

A Practical Study of

GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

"Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free"

Study #5 – Galatians 3:1-14

UNTIL: You Said, "I Do It Myself"

Key verse: Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit now are you being brought to maturity in the flesh?

TEXT:

v. 1 O foolish Galatians who fascinated (bewitched) you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was portrayed having been crucified.

v. 2 This only I am desiring to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the message of faith?

v. 3 Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit now are you being brought to maturity in the flesh?

v. 4 So many things did you suffer in vain? If indeed it be in vain.

v. 5 Therefore the one supplying the Spirit to you and working miracles among you (Is He doing it) by the works of the law or by the message of faith?

v. 6 Even as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness.

v. 7 You are knowing therefore that those who are of faith these are sons of Abraham.

v. 8 Now the scripture, having foreseen that on faith God is justifying the Gentiles announced beforehand to Abraham all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.

v. 9 So that those who are believing ones (of faith) are being blessed with believing Abraham.

v. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written “Cursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

v. 11 But that in the law no one is being made righteous before (in the sight of) God is clear (evident) because the righteous (man) shall live by faith.

v. 12 Now the law is not of faith but the one who has done them shall live in them.

v. 13 Christ delivered us by the payment of a ransom from the curse of the law. Having become a curse in behalf of us because it is written cursed is everyone who is suspended upon a tree.

v. 14 In order that to the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham might come in Jesus Christ, in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

INTRODUCTION:

(Cowgirl Poetry: One Hundred Years of Ridin' and Rhymin' edited by Virginia Bennett) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Virginia Bennett, 2001.

**THE
HIRED MAN'S WIFE**

*Jody Strand
Baker, Montana – 1989*

With the job, your housing's furnished,
but your house is not your own,
And every time you have to move,
you grumble and you groan.
'Cause you just got to know the neighbors,
and your bedroom curtains came.
Your seeds just came up in the garden,
and now the preacher can call you by name.

You finally got the house fixed up,
the leaky faucets and busted screens.
You've shampooed the rugs and washed the walls
and scrubbed and shined and cleaned.
You trimmed the trees and mowed the yard
and you've got some flowers growin'.
But now that you've made this place your home,
you'll be leavin' soon, you're knowin'.

'Cause when you get all settled in
and start plannin' for next year,
You know that he'll sit down one day
and say, "You better start packin', dear.
I heard about this better job
where we can run cows of our own.
The pay is good and the housing's furnished.
So, pack up, and let's get going'!"

You take down all your pictures,
pack your dishes and your clothes,
Walk through your half-grown garden,
wipe your tears and blow your nose.

He's trying to make life better,
 trying hard to get ahead,
 And he will never understand
 the lonely tears you shed.

'Cause the housing that was furnished
 was like unmolded clay.
 You worked and shaped it into your home
 and forgot you couldn't stay.
 Now, it's time for you to move again,
 and reluctantly, you'll go.
 But part of you will stay behind
 to watch your garden grow.

"How can you start over again and again?"
 some other women ask.
 We simply smile because we know
 we're equal to the task.
 You see, ranch hands' wives have a special gift
 for accepting what we've been handed.
 And to live the cowboy life we love,
 we'll grow anywhere we're planted.

pp. 142-3

(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon) New York, NY: Viking / Penguin Group.
 Copyright – Jan Karon, 2005.

For our Country

Almighty God, who has given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise, among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(American Soldier by General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell) New York, NY: Regan Books. Copyright – Tommy Franks, 2004.

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO PASS THROUGH TAMPA BEFORE HEADING BACK to CENTCOM Forward in Qatar. But I did speak to Cathy, Jacqy, and the grandkids on the phone.

"I'll talk to you in a day or so, dear," I told Cathy as the Pentagon sedan rolled up to Spar 06 on the ramp at Andrews.

My fingers went to the wedding ring Cathy had given me so long ago, and I felt a tear cross my face. I pulled a small Bible and a wrinkled American flag from my uniform pocket. The flag was one Jacqy had given me as I'd deployed to Desert Shield in 1990. After that war I'd returned it to her as a souvenir; now she'd sent it to me again for luck. And the Bible was a gift from Cathy's grandfather, Jimmie Ellis, whom I had loved as the grandparent I'd never had, until his death in 1994.

I opened the Bible to my favorite scripture, Ephesians 6:11-17. "Put on the whole armor of God . . . stand your ground . . . putting on the sturdy belt of truth . . . and the breastplate of God's righteousness . . . use faith as your shield . . . and take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." How many times had I turned to this page? And how many more times, in the days ahead, would I call on my faith as a source of strength?
p. 430

God on Trial

It is not uncommon for people to shake their fists at God in the midst of tragedy and suffering. The Bible includes the stories of righteous men who questioned God for what they considered poor management of creation.

But Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers has taken his complaints to court. In October 2007, Sen. Chambers sued God for “causing untold death and horror” in the form of “fearsome floods . . . horrendous hurricanes, [and] terrifying tornadoes.” Furthermore, says the senator, God has wrought “widespread death [and] destruction” and terrorized “millions upon millions of the Earth’s inhabitants.”

Chambers filed the suit to make a statement about the American court system. Outraged by a recent lawsuit he considered frivolous, the senator intends to demonstrate that “anybody can file a lawsuit against anybody.” His motion against God, then, is tongue in cheek; Chambers, who has a history of antagonism against Christians, has no vested interest in his suit against the Almighty.

Nevertheless, the case raises important questions about God’s activity in this broken world. Is God to blame for poverty, warfare, and natural disaster? Chambers seems to think so. To him the facts are clear: there is suffering everywhere, and God is everywhere. Therefore, God must cause suffering. But God’s not the only being who is everywhere. So are sinful human beings.

Brandon O’Brien, assistant editor, PreachingToday.com; source: “Neb. state senator sues God in protest” (Associated Press) USA Today (10-08-07)

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(PreachingToday.com)

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)
 Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

I was traveling on obscure back roads in a part of the country I had never been to before. When I obtained a rental car, the man at the counter said to me, "Along with this car, if you want, you can also get a little box, a guidance system." Have you ever seen one of these? You plug it in and punch in your destination, and a voice will tell you how to get to wherever it is that you are going.

"Do you want to add this to the car?" he asked.

My immediate response was, "No. I'm not going to pay for that. I can find where I'm going without that."

But when I went out to the parking lot, I could not find my car. I could not remember what stall it was in. I had to go back to the counter and tell the man I had gotten lost before I found my car.

I decided to get the box.

There was a voice coming out of the box. You don't even have to look at a screen or follow a map. Someone talks to you. It is a British voice, because people who talk with a British accent always sound smarter. You're just inclined to do what they say. And it was a woman's voice, because . . . same thing.

You can get the box. You can have the lady's voice in the car, but that doesn't mean you trust her. If you trust her, what do you do? You do what she says. You go where she tells you to go. If she says, "Turn left," you turn left. If she says, "Turn left," and your heart you think, *Oh, but I want to turn right*, you remember that verse, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

To live in the flow of the Spirit means doing what Jesus says. I will mess up a lot. I am going to need his power. I know that, but I form the intention. I say to him, "God, with your help, as best I can, I will do what you say. I will give you my life, my time, my obedience." If that is not my settled intent, then it is best to be honest about it.

pp. 44-45

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

There is something else you need to know. At one point when I was driving in the unfamiliar territory, I was quite sure the lady in the guidance system was wrong. She said to go left, and I didn't go left. I went right because I knew she was wrong. Then, in a fascinating response, she said, "Recalculating route. When safe to do so, execute a U-turn." I knew she still was wrong . . . so I unplugged her. That is the beauty of that little box—you can unplug her.

