

# GALATIANS Bible Reading Schedule

## 1 Week

### 6 DAYS

#### DAY 1 – Galatians 1

Every chapter will highlight a verse or two that is worth memorizing and contemplating. This chapter might be the only one with mostly an introductory purpose. Still, there is a verse that shapes my life and I think could easily be formative for you. But before I share it with you, let's realize a few important facts that help us understand what we will be reading. This is the first letter that Paul wrote. He was compelled to write because the believers in that area were being led astray. People known as the Judaizers were teaching the new Gentile believers that they must obey the law to be saved. Paul clearly says that this is no gospel at all. Paul brings a strong but beautiful presentation of the Gospel of grace and he does it without fear of man. The Judaizers were a very zeal group that could be quite convincing. But our man, Paul stood up to them with unrelenting courage. That leads me to my highlighted verse: "Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people (like the Judaizers), but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." (Verse 10) Paul had to confront the Judaizers and speak harshly to the Christians in Galatia. He might end up not having any friends. It could seem like a "lose, lose" proposition. But his greatest concern was the truth of the Gospel. He could not faithfully serve Christ and allow the Galatians to remain on the wrong path otherwise he would be dishonoring God's call on his life and the spiritual well-being of these new believers. This issue of people-pleasing is very practical because we can become timid if we believe people will think negatively about us. Acts 5:29f gives an example of how the Apostles courageously honored Christ even though it meant suffering for him. The Apostle Paul elaborates on this topic in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 THES 2:3-6). Sometimes I overreact to people and underreact to my Lord. Thus, this verse is both significant and convicting to me. How do you respond to the challenge of pleasing God rather than people?

#### DAY 2 – Galatians 2

Paul continues to give some details to his ministry mostly because the Judaizers were trying to discredit him as a legitimate Apostle. He needed to write out his testimony to reestablish his authority among them. So much was at stake. He even had to be very direct with Peter because Peter was sending mixed signals about how to embrace the Gentile believers. But the portion of this chapter that gets my attention is the reaffirmation of the Gospel. First, verses 15 & 16 are marvelous, "Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law." He ends the chapter with another profound statement, "If keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die." (Verse 21) This is why I want us to read this book as we close out the year. It can mean a renewal of faith and a heart of gratitude for the glorious Gospel of grace. Verses 14 – 21

highlight the gift of righteousness that is received by faith, not by works. When I first met the Lord at old 20, I was encouraged to memorize certain verses to establish a strong foundation in my life based on the truth of God found in his Word. Galatians 2:20 was one such verse, (NIV) "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Does that say it all or what? I have died to self; I have received Christ's Spirit who lives in me; I live by faith now and always! Faith is essential and will remind us that it is by grace and grace alone we are saved. Gratitude, humility, and strength are the result! How does Galatians 2:20 speak to you? I encourage you to make this verse a memory verse for you. What do you learn about the righteousness that is received by faith in this chapter? How important are these truths?

### DAY 3 – Galatians 3

Again, the emphasis is on the law and the tension between faith and following the law. Abraham is the example that Paul uses because he met the Lord before the law was given. So, both Galatians and the Book of Romans highlight Genesis 15:6, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." (Verse 6) Then it says, "The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God." I like that idea because the Jews thought of themselves as children of Abraham but the real descendants of Abraham are people of faith, faith in Jesus the Messiah. There are two ideas in this chapter that especially get my attention. The first one has to do with the law and the purpose of the law. Paul refers to the law as a guardian in verses 24 & 25. The role of the guardian would include helping the children get to school because they could easily wander off the path. The guardian would correct the child if he or she got off the path. The law tells us when we drift from the path. The facts are we always drift and wander. Like the song says, "prone to wander, Lord, I feel it." The law never gave us anything to be able to stay on the path, it only told us when we wandered. This reminds us that we are hopeless without Christ's forgiveness and presence in our lives. Secondly, verse 3 has always challenged me. "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?" By chapter 5, Paul will give the Galatians plenty of teaching on the Holy Spirit like, (NIV) "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." (5:16) The Spirit-filled life is a life empowered by Christ. He enables us to live a fruitful life as well as helps us say "no" to sin. I would suggest memorizing verse 3. The Spirit comes into our lives by faith and fills our lives by faith. A life of faith in Christ is essential to a spiritually successful life. How do you sense God speaking to you through this chapter?

