

# Study Through the Bible

## **Galatians: The Essence of Being a Christian**

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# Study Through the Bible

## Galatians

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### Why read this book?

People who care about nutrition often read the labels before buying packaged foods. Why? They're on the lookout for additives and ingredients that may be hazardous to their health. In a similar way, Galatians warns against mixing legalism and human works into the simple gospel. It describes artificial spiritual additives and their toxic effects. This book offers a spiritual health check—a clear explanation of what it means to be saved by faith.

### Who wrote this book?

Paul, the apostle.

### To whom was it written?

To Christians in Galatia, a Roman province in the central part of what is now called Turkey.

### When was it written?

Probably around A.D. 48 to 53, less than 25 years after Jesus Christ's ministry on earth.

### Why was it written?

To denounce and correct false teachings that had infiltrated the churches Paul and Barnabas had earlier established. False teachers insisted that Gentile Christians keep the ritual laws of the Jews. Paul, stinging from their personal attacks against him, also wrote to defend his integrity as an apostle and to reassert his love for the Galatians.

### What to look for in Galatians:

Galatians will take you back to the basics—what the gospel is, how you receive it and how you can apply it in your daily life. Paul uses several techniques (his own conversion story, an illustration from the life of Abraham and even sarcasm) to persuade the Galatians to return to the pure gospel.

*From the Quest Study Bible (Zondervan)*



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# Study Through the Bible

## Galatians: The Essence of Being a Christian - Study 1

### PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

## Live Under God's Full Blessing

*God blesses those who rely on him rather than on themselves.*

There are two ways to try to please God. One is by human effort in keeping a moral code. The other is by trusting in Jesus Christ for the gift of righteousness and in the Holy Spirit for the ability to do God's will. Those who trust in themselves are under God's curse, while those who trust in God are under his favor.

As Christians, we believe we are saved by faith alone. But we often live as though God accepts and loves us based on our obedience to a biblical moral code or performance of certain spiritual disciplines. This study calls believers to rely not on human effort to please God, but on Christ and the Holy Spirit for righteousness.

**Scripture:**  
Galatians 3:1-14

**Based on:**  
"The Essence," Series Builder by Craig Brian Larson, PREACHING TODAY SERMONS



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**PART 1**

## **Identify the Current Issue**

A news article about the religious history of the Chicago area began with this paragraph about Zion, a small town north of the city: "Rev. John Alexander Dowie left little to chance a century ago, when the charismatic preacher founded the city of Zion as a carefully ordered religious utopia: He immediately outlawed sin."

It was both a great idea and a foolish presumption. God had already outlawed sin from the beginning, of course, thereby proving that pure legalism can't produce godly people. Rev. Dowie should have known that the law only confirms that we're sinners.

We should make laws, but laws don't change hearts. Only Christ can change hearts and form "law-abiding" spiritual citizens.

*(Illustration from PREACHINGTODAY.com,  
Lee Eclou, Lake Forest, Illinois; source: Chicago Tribune, 9-22-00.)*

**PART 2**

## **Discover the Eternal Principles**

**Teaching point one: Our Christian life begins—and should continue—with faith in Christ, not human effort.**

**Teaching point two: Abraham is the prime example of those who are blessed and justified through faith, not law keeping.**

**Teaching point three: Those who seek to be justified by keeping a moral code are under a curse.**

**PART 3**

## **Apply Your Findings**

**[Q]** With which statement do you find yourself agreeing most?

- 1) I try my best to live the way God wants me to, but I often fail.
- 2) I often fail, but I confess it and ask God for his power to live as he wants me to.
- 3) I've given up trying because it's hopeless.
- 4) I have no trouble keeping God's commandments.

Explain why you chose the statement you did. What difference does it make which statement you see yourself in? How does that view affect your life?

*—Study by Craig Brian Larson, with JoHannah Reardon*