And—would you believe it?—I got lost as a goose, which my wife enjoyed immensely. So we plugged that lady back in, and you know what she said?

"I told you so, you little idiot. You think I'm going to help you now? You rejected me. There is no way. You just find your way home by yourself."

No, of course she didn't say those things. She said, "Recalculating route. When safe to do so, execute a U-turn."

That is grace.

God will say to you, "Here is the way home. Execute a U-turn." As soon as you are ready to listen, as soon as you are ready to surrender, that is repentance.

He will say, "I will bring you home." That is grace.

Jesus is the only one with authoritative wisdom about how to live. He is the only one to bring about the possibility of forgiveness for your sin and mine. He is the only one to give any kind of realistic hope of conquering death. To all who approach him, he is the thirst-quencher, the life-giver, the Spirit-bringer. No matter how wrongly you have erred in the past, if you are sincerely ready to listen to and obey God, *you do not have to worry about God being mad at you.*

He is not that kind of God.

pp. 45-46

(Right with God: Loving Instruction from the Father's Heart by Ron Mehl)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ronald D. Mehl, 2003.

My friend Larry told me about one of the first bike rides he attempted with his young son, Matthew. Going down a hill near their home, little Matt lost control. When he crashed, Matt went over the handlebars, landed on his head, and scooted along the asphalt for several feet . . . on the top of his helmet.

When Matt got up, Larry looked at the helmet and saw that its top—and not the top of his son's head!—had been badly scraped and scored by the rough asphalt. How do you think Larry felt about that helmet? He loved that helmet. He kissed it. He valued and honored that helmet, and used it as an object lesson for his boy.

A person who resists, scorns, and rejects God's Word will meet with destruction. I wish I could say it in a nicer way, but as a pastor, I see it all the time. People say, "I don't need God, and I don't need His Word. I don't care about His requirements. I don't care to hear His warnings. I'll do what I want." That person's life will come to disaster in one way or another, and God's Word is not shy about saying so.
pp. 88-89

(American Soldier by General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell) New York, NY: Regan Books. Copyright – Tommy Franks, 2004.

"To Cathy Franks," I said, seeking out her eyes in the audience. "Today is the day I make myself an honest man, having told my wife thirty-four years ago that I was going to leave the United States Army. . . .

"Cathy, thanks for your love, your support. And as Secretary Rumsfeld said, thanks for your service to this nation. Man has no greater treasure than family. You're the best. And I'm a lucky guy.

"Today is a very stressful time for me," I said, warming to the moment. "When I woke up this morning, I had a Boeing business jet, several aides, several sedans, and now I'm worrying about how in the hell I'm going to get home."
p. 535

(American Soldier by General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell) New York, NY: Regan Books. Copyright – Tommy Franks, 2004.

As we walked toward the exit, Don Rumsfeld gave me an envelope containing a handwritten note from President George W. Bush:

Dear Tommy,
 Congratulations on your retirement from the U.S. Army. You served our nation with distinction and class.
 Our nation has been tested over the past two years. We were attacked by ruthless killers who thought we would cower. They were wrong. We had a man named Franks in charge.
 Tommy, you led our troops in two major battles in the war on Terror. We prevailed in Afghanistan and Iraq because you commanded brave troops with sound strategy. Our nation is grateful for your service. It has been my privilege to serve with you. You are a good man. My best to Cathy.

Sincerely,
 George Bush

. . . *a good man* . . . and for thirty-eight years a proud American soldier.
 p. 536

(Hope Has Its Reasons: From the Search for Self to the Surprise of Faith by Rebecca Manley Pippert) San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers. Copyright - Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1989.

I have one friend who comes across as so spiritual he never seems to have a bad day. He sprinkles every sentence with pious words, whether they fit the occasion or not. Just seeing him gives me a spiritual inferiority complex and a headache. One time he came striding in triumphantly and said, "Hello, Becky. Praise God! How are you? The Lord is good! My car was totalled. Thank you, Jesus!"

"Yes, yes," I said rather routinely, "Everything is fine . . . What did you just say?"

"God is good," he replied.

"I got that part. But what about your car?"

"It was totalled last night. Praise the Lord!" he answered with a glow.

I was shocked. "But that's terrible!" I exclaimed.

"Not when you know the Lord!" he retorted. And off he went on an apparent celestial cloud.

Meanwhile, he left me to ponder some rather earthly questions. Is that the kind of behavior we are to emulate if we trust in God, or is it too holy by half? Does faith mean we can't acknowledge fear, doubt, anger, or frustration? Does loving God mean that we so live in the world of the Spirit that we are oblivious to daily problems and rise above the less spiritual types who struggle with such mundane things as totalled cars?

pp. 10-11

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

Sixth, I have learned to recognize what it means to be human. I'm so tired of hearing about the victorious Christian life that I think I will die. Do you know what the victorious Christian life is? It is keeping your nose above water. It is keeping on trucking for another day. It is being faithful—just barely. It is keeping from messing it up too terribly. We have this idea of what a real Christian ought to be, say, and think, and then we try to live up to that idea and force everyone else to live up to it too.

A number of years ago I was speaking at a religious emphasis week at a Christian college. Shortly before I went to speak at the college, a woman I had known for a number of years died. She had been one of Christ's most faithful servants. Her witness had literally touched thousands of people in some exciting and positive ways.

Her daughter was a student at the college and one evening after the meeting I noticed her standing in line waiting to speak to me. I was interested in what she was going to say. When she got up to me, she said, "Mr. Brown, I'm Sara Clark (not her name)."

"Sara," I said, "I knew your mother, and I loved her. She was an inspiration to so many of us. I know this must be a difficult time for you."

"Not at all," she said smiling. "I know where my mother is. She is in heaven, and her funeral was a witness to how our family is praising God. We saw a number of people come to know Christ at the funeral. Don't waste any pity on me. I'm a Christian."

With uncharacteristic bluntness (well, maybe a little characteristic), I said, "Sara, don't give me that kind of balderdash. If your mother's dead and you're happy about that, you're not playing with a full deck."

Do you know what happened? She fell apart. The tears flowed for the first time in weeks. Sara and I spent a lot of time together that week talking about her mother, how she loved her, and how much she missed her. Most of the time I just let her talk and cry and be angry. She had found someone who allowed her not to be "Christian" for a change, someone who didn't reject her honest feelings.

Sara is doing fine now. She still misses her mother. She knows that her mother is with Christ, and Sara has a much stronger witness to her friends now because it is honest and free.

The point? Sara had been given a set of standards that as a Christian she felt she must maintain. One of those standards was that Christians praise God all the time and never deal with tragedy honestly lest they hurt their witness for Christ.

By allowing people to be human, we give them permission to be free.
pp. 216-17

We often hear on the radio **FRANK SINATRA** belting out the song that made him famous:

“I DID IT MY WAY.”

Scripturally, we see the consequences of this kind of mentality in the life and biography of **JACOB**. He starts out by buying the birthright away from Esau and then stealing his blessing as well.

It is only after an all-night wrestling match at **PENIEL**, some 20 years later, that Jacob begins to learn a little bit about doing it **HIS WAY** instead of **MY WAY**.

In that final scene as Jacob is worshiping the Lord, leaning on the top of his staff, I can hear him singing, “I did it His way.” And really, that is why he is so blessed and fulfilled at the end of his life.