### DAY 4 – Galatians 4

I hope you are benefitting from this Book. I need the reminder of the Gospel of grace from time to time. This is a foundational book and has been confirmed as the first letter that Paul wrote. This highlights what might be most on the mind of Paul. The Gospel must be proclaimed and protected or the very gate of our faith is in jeopardy. As I read this chapter, I am drawn to two words that both begin with "A." I wonder if you can guess what they are? Well, if you read on, I will tell you, of course. The word "adopt" is very special and also the meaning of a relationship that affirms addressing God as "Abba Father." Jesus came at just the right time to make adoption possible. "God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law" and in bondage to sin. (Verse 5) Verse 6 points to adoption which makes us heirs

with access to all that God offers his children. By faith, we are no longer slaves but sons (& daughters) because we are God's own children! Plus, we have the kind of relationship with the Almighty God that we can address him with the word "Abba" which is an endearing address of closeness and personal connection. I often pray using the name, "Abba," which reminds me of the privileged position I have received by grace from God. Romans 8:15-17 has similar language because the Book of Romans is Paul's theological script on the Christian faith. You can anticipate reading through Romans sometime in February. The analogy between Hagar and Sarah is also very profound about slavery and freedom. Paul ends the chapter with a simple summary, "Dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman; we are children of the free woman." (Verse 31) Or, we are children of the promise which connects us to God's promise to Abraham and all his descendants. (Genesis 12:1-3) I think verse 5 is a great verse to memorize. What have you learned about your life in Christ from this chapter? What does it mean to you to be adopted by the living God through faith in Christ?

#### DAY 5 – Galatians 5

This chapter is the fullest, in my opinion. There are so many memorable verses that have dynamically shaped my thinking. I like verses 1, 6, 13, 16, 22, 23, & 25. Do you see what I mean? Remember this is Paul's first letter and he introduces life in the Spirit; that is, Christ's Spirit living in us by faith. This is of first importance to him. And life in the Spirit is referred to as a life of freedom. "For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 COR 3:17) He also introduces the Spirit-led life compared to the life influenced by the flesh. Without Christ, we are people of the flesh, pulled by the power of sin. But the truth of verse 16 is so encouraging pointing to the possibility of walking in step with the Spirit and living in victory over the flesh. "The Spirit gives us desires that are opposite of what the sinful nature desires." (Verse 17) Don't you love the list of characteristics that the Spirit produces? Verses 22 & 23 are referred to as the Fruit of the Spirit. These are so positive and attractive that I have done a sermon series on them and enjoyed Bible Studies that took one characteristic at a time and looked up many references in the Bible that affirm these spiritual qualities. I would suggest you memorize these two verses for contemplation and transformation. May this list of spiritual fruit be birthed in us. There's one compliment that I have remembered since I was a youth pastor in 1983. It came from a 15-year-old student. He said, during a discussion on the fruit of the Spirit, "Pastor Barry, I think you have all of these!" Isn't that so encouraging!? But the truth is, these qualities are intended to be seen in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. If they are not evident, then we are ignoring the Spirit's leading and quenching his influence in our lives. (1 Thess. 5:19 & Eph. 4:30) On the other hand, Paul told Timothy to fan into flame the spiritual gifts given through the Spirit who is full of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:6-7) The Spirit-led life is intended to be the normal Christian life instead of something rare and seldom noticed. This is my favorite chapter in Galatians and I am sure there is much to chew on. How is God speaking to you through it?

#### DAY 6 – Galatians 6

We are wrapping up Galatians in just one week of readings. The first 10 verses are seemingly the most significant and connect with Paul's message about the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit leads to helping our fellow believers with discernment and support, you know, good works. It is rewarding to serve God and others. Verse 9 is the exhortation that we need when life seems like things are getting worse in our

world: "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessings if we don't give up." Then, the next verse emphasizes the importance of supporting our fellow believers especially when they are drifting off track (Verse 1). I think this all pertains to verse 8 and sowing by the Spirit. This has to do with pleasing the Spirit and trusting that God will bring a harvest of blessings now and forever. These are powerful and practical verses; how do they speak to you? The remaining 8 verses are an appropriate summary of this Book. I have memorized verse 15 in the NIV: "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation." It is simple and profound. The Galatians had confused the point of the Good News, that a new creation has come in Christ by the Spirit, not by human effort. We are the new people of God. As Peter wrote so powerfully in 1 Peter 2:9-10, "You are a chosen people; you are royal priests, a holy nation. God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." These words match what Galatians means to me. I find the Gospel of grace such a marvelous truth and so liberating for me as a genuine believer. How do you respond to these words? What does the new creation mean to you?