bore a son named Ishmael, but his birth was a result of Abraham and Sarah not trusting that God would give them a son. Eventually God gave them a son named Issac and fulfilled the promise He had made to them. Ishmael was born of human efforts, but Issac was miraculously given by God. Paul uses this real life story to illustrate a spiritual truth. Hagar represented law/works while Sarah represented grace/faith (4:22-26). Hagar was a slave and illustrated being under bondage to the law and Sarah illustrated freedom through grace. Issac received the promises made to Abraham just as believers receive God's promises of redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ (4:28). According to Galatians 4:29, there has always been conflict between the descendants of Ishmael (Arabs) and the descendants of Issac (Jews). This struggle is illustrated in modern day between unbelievers (those who trust in law/works) and believers (those who trust in grace/faith) - this was the struggle which was now taking place in the churches at Galatia. Paul challenges them to forsake justification through the law because it only leads to bondage, but rather be justified through faith which leads to freedom (4:30-31).

*Dear God, thank You for the freedom provided through the grace given by Jesus Christ!*

## **Galatians 5:1-15**

For the first four chapters of Galatians Paul has been exposing the erroneous doctrine of salvation by works and as he nears the end he "states it plainly" for his readers to understand. Jesus Christ has provided liberty and freedom from sin through His death on the cross and given new life through His resurrection. Believers are no longer a slave to the law, as well as it's demands and penalty (5:1). For those who felt the need to follow the law (specifically circumcision), Christ's sacrifice would not profit them anything (5:2); in fact, if a man is circumcised, he is obligated to keep the whole law in order to be saved. Paul was revealing the impossibility of keeping the whole law and cross referencing with other New Testament writings, no man has kept the law. James even says that a person who keeps the whole law, but disobeys one part, is guilty of breaking the whole thing. Any attempts to attain salvation through the law results in rejecting the grace provided through Christ (5:4); furthermore, any works (or lack of works) can never result in righteousness and salvation (5:6a). Only faith can provide salvation and always results in works (5:6b). The churches in Galatia had a great history having received the gospel through faith, but now false teaching was creeping in and they needed to stand for the truth (5:7-10). Paul goes on to say that the result of receiving salvation through grace/faith is that they would love one another (5:13-14). He was not saying that works are not necessary, but Paul was simply putting into perspective the role of works in our spiritual life. Works cannot bring salvation, but are a product of those who have received the grace of Christ through faith.

*Dear God, enable me to do good works so others can see the change You've made in me!*

### **Galatians 5:16-18**

Paul now begins a conversation with the churches at Galatia which gives them directions as to how to live a life of grace/faith. Life in Christ immediately results in the Holy Spirit entering into a believer and producing within certain, identifiable characteristics. The Holy Spirit provides the power to walk a Spirit-filled life. Paul says "walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." The word *walk* implies a continuous action and means that a Christian surrenders to the Spirit's control as he lives his daily life. The Word of God works hand in hand with the Spirit of God to direct our attitudes and actions; in other words, our lifestyle reflects the desires of the Spirit rather than the desires of the flesh. He goes on to say that the "flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." There is truly a battle which rages between the works of the Spirit and the works of the flesh - they are totally opposite. Paul then ties in the teaching that he has been emphasizing for the first four chapters of Galatians - those who are "led by the Spirit...are not under the law." Those Judaizers who were teaching that salvation comes through the law were being led by the flesh - they felt obedience to the law would result in righteous behavior; however, Paul was stating that righteous attitudes and actions only result from the power of the Spirit (5:18). Circumcision had no power to result in good works, even though this is what the false teachers had been telling the churches at Galatia. Paul's point is very clear - God desires for His followers to walk in the power of the Spirit and not trust our flesh to bring righteous attitudes and actions. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin through His death on the cross and now He has provided us with the Spirit of God, who will enable us to do good works.

*Dear God, thank You for the Spirit of God who provides the power to produce righteous attitudes and actions.*