Thus far in our study, we have noted together under our theme: **YOU WERE RUNNING WELL:**

1. You Were Running Well UNTIL: No Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error (Galatians 1:1-9)—**TROUBLED MINDS AND TWISTED GOSPEL**
2. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Forgot What God Was Doing in Your Life (Galatians 1:10-24)—**TESTIMONY**
3. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Divine Direction Was Not Discerned (Galatians 2:1-10)—**GOD’S WILL (PROVERBS 3:5-6)**
4. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (Galatians 2:11-21)—**DANIEL 1:8**

We now come to this **FIFTH CONSIDERATION:**

5. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself.

There is a strong delusion among believers that is so prevalent, and that is the feeling that:

FRUIT IN MY CHRISTIAN LIFE IS BY MY OWN EFFORTS or

FRUIT IS BY THE FLESH.

It is the thought that if we perform certain things, we will become spiritual.

It is **LIVING BY THE LAW** that **PROGRESS COMES BY PERFORMANCE.**

John 12:24-25 (NASB)

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.

Paul, in his argument of the book in the first **TWO CHAPTERS**, has defended his:

APOSTLESHIP,

MESSAGE,

MOTIVATION, and

MISSION to the Galatians

We now come to the **DOCTRINAL SECTION** where he will teach us of the foolishness of feeling that we can gain merit in God's sight and that our relationship to Him is all of grace and not of law.

Richard C. Halverson points out:

When Paul says, “by grace you are saved,” he is not referring just to a fraction of salvation—two thirds, for example—as though justification and glorification, but not sanctification, depended upon grace. He is referring to the total work of God in the Christian: the past, the continuing present, and the future; the beginning, the end, and all in between. Grace is as necessary for the continuity of the Christian life as it is for its conception and consummation.

One has little difficulty in apprehending the fact that the new birth is a work of grace. There is nothing one can do to be born anew. “The wind blows where it desires to blow and you hear the sound of it, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). The mystery of spiritual birth, it is relatively easy to me, must be a work of grace.

Furthermore, there is a little difficulty in understanding the resurrection of the body to be a work of grace. It is quite obvious that man can do nothing to expedite this event. But when it comes to the interlude between regeneration and resurrection the inclination is to think of it as man on his own, or at least man doing his best with token help from God. It is at this point that the Christian is constantly in danger of developing a doctrine of works that will defeat the very thing he is desiring in his life. (source unknown)

It is as if:

REDEMPTION is 2/3 the **WORK OF GOD** and

the remaining 1/3, the **LIVING THE LIFE PHASE**, is the **WORK OF MAN**.

This **DIVISION OF LABOR**, so to speak, is diabolical and destructive of grace. It has prompted Paul’s strongest language in these verses that are before us.

In summary, we must understand theologically that:

SALVATION,

SANCTIFICATION, and

GLORIFICATION are all an act of grace on God's part.

That the:

CONCEPTION,

CONTINUITY, and

CONSUMMATION of life is indeed of grace.

That time between regeneration and resurrection is a critical time to understand that we are victorious not by the works of the law but by **OUR FAITH IN THE ADEQUACY OF JESUS CHRIST TO LIVE OUT HIS LIFE IN US.**

It is **NOT**:

2/3 a work of God and

1/3 our living the life.

You can say a lot of things but do not touch the grace of God.

Anders says:

“The [role] of the law is to show us the disease in such a way that it shows us no hope of cure; whereas the [role] of the gospel is to bring a remedy to those who are past hope.”

John Calvin

p. 34

Anders says:

IN A NUTSHELL

In chapter 3, Paul gives six points to show the Galatians the superiority of grace over law. (1) By grace, salvation and the Holy Spirit are given. (2) Abraham, the father of our people, was saved by grace. (3) Grace gives redemption and salvation; the law brings condemnation. (4) Abraham was saved by grace hundreds of years before the law was given. (5) The law's purpose is to act as a guide that leads us to Christ. (6) By grace a love relationship with God and one another is obtained.

p. 34

Barclay says:

HERE Paul uses still another argument to show that it is trust in God and not works of the law which puts a man right with God.

p. 25

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The apostle has been defending the Gospel of grace from the very beginning of this letter, but until now he has done so from the viewpoint of his own experience and calling. These had been challenged. So he has been insisting that God rather than another human being called him and gave him his message. In speaking of his own experiences, however, Paul had gradually worked around to talking about the Gospel itself, and this has brought him to the place where he is now set for a theological—or, better, a scriptural—defense of the Gospel. So he returns to the Galatians themselves and to the point at which the doctrine of justification through faith bore down upon their own experience.
p. 720

Bartlett says:

WITH THIS CHAPTER we come to the distinctly doctrinal portion of Galatians, which comprises chapters 3 and 4.
p. 54

Baxter says:

We turn on to chapters iii. and iv. What is the real point of the theological argument here? Well, to begin with, we cannot but observe that Paul's attitude throughout is that of sheer surprise. He speaks as though it is almost incredible to him that anyone should turn back from the glorious liberty and superiority of the Gospel to the bondage and beggarliness of legalism. His first words are: "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you?"—as though he could only attribute it to some strange hypnotic spell. He picks up that word "foolish" again in verse 3: "Are ye so foolish?—having begun in the Spirit, do ye now attempt perfection through the flesh?"
p. 146

Baxter says:

All through these two chapters Paul is showing the *superiority* of the Gospel over Judaism; of “the Spirit” over “the flesh” (iii. 3); of “faith” over “works” (iii. 2); of being “justified” over being held by law (verses 8, 11); of being “blessed” over being “cursed” (verses 9, 10); of the “promise” in Abraham over the command through Moses (verses 12-14) . . .

p. 146

Bickel & Jantz say:

What’s Ahead

- Foolish Galatians (3:1-5)
- True Descendants of Abraham (3:6-9)
- The Road Less Traveled (3:10-14)

p. 65

Bickel & Jantz say:

From time to time you’ll hear about someone you thought was pretty intelligent doing something really stupid. It could be a friend or a co-worker, but more often than not it’s a celebrity. Maybe it’s because they’re in the limelight more than the rest of us mere mortals, but celebrities seem to fall prey to this “smart people doing dumb things” syndrome. At least you think they’re smart, because they make all kinds of money and people adore them. But then they do something so ridiculously stupid that you literally yell at the television screen, “Have you lost your mind? What were you thinking?”

As far as Paul is concerned, the Galatians are like that.

p. 65

De Haan says:

If there was any one single thing which Paul was dead set against, it was against being put back under the law from which he had been delivered by the grace of God. For many years Paul had lived under the law of Moses, and had done his very utmost extended best to keep that law in all sincerity, so that he could say, "as touching the law, blameless." And yet at the end of all those years of struggling to keep the law he found himself a poor lost sinner standing in the need of the mercy and the grace of God. Paul knew the utter futility of trying to please God by his own works, and therefore was ready to fight to the finish those who would bring him back under the bondage of the law.

p. 79

Dunnam says:

It is not by works of the law, but by hearing with faith that we become the recipients of God's grace. The message is clear.

p. 51

Eadie says:

THE apostle has now finished his self-vindication. He has maintained his apostleship to be divine in origin and in fulness of prerogative; and the discussion at Antioch proved his equality with Peter, nay, it evinced his superiority as compared with the momentary relapse and dissimulation of the apostle of the circumcision. His rebuke of Peter does not rest simply on logical argument, but it has its source and power in the living depths of his own spiritual experience. The address as here presented concludes the first portion of the discussion, and is so moulded in its parting words that it naturally introduces us into the second division of the epistle.

p. 214

Gutzke says:

Salvation is the work of God. It is not by the effort of man. It takes place in man and it affects man's conduct and activities, but it doesn't start from man. This is the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To understand the gospel, one must realize that man in himself cannot do the will of God. Man is a sinner condemned as unrighteous and is counted as unfit.
p. 49

Gutzke says:

In Galatia, however, the other preachers were saying, "You began your Christian life by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that was good. Then you received the Holy Spirit of God and you were blessed in Him, and that was good. But now there are things you must do." They outlined regulations. If the believer would keep all these regulations he would be good; then he would be doing what God wanted him to do. This is what bothered Paul because it is not true.
pp. 50-51

Harrison says:

Here is another striking, strongly contrasted antithesis; and it is most intimately linked with the one just considered. Law demands works; grace requires faith.

As law leaves us helplessly on Our Side, impotent to transfer us to His Side, it is evident that all works required by law are equally impotent. As grace alone has positioned us on His Side, so faith lays hold of all the riches that are ours by His saving and sustaining grace.
p. 50

Hendriksen says:

1. The apostle, having proved that the gospel as proclaimed by himself—that is, the good tidings of justification by faith apart from law-works—is of divine origin and is therefore able to maintain itself everywhere and at all times, now proceeds to show that both *Scripture* and *experience* bear testimony to its truth. He turns to *experience* first of all, that is, to that which the Galatians themselves had begun to experience when they, by sovereign grace, had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
p. 111

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

REPROOF OF THE GALATIANS FOR ABANDONING FAITH FOR LEGALISM.
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH VINDICATED: THE LAW SHOWN TO BE SUBSEQUENT TO THE PROMISE: BELIEVERS ARE THE SPIRITUAL SEED OF ABRAHAM, WHO WAS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH. THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US TO CHRIST, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH.
p. 1264

Lenski says:

The Gospel of Christian Liberty Unfolded Anew for the Galatians, 3:1-5:12

Paul has brought the Galatians the true gospel which was given to him by revelation, acknowledged by the Jerusalem conference, attested in correcting Peter himself. This precious gospel Paul now unfolds anew for the Galatians in such a way as to destroy the Judaistic error that was creeping in among them. The body of this letter consists of doctrinal exposition which is shot through with dramatic application to the Galatians.
p. 121

Lucado says:

With urgency and intensity, the apostle Paul admonishes the believers in Galatia to remember the fundamental truth of Christianity: Just as we came to Christ by faith alone, so now we also walk with him by faith alone. Religious works, no matter how great, do not merit greater approval from God.
p. 32

MacArthur says:

Defection and desertion are contemptible because they involve disloyalty and betrayal. Few things are more tragic or disappointing than a Christian who deserts the purity of the gospel for a false form of Christianity that presumes to improve on the finished work of Christ. Yet that is what many believers in the Galatian churches had done or were in danger of doing because of the Judaizers.
p. 61

MacArthur says:

Paul had been used by the Lord to introduce the gospel of sovereign grace to the Galatians, first to bring them the truth that salvation is received by faith in Christ's atoning work on the cross plus nothing else. Now they were drifting away from the way of pure grace and had accepted an inferior and impotent substitute based on the old Mosaic rituals and ceremonial standards that the New Covenant in Christ had made invalid—and that, even under the Old Covenant, had no power to save. The defecting believers had not lost their salvation, but they had lost the joy and freedom of it and had returned, deceived, to the uncertainty and bondage of a self-imposed legalism. They were still in Christ and right with God positionally, but they were not practically living in conformity to the truth by which they had been made righteous. They substituted a form of religion that had no power or joy for the fullness of life in Christ they once enjoyed.
p. 62

Machen says:

Now we turn to the second main division, embracing the central portion of the Epistle from Gal. 3:1 to Gal. 5:12, in which Paul defends the *content* of his gospel of free grace as over against the Judaizers' contention that faith, in the attainment of salvation, must be supplemented by works.
p. 162

McGee says:

EXPERIENCE OF THE GALATIANS

Paul now goes back to the experience of the Galatians. How were they saved? Were they saved by law or were they saved by faith in Jesus Christ? I personally believe in experience. I had a Methodist background as a boy. I went down to a penitent altar underneath a brush arbor in back of an unpainted Methodist church in southern Oklahoma. I was just a little fellow and I knelt there with an open heart. I believe in experience and when we come to chapter 4, we will deal further with the subject of experience.
p. 164

Parker says:

In chapter iii. the Apostle is still argumentatively upon a historical basis. The Apostle shows here the solidarity of history. Paul never broke history into little morsels that had no relation to one another. History in the hands of Paul, and in the hands of every philosopher, is not a sack of peas, which will run away from one another the moment you cut the sack: history was unity, continuity, development,—touch it at any point and every other point throbbed with sympathy. It is because we forget that we belong to the creation of God, that we make little men of ourselves, and subject ourselves to all the passing winds that care to make sport of our so-called convictions and our miscalled hopes and dreams of greatness.
p. 440

Ridderbos says:

Now the apostle arrives at the point of defending the gospel in the general sense of the word and of fully unfolding his thoughts. His argument is full of power and is dynamically charged. It does not follow a carefully plotted scheme of treatment. The forward movement of the thought takes a natural course, and, despite its profundity, the argument is easy to follow.
p. 109

Vos says:

Having defended his apostleship and the authority of his message, Paul now goes on to vindicate the truth of his message. In chapters 3 and 4 he asserts this truth by successive appeals to experience, to Scripture and to reason.
p. 51

Wiersbe says:

“Whitefield and Wesley might preach the gospel better than I do, but they cannot preach a better gospel.”

Charles Spurgeon

GALATIANS 3

Examination (1-14). It does us good to examine ourselves to make sure our spiritual experience is valid (2 Cor. 13:5). Do you have the Spirit living within? (See Rom. 8:9.) If you began in the Spirit (which is the only way to begin), are you trying to continue in the power of the flesh? Like Abraham, were you saved by faith; and are you now, like Abraham, walking by faith?
p. 768

Wiersbe says:

**BEWITCHED AND
BOTHERED**
(Galatians 3:1-14)

p. 67

Wiersbe says:

The sixty verses that make up Galatians 3 and 4 are some of the strongest writing that Paul ever penned. But after all, he was in a battle! He was out to prove that salvation is by grace alone, and not by the works of the law. His opponents had used every possible means to try to capture the churches of Galatia, and Paul was not going to fight them halfheartedly. The apostle was no amateur when it came to debate, and in these two chapters he certainly proves his abilities. His logic is unassailable.

p. 67

Wiersbe says:

Paul used six different arguments to prove that God saves sinners through faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. He began with the *personal argument* (Gal. 3:1-5), in which he asked the Galatians to recall their personal experience with Christ when they were saved. Then he moved into the *scriptural argument* (vv. 6-14), in which he quoted six Old Testament passages to prove his point.

p. 67

Wuest says:

Paul defends his doctrine of justification by faith alone without works, against that of the Judaizers who taught that the works of an individual gave him acceptance with God (Ch. 3 and 4).

p. 83

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles chapters 3 & 4 and then says:

Doctrinal: A Defense of Justification by Faith (chaps. 3-4).

In the first two chapters of the epistle Paul established the divine origin of his apostleship and his message. Then he turned to the Galatians who were being urged to add works to faith, to keep the Mosaic Law in addition to placing faith in Christ as the grounds of acceptance before God. The Galatian Christians would receive, the Judaizers thought, a more complete salvation and a greater sanctification if they would obey the Law. But, Paul argued, to supplement the work of Christ is to supplant it. There can only be one way of salvation, and that is by faith in Christ alone.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary then titles chapter 3:

Vindication of the doctrine (chap. 3).

We are now ready to launch into:

**Study #5: You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself
(Galatians 3:1-14)**

v. 1 O foolish Galatians who fascinated (bewitched) you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was portrayed having been crucified.

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you? Before your eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified!

Peterson titles this section and then paraphrases verse 1:

Trust in Christ, Not the Law

You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a hex on you? Have you taken leave of your senses? Something crazy has happened, for it's obvious that you no longer have the crucified Jesus in clear focus in your lives. His sacrifice on the cross was certainly set before you clearly enough.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles chapter 3 and then says:

Vindication of the doctrine (chap. 3).

1. BY THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GALATIANS (3:1-5).

3:1. Paul's tone was direct and severe as he remonstrated, **You foolish Galatians!** To embrace a doctrine which declared the death of Christ unnecessary was irrational (cf. 2:21). It would almost appear they had been **bewitched**, cast under some evil spell by a malign influence. For this they were, however, without excuse because the Savior had been **clearly portrayed** (proographē; lit., "to write for public reading" as with the posting of a public announcement) **as crucified** before them. Paul had vividly and graphically proclaimed the crucified Christ to the Galatians; yet their eyes had been diverted from the Cross to the Law. They were without excuse.

In order to demonstrate convincingly that faith alone is God's method of dealing, the apostle asked four questions.

PAUL WARNS TIMOTHY in:

1 Timothy 6:9 (DAV)

But those who are desiring to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many useless and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

This is the **REASON** the passion flows from Paul's pen because he is so concerned about the **PURITY OF THE GOSPEL** of the grace of God.

There are going to be **SIX QUESTIONS** in these first five verses and the apostle begins **QUESTION #1** with the word **"WHO"**:

"WHO FASCINATED (BEWITCHED) YOU BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST WAS PORTRAYED HAVING BEEN CRUCIFIED?"

Here Paul gets sharp in the use of his language but I am sure we can see why. If Jesus Christ were set aside and His work neglected, I am sure we would get excited too.

The word **"FASCINATED (BEWITCHED)"** has the idea of the **EVIL EYE** in it. Private letters used to end:

"Above all, I pray that you may be in health, unharmed by the evil eye, and faring prosperously."

Paul's gospel contains a death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (DAV)

For I delivered to you among the first things that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 2:2 (DAV)

For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and that One having been crucified.

Paul, in his ministry to the Galatians, had been faithful in presenting to them a crucified Christ. That crucifixion would have been meaningless if salvation could be obtained by the law.

So in verse 1 we have Paul's **QUESTION** that begins with **"WHO":**

"WHO FASCINATED (BEWITCHED) YOU BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST WAS PORTRAYED HAVING BEEN CRUCIFIED?"

"Who is it that has fascinated you and has influenced you away from the crucified Christ?"

Anders says:

3:1 Paul is direct and stern as he calls the Galatians **foolish**. They had fallen under the bewitching, deceptive spell of the Judaizers. They accepted a message that implied the death of Christ was insufficient. Paul had been so clear in presenting the gospel that he could say: **Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified**. They were now rejecting what they had seen, through Paul's preaching, with their own mind's eyes.

pp. 35-36

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

This is the first time since 1:11 that Paul addresses the Galatians. Now it is by the impersonal term "Galatians" rather than by the word "brothers," and it sets a sober tone for the formal argument to follow.

p. 720

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul cites three things that are inexplicable in regard to the Galatians' conduct. (1) Their conduct is irrational or "foolish" (GK 485), a word that suggests the actions of one who can think but fails to use those power of perception (cf. Lk 24:25; Ro 1:14; 1 Ti 6:9; Tit 3:3). This term was suggested to Paul by the trend of his thought at the end of the previous chapter—namely, that a doctrine of salvation by works foolishly denies the necessity for grace and declares the death of Jesus Christ unnecessary. A doctrine leading to such a conclusion is irrational. Yet this is what the Galatians were on the verge of embracing. How can such nonsense be explained? Paul suggests facetiously that perhaps they have been placed under a spell by some magician.
p. 720

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul cannot understand what is happening because the true Gospel had been so clearly preached to them. Undoubtedly, he is referring to his own preaching, arguing that the Gospel had been made as clear by him as if he had posted it on a public bulletin board. The heart of the Gospel that Paul preached is—and always must be—"Christ crucified" (cf. 1Co 2:2).
p. 720

Bartlett says:

In these first five verses of the third chapter, the apostle points out to his readers the folly of turning their backs upon the gospel of grace, the truth of which had been so abundantly confirmed in their Christian experience.
p. 54

Bartlett says:

Put no trust in anyone who seeks to lure you away from a simple reliance upon your all-sufficient Saviour. It cannot be insisted upon too strongly that subjection to works is rejection of grace. Self-righteousness is spiritually fatal. He who turns his back upon Christ as his one and only Mediator with God loses everything.

p. 55

Bartlett says:

In the words, “evidently set forth,” Paul reminds his readers that the message of the cross was set forth in their midst so vividly and clearly that those who reject its saving truth are left without excuse. Never let it be forgotten that it was through His death on Calvary that Jesus has become our living Lord.

p. 55

Calvin says:

O foolish Galatians. An expostulation is here interwoven—I should rather say, inserted—amidst his doctrinal statements. Some will wonder that he did not delay it to the close of the Epistle, but the very serious nature of the errors which he has brought forward unquestionably roused him to a burst of passion. When we hear that the Son of God, with all his benefits, is rejected, that his death is esteemed as nothing, what pious mind would not break out into indignation?

p. 78

Calvin says:

He therefore declares that those who allowed themselves to be involved in so heinous a crime must have been . . . “disordered in mind.” He accuses them not only of having suffered themselves to be deceived, but of having been carried away by some sort of magical enchantment, which is a still more serious charge.

p. 78

Calvin says:

Let those who would discharge aright the ministry of the gospel learn, not merely to speak and declaim, but to penetrate into the conscience of men, to make them see Christ crucified, and feel the shedding of his blood.
p. 80

Dunnam says:

To capture the burning intensity of this address, J. B. Phillips translated it, “O you dear idiots of Galatia . . . who has been casting a spell over you?” *The New English Bible* has it, “You stupid Galatians! You must have been bewitched.” How could you miss it?—you “*before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified.*” (v. 1).
p. 52

Dunnam says:

This crucified love, Jesus Christ on the Cross, has been portrayed among the Galatians. They had known the deliverance, joy, and freedom that comes through “hearing with faith” this message of redemption. But they were deceived again, on the verge of turning again into the dead-end way of seeking salvation by their own efforts of keeping the law.
p. 53

Eadie says:

Their temperament was rather different. It was not stupidity, but fickleness; not dulness, but susceptibility so quick as to be at variance with decision and permanence. Their folly showed itself in that facility of fascination by which they had been characterized.
p. 215

Fergusson says:

8. The more clearly and powerfully that the gospel hath been preached among a people, their defection from it, and not giving obedience to it, is the more aggregated . . .

p. 45

Gaebelein says:

What the law could not do and what grace has done for the believer in Christ is now unfolded. Paul addresses them as foolish, and asks, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Who was responsible for the awful error they were following so destructive to the whole truth of the gospel? It was the witchery of Satan; as he tells them later, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you" . . .

p. 214

Gutzke says:

They had had clear preaching of the gospel. They had had a vivid preaching of the fact that Jesus Christ had died for them. Paul went on to write: "This only would I learn of you, Receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (3:2).

p. 51

Hendriksen says:

. . . the original indicates an attitude of *heart* as well as a quality of *mind*. It refers not to bluntness but to a sinful neglect to use one's mental power to the best advantage. The Galatians, in lending a listening ear to the arguments of the legalists, must be considered not necessarily dull but thoughtless, not ignorant but senseless, not stupid but foolish. And is not everyone foolish who barter the truth of God for the lie of Satan, peace for unrest, assurance for doubt, joy for fear, and freedom for bondage?

p. 111

Hendriksen says:

But Paul was probably not thinking about the sorcerer who had brought the Galatians under the baleful influence of his evil eye, but rather of the Judaizer who had cast a spell upon them *not* by means of his eyes but by means of his *words, his teaching*; specifically, by telling them that faith in Christ must be *supplemented* by Mosaic ritualism. And the Galatians, by yielding to this influence, had failed to understand that a Christ *supplemented* is a Christ *supplanted*.
p. 112

Hendriksen says:

With their very eyes, as it were, they had seen him. So clear and vivid had been the presentation of this Christ that they had formed a mental picture of him, dying for sinners and promising salvation to all who would accept him by true faith. When Paul says “before whose very eyes Jesus was openly displayed as crucified,” he is thinking not so much of the historical details of the crucifixion as of the supreme value of Christ Crucified for a world lost in sin, and of the implication that obedience to law contributes nothing to this salvation.
p. 112

Henry says:

The apostle is here dealing with those who, having embraced the faith of Christ, still continued to seek for justification by the works of the law.
p. 1840

Henry says:

He reproves them, v. 1. He asks, *Who hath bewitched you?* They did not adhere to the gospel way of justification, wherein they had been taught. It is not enough to know the truth, and to say we believe it, but we must obey it too.
p. 1840

Hogg & Vine say:

O foolish Galatians,—the meaning is, not that the Galatians were naturally stupid, senseless, but that they had not used their senses, else they would never have allowed themselves to be led into the absurd position in which they were found. The tone is certainly not that of contempt, nor is it so much that of indignation as of reproach, as in the Lord's words on the way to Emmaus, Luke 24. 25.
p. 106

Ironside says:

WE now enter upon the strictly doctrinal part of this epistle. In verse 1 of this chapter the apostle Paul uses very unusual language. What he really means is this, "How is it that you seem to have come under a sort of spell, so that you have lost your grasp of the truth and your hearts and minds have become clouded by error?" Error affects people in that way. It is quite possible for one to have been truly converted and to have begun with a clear, definite knowledge of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, and then because of failure to follow on to study the Word and to pray over it, to come under the influence of some false system, some unscriptural line of teaching. And so often when people do come under some such influence you find it almost impossible to deliver them. They seem to be under a spell.
pp. 88-89

Ironside says:

When once one has laid hold of the blessed truth that the Lord Jesus has been crucified on our behalf, that in itself ought to be the means of delivering us forever from such error as that into which these people had fallen. If Christ has actually given Himself for me it is because it was impossible for me to do one thing to save myself. Because I could not fit myself for the presence of God, because I could not cleanse my heart from sin, because no work of righteousness of mine could fit me for a place with the Lord, He had to come from heaven and give Himself for me on the cross. How then can I think of turning back to the ground of human merit as a means of securing salvation, or of maintaining me in a condition of salvation before God?
p. 90

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

bewitched—fascinated you so that you have lost your wits. THEMISTIUS says the Galatians were naturally very acute in intellect. Hence, Paul wonders they could be so misled in this case.
p. 1264

Lange says:

. . . although a new section begins here, yet, for the writer, this beginning presupposes what precedes—that is, in the first instance the proof of the full apostolicity of his preaching generally, and then particularly the just cited rebuking of Peter for conduct similar to theirs, concluding with the powerful words: “For, if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died without cause.” This very thought, so painful, that the Galatians, by their conduct, are declaring the greatest act of God’s grace, the death of Christ, to have been in vain, may have been what impelled him to the vehement exclamation . . .
p. 61

Lange says:

Severe reproofs, when they flow from a zeal for the wounded honor of God, and from love to our neighbor, and a desire to save him, are not wrong. The sharp tongue of good men is many times more wholesome than the friendly tongue and flattering words of the ungodly.
p. 64

Lenski says:

The address fits the question; “brethren” would not do so. Paul’s feeling is the same as that which is in evidence in 1:6. It is almost unbelievable that, having Christ crucified before their eyes, the Galatians should start to Judaize.
p. 122

Lenski says:

Paul calls them . . . “thoughtless” or “foolish” people who were not using their . . . mind, who were not stopping to think. The relative clause states of what they should at once have thought, namely of Christ crucified. Where were their minds?

p. 122

Lenski says:

The question is rhetorical, exclamatory, and asks for no answer. It is like our: “What has gotten into you?”

p. 123

Lightfoot says:

In the last paragraph of the foregoing chapter St Paul began by speaking of the incident at Antioch, but his thoughts have been working round gradually to the false teachers in Galatia, and have moulded his language accordingly. He is thus led to dwell on the direct antagonism to the Gospel involved in the conduct of the Judaizers, which tacitly assumes that a man may be justified by his own works. It is a practical denial of the efficacy of Christ’s death. This thought is intolerable to him, and he bursts out into the indignant remonstrance with which this chapter opens.

p. 133

Lovett says:

STUPID. His apostleship artfully defended, Paul wades into his Galatians. Have you lost your wits, he asks? Everything they have received so far is based on what Christ has done for them, not what they have done for Him. As their teacher, Paul knows how vividly he portrayed Christ **crucified**, as though they had been at Calvary. Everything they presently enjoy is based on that glorious fact—**and they know it.** Paul reckons the only reason they would trade the Gospel of grace for a gospel of dead works is because they have been hypnotized. No one in his right mind would do such a thing. To jar them from their stupor he asks: did you receive the Spirit by DOING or by BELIEVING? They were fully aware that the forgiveness of sins and sonship in Christ come via the Spirit. And they didn't do one thing to receive the Spirit other than believe the Gospel. Surely you must be under some kind of a spell, says Paul.

pp. 32-33

Luther says:

THE Apostle Paul manifests his apostolic care for the Galatians. Sometimes he entreats them, then again he reproaches them, in accordance with his own advice to Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort."

In the midst of his discourse on Christian righteousness Paul breaks off, and turns to address the Galatians. "O foolish Galatians," he cries. "I have brought you the true Gospel, and you received it with eagerness and gratitude. Now all of a sudden you drop the Gospel. What has got into you?"

p. 86

Luther says:

There is no question that Paul is disappointed. It hurts him to think that his Galatians showed so little stability. We can hear him say: "I am sorry to hear of your troubles, and disappointed in you for the disgraceful part you played."

p. 86

Luther says:

Paul calls the Galatians foolish and bewitched. In the fifth chapter he mentions sorcery among the works of the flesh, declaring that witchcraft and sorcery are real manifestations and legitimate activities of the devil. We are all exposed to the influence of the devil, because he is the prince and god of the world in which we live.

Satan is clever. He does not only bewitch men in a crude manner, but also in a more artful fashion. He bedevils the minds of men with hideous fallacies. Not only is he able to deceive the self-assured, but even those who profess the true Christian faith. There is not one among us who is not at times seduced by Satan into false beliefs.

p. 87

Luther says:

Although I am a doctor of divinity, and have preached Christ and fought His battles for a long time, I know from personal experience how difficult it is to hold fast to the truth. I cannot always shake off Satan. I cannot always apprehend Christ as the Scriptures portray Him. Sometimes the devil distorts Christ to my vision. But thanks be to God, who keeps us in His Word, in faith, and in prayer.

p. 88

Luther says:

Paul incriminates the Galatians in worse failure. "You are so bewitched that you no longer obey the truth. I fear many of you have strayed so far that you will never return to the truth."

p. 88

MacArthur says:

3:1 foolish. This refers not to lack of intelligence, but to lack of obedience . . .

p. 1664

MacArthur says:

bewitched. Charmed or misled by flattery and false promises. The term suggests an appeal to the emotions by the Judaizers.
p. 1664

MacArthur says:

Satan never ceases his effort to destroy God's way of salvation, and because God's way is by His grace working through man's faith, Satan's is the opposite, the way of man's own effort and work. From the time of Cain's first works-righteous offering of a grain instead of an animal sacrifice, unbelieving man has sought to make himself right with God through his own goodness and merit.
p. 62

MacArthur says:

In 3:1-5 the apostle reminds his readers that a believer's experience of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and of God the Father are incontrovertible evidence of having been graciously made acceptable to God through personal faith in the perfect, complete work of Christ, apart from any human supplement.
p. 62

MacArthur says:

You foolish Galatians reflects a combination of anger and love mixed with surprise. Paul was incredulous, hardly able to believe what the **Galatians** had done. Like many believers before and after them, they had been victimized by Satan and induced to slip away from the moorings of the truth by which they had been saved. Those believers were especially **foolish** because they had been so carefully and fully taught, having been on many occasions over the years privileged to sit under the teaching of Paul himself, whose very heartbeat was the gospel of God's grace.
p. 63

MacArthur says:

The **Galatians** were actually **bewitched** by the Judaizers. **Bewitched** is from *baskainō*, which means to charge or fascinate in a misleading way, as by flattery, false promises, or occultic power, and clearly suggests the use of feeling over fact, emotion over clear understanding of truth. “**Who** tickled your fancy?” Paul asked rhetorically, fully aware of the answer. “Who could have dragged you away from the solid foundation of truth in which you were once so well grounded?” Although **bewitched** can carry the idea of sorcery, that is not the idea here. The Galatians were not victims of a magical spell or incantation, but were misled pupils of teachings they should have instantly recognized as false. They were willing victims who succumbed to the flesh-pleasing works righteousness of the Judaizers.
p. 64

MacArthur says:

It is tragic that even much religion that goes under the name of Christianity rejects the substitutionary work of Christ and replaces it with some form of works righteousness. Churches who go by the Lord’s name but reject His righteousness in favor of man’s are guilty of establishing a form of godliness that has absolutely no power.
p. 65

Machen says:

Of course, this story of the Cross was not presented by the Apostle merely as an inspiring story of a holy martyrdom; but it was presented as something that had profound meaning for those to whom it was proclaimed. “Christ died for your sins,” said Paul to those unconverted people in the Galatian cities.
p. 165

McGee says:

“O foolish Galatians”—senseless Galatians. The Greek word is *anoetoi* from the root word *nous*, meaning “mind.” He is saying, “You’re not using your mind—you’re not using your *nous*.”

p. 164

Patrick & Lowth say:

... “Who hath looked upon you with an evil or envious eye,” as envying you the blessings of the gospel?

p. 728

Pinnock says:

The point made, the epistle could have stopped here. But Paul turns once again to the Galatians themselves. He hopes he can bring them to their senses by an appeal to their own spiritual experience. He feels they have been plain foolish. He will not have them shift the blame to someone else. They should have known better. It is not so much their treachery as their folly which strikes Paul. It was as if a witch had cast a magic spell over them. Before their very eyes Christ had been displayed as crucified. This must refer to the content of Paul’s preaching when he established the Galatian churches. He could tell the Corinthians: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). Paul’s theology was dominated by the cross. He dwelled constantly on the fact and significance of it. It was his only boast (6:14). In the light of this, Paul puts a simple question to them. He seems to be asking for information. But it is really a teaching device. Both he and they know the answer already. But they seem to be dull pupils and need to have the answer drawn out of them.

p. 35

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

3:1 Foolish does not indicate lack of intelligence but lack of wisdom. Paul wonders whether something like an evil spell had prevented the Galatians from recalling the gospel of the **crucified** Christ, which had been **clearly portrayed** or preached to them. He uses a play on words—**before whose eyes**—to highlight their duplicity as contrasted with the truth he had carefully explained to them.
p. 1521

Ridderbos says:

For the first time since 1:11, Paul addresses his readers by name. He refers to them now, not as brethren, but as Galatians, placing them, so to speak, at a formal distance in order to summon them to their responsibility. The tone of his words is passionate. All that had been said in the foregoing about the excellence of Christ is apparently on the point of being denied by the Galatians.
p. 111

Vos says:

In a word, Paul's message to the Galatians here is that their reason and experience should have convinced them of the all-sufficiency of faith. He breaks into a remonstrance at the beginning of this chapter.
p. 51

Wiersbe says:

The key to this section is in the word *suffered* (Gal. 3:4), which can be translated “experienced.” Paul asked, “Have you experienced so many things in vain?” The argument from Christian experience was a wise one with which to begin, because Paul had been with them when they had trusted Christ. Of course, to argue from experience can be dangerous, because experiences can be counterfeited and they can be misunderstood. Subjective experience must be balanced with objective evidence, because experiences can change, but truth never changes. Paul balanced the subjective experience of the Galatian Christians with the objective teaching of the unchanging Word of God (vv. 6-14).
p. 68

Wuest says:

O, unreflecting Galatians, who betwitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was placarded publicly as the crucified One?
p. 204

Wuest says:

Paul says, *O foolish Galatians*. It is an expression of surprise mingled with indignation. The situation in Galatia will help us understand this outcry.
p. 83

Wuest says:

The word is *anoetos*. It denotes the stupidity that arises from deadness and impotence of intellect. It means “lacking in the power of perception, unwise.” It refers to one who does not reflect. The word speaks of failure to use one’s powers of perception. The Galatians, Paul says, were certainly not using their heads. The word is used with an ethical reference as the faculty of moral judgment. Thus the word indicates a failure to use one’s powers of perception, that failure being due to a moral defect.
pp. 83-84

Wuest says:

The infatuation of the Galatians is attributed to the baneful effect of some mysterious power of evil.
p. 84

Misunderstanding the Value of the Cross

Some years ago, a 14-foot bronze crucifix was stolen from Calvary Cemetery in Little Rock, Arkansas. It had stood at the entrance to that cemetery for more than 50 years. The cross was put there in 1930 by a Catholic bishop and had been valued at the time at \$10,000. The thieves apparently cut it off at its base and hauled it off in a pick-up. Police speculate that they cut it into small pieces and sold it for scrap.

The thieves figured that the 900-pound cross probably brought about \$450. They obviously didn't realize the value of that cross.