## **Galatians 5:19-21**

Since the flesh and the Spirit are contrary to each other, Paul felt like it was necessary to describe the works of the flesh as well as the works of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:19 Paul gives a list of the works of the flesh and even seems to divide them into three different areas of life: sexual immorality (5:19), spiritual impurity (5:20a), and selfish human attitudes (5:20b-21a). First, Paul mentions the area of sexual immorality and describes those things which characterize a person who lives by the flesh..."adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness." The sexual choices of those controlled by the flesh are evident through all kinds of perversions. Adultery is when a spouse is unfaithful. Fornication encompasses many forms of sexual sin such as premarital sex, homosexuality, and adultery. Uncleanness is a simple description of those who have compromised their sexual purity and whose life is characterized by all sorts of sexual impurity. Lewdness describes uncontrolled sexual desires. Paul's point is clear - a person who is controlled by the flesh will live a lifestyle of sexual immorality. Next Paul enters the area of spiritual impurity. He uses two words to describe those who are in this category..."idolatry, sorcery." Idolatry describes those who worship anything other than the one, true God and sorcery includes magic as well as drug induced contact with spirits. The last area Paul addresses is selfish human attitudes. Out of the three areas, Paul uses the most words to describe this group of people. Most of these attitudes are self explanatory with terms such as "hatred, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, envy, drunkenness." Paul ends his description of those who live by the flesh with these significant words: "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." The key word is *practice*. Paul was not saying that Christians do not commit these sins, but he was saying that these things do not characterize their lifestyle; in other words, these sins are not continual without repentance. If a person habitually and continually is involved in sexual immorality, spiritual impurity, and selfish human attitudes he cannot claim to be inhabited by the Spirit and furthermore will not enter God's future kingdom. Why? If a person is living by the Spirit He will produce good works in the life of that person. What are those fruits? We will look at those characteristics in the next few verses

tomorrow.

*Dear God, protect me from the works of flesh.*

## **Galatians 5:22-26**

Paul has been clear on the works of the flesh (5:19-21) and has even declared that those whose lifestyle is characterized by these works cannot enter the kingdom of God. So, how are those who are controlled by the Spirit different? Paul begins to list what he calls the "fruit of the Spirit" which implies that these attitudes/actions will be produced in those who have believed in faith. When I think of fruit, I picture something that begins small and grows to full maturity. These fruits of the Spirit begin by the believer taking small steps in life but will grow over time. He lists nine characteristics in Galatians 5:22-23 and I will give a brief description of each so we can honestly examine whether these attitudes/actions are being modeled in our life. *Love* is a self-sacrificial concern for another which leads to action. *Joy* is a settled emotion of confidence no matter the circumstances. *Peace* is firm belief that God is in control and therefore no need to worry. *Longsuffering* is patience during unfavorable situations. *Kindness* is simply being nice to others. *Goodness* is the act of selflessly serving others. *Faithfulness* is loyalty and being dependable. *Gentleness* is humility and control over one's response to circumstances. *Self-control* is the ability to hold back emotions or desires. Paul then immediately says "against such there is no law." He was emphatically declaring that the law could not produce these attitudes/actions, but only the Holy Spirit will produce these things in us when we allow Him to have control over our mind and heart. The reason for this is because "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." And now "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." We are able to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit because Jesus Christ died for our sin and provided the indwelling Holy Spirit for those who would believe in faith. Although we still struggle with the flesh and the Spirit, one day our flesh will be totally redeemed making us no longer subject to sin. But now we can bring pleasure to God when we choose to walk in the Spirit and evidence the fruit He is producing in us.

*Dear God, manifest within me the fruit of the Spirit so I may please You and others would see You through my attitudes/actions.*

## **Galatians 6**

Paul leaves some final advice for those who believe in Jesus Christ. First, Paul challenges Christians to carefully handle those who have sinned. He seems to recognize that believers are capable of allowing their flesh to gain control over them by not submitting to the Spirit. However, Paul urges the spiritually mature to "restore such an one in a spirit of gentleness." Restoration is sometimes a forgotten art in the modern day church where those who sin are ostracized. Paul's approach to these people is to give them a second chance. When a person sins, a believer should help bring them back into fellowship with God through repentance. If the sinning person repents, we should also forgive them and welcome them with open arms. Furthermore, we should consider yourself "lest you also be tempted." Don't cast judgment on a person who has sinned thinking you are not capable of committing the same sin, but rather evidence humility by understanding you are susceptible to the same temptation. Next, Paul commands believers to "bear one another's burdens," which implies helping people cope when difficult times come into their lives. When we do this, we are actually fulfilling the law of Christ through love. In verses 3-4 Paul reminds believers not to think highly of themselves. Considering what he has already addressed, Paul urges Christians to remain humble and understand they are capable of sin and falling on tough times, so instead of judging they should follow the law of love. In Galatians 6:7-9 Paul shared the principle of sowing and reaping. Referring back to the flesh and the Spirit, Paul says that the man who follows his flesh will become corrupt, but the man who walks in the Spirit will experience a high quality of life. In verse 10 Paul simply reminds them to "do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." As he concludes, Paul returns to his ultimate purpose in writing this letter to the churches at Galatia - reject the teachings of the Judaizers and trust in the power of the cross to make them a new creation. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything." External obedience to the law cannot change the inward attitudes and actions of a person, but only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit possesses the power to change hearts. Today we must turn away from external rituals and rules thinking that they possess the power to make us right before God and walk in the Spirit who always guides us in the way we should live.

*Dear God, each day help me to listen more to the Holy Spirit (and Your Word) as they remind me how to live.*