That is the problem, of course—understanding the value of the cross. As the gospel writers relate the story of Jesus' crucifixion, the theme that runs through all the details is rejection. Not only did people not see the value of Jesus, they also didn't understand the value of his death. May we not be so blind!

Lee Eclou, in the sermon "The Agony of Victory," PreachingToday.com

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(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)
Grand Rapids, MI.:Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications,
1985.

We cannot make too much of the blood, or dwell too securely under its protection. The blood of Christ has a *double* efficacy: it is the atonement for sin, and it is the sanctification of the sinner on whose heart it is sprinkled.

“We are justified by his blood” (Rom. 5:9);

and we are sanctified by the blood (see Heb. 13:12). This one offering of Himself includes sin-offering, burnt-offering, meat-offering, peace-offering, *all in one*. His blood cleanseth “from all sin,” both from the *guilt* of sin, and from the *filth* of sin, from every kind and degree of sin, and everything contained in sin, its pollution, its demerit, and its consequences; where the blood of the Lamb is applied by faith the Holy Ghost descends and dwells there forever.

Would we did always remember, to the comfort of our souls, that when the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary, as an offering for sin, all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the Church of God, whether past, present, or future, were laid upon Him. It is written,

“The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6),

and all were future then! Nay, they were confessed upon His blessed head, even as Aaron confessed all the iniquity, the transgressions, and the sins of Israel, putting them on the head of the scapegoat.

Now, if this was so, and the blood then shed availed to blot out the mighty *whole*; . . .

p. 331

This then seems to be the meaning of “I sanctify myself.” It was His setting Himself apart—all that He was, all that He had, and all that He could at any time command—devoting Himself, dedicating Himself, and delighting to do so, for the persons and for the objects He had in view.

p. 332

(Cries from the Cross: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus by Erwin W. Lutzer)
Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Erwin W. Lutzer, 2002.

If we were the centurion in charge of the Crucifixion, we would have put the two thieves next to each other and Jesus off to the side. This Roman soldier probably had no idea why he arranged the crosses as he did, but he was fulfilling an ancient prophecy: “He . . . was numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). God decreed that He who was most holy not only died among criminals but was numbered as one of them, and therein lies the heart of the gospel.

God had His reasons for decreeing that Jesus should gracelessly hang between two thugs. He wanted to demonstrate the depths of shame to which His Son was willing to descend. At His birth He was surrounded by beasts, and, now, in His death, with criminals. Let no one say that God has stayed aloof from the brokenness of our fallen world. He descended that we might ascend with Him to newness of life.

p. 54

What a day for this thief! In the morning he was justly crucified on a cross; by late that evening he was justly welcomed into paradise by Jesus!

p. 55

“The Bucket List”: Resisting All Beliefs

In the film *The Bucket List*, Edward (Jack Nicholson) and Carter (Morgan Freeman) are both terminally ill. Doctors have given them about one year to live, so they make a list of things they always wanted to do before they “kicked the bucket”—and go about doing them, one by one. The list includes skydiving, racing vintage Mustangs, and seeing the wonders of the world. In this scene, Edward and Carter are on their way to Europe in a private jet.

“It’s indescribably beautiful,” Carter says as he looks out his window at a magnificent landscape.

“I love flying over the polar caps,” replies Edward. “We’re above the desolation.”

Both men look out the window together. “The stars—it’s really one of God’s good ones,” Carter says.

“So you think a being of some sort did all this?” Edward says.

“You don’t?”

Referring to his illness, Edward replies, “You mean, do I believe if I look up in the sky and promise this or that, the ‘Biggie’ will make all this go away? No.”

“Then 95 percent of the people on earth are wrong,” Carter says.

Edward smugly fires back: “If life has taught me anything, it’s that 95 percent of the people are always wrong.”

“It’s called faith,” Carter says.

“I honestly envy people who have faith. I just can’t get my head around it.”

“Maybe your head is in the way.”

“Carter, we’ve all had hundreds of these discussions, and every one of them always hits the same wall. Is there a sugarplum fairy or not? And nobody has ever gotten over that wall.”

“So, what do you believe?” Carter asks.

“I resist all beliefs.”

“No big bang? No random universe?”

“We live. We die,” Edward says. “And the wheels on the bus go round and round.”

“What if you’re wrong?”

“I’d love to be wrong. If I’m wrong, I win.”

Carter chuckles before he says, “I’m not sure it works that way.”

Elapsed time: DVD, scene 11, 00:47:15–00:49:17

Rated PG-13 for language, including a sexual reference

*The Bucket List (Warner Brothers, 2007), directed by Rob Reiner;
submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Canada*

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U. S. Religious Landscape Survey

On February 25, 2008, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life released a study entitled *The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*. Based on interviews with 35,556 adults, America is “constantly shifting amid religious choices” and “unaware or unconcerned with doctrinal distinctions.” Here are some telling highlights from the study:

- Forty-four percent of those surveyed said they’ve abandoned “the religious or secular upbringing of their childhood.”
- Twelve percent said their religious identity is “nothing in particular.”
- Fifty-one percent claimed to be Protestants, but one third of that number did not want to be identified with any one denomination.

According to the Forum’s report, Christianity is the religious choice of 78 percent of Americans. However, only non-denominational Christian churches showed growth that outpaced their losses.

The co-author of the study, John Green, says, “Fluidity is the rule today, not the exception. There’s greater diversity and greater movements—a quantum leap in the rate of change.” He goes on to note: “It will become increasingly difficult to find people who share a love for a distinct doctrine. But there are always niches in the marketplace, and there will always be a place for religions that are strict. They just may cater to a smaller number of people.”

*Brian Lowery, associate editor, PreachingToday.com; source:
Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Survey: Americans freely change,
or drop, their religions,” USA Today (2-25-08)*

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(Living the Cross Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing by C. J. Mahaney) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Sovereign Grace Ministries, 2006.

It would be necessary for Him to die even if it were for your sin alone or my sin alone. That's why you and I are fully responsible for this tragic death. As John Stott wisely observed, "Until you see the cross as that which is done *by* you, you will never appreciate that it is done *for* you."⁸⁶

Luther said that we all carry in our pocket His very nails. Are you aware of those nails in your possession?

86. John R. W. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 59-60. p. 90

He's receiving what you and I should be receiving—His Father's full and furious wrath. He's experiencing what every other human being in history deserves and what he alone does *not* deserve.

And He's experiencing it *alone*. Have you ever felt truly alone?
p. 92

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Gerald B. Smith) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications. Copyright – Christian Publications, 1980.

A classic example of this is seen in the meeting of Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield. In his autobiography, Franklin recounts how he listened to the mighty preaching of the great evangelist. Whitefield talked with Franklin personally about his need of Christ and promised to pray for him. Years later Franklin wrote rather sadly that the evangelist's prayers must not have done any good, for he was still unconverted.

Why? Franklin had light without sight. To see the Light of the World requires an act of inward enlightenment wrought by the Spirit. We must pit our prayer against that dark spirit who blinds the hearts of men!
(November 6)

v. 2 This only I am desiring to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the message of faith?

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God's Message to you?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

(1) *How did you receive the Holy Spirit?* This rhetorical question pointed to the time of their conversions, when they received the Holy Spirit (cf. 4:6). Thus Paul did not question their salvation but challenged them to consider whether they were saved and received the Spirit by faith or on the basis of works. It was of course by faith, when they heard Paul preach the gospel. As an essentially Gentile church they did not possess the Mosaic Law anyway.

Now we have **QUESTION #2**:

"DID YOU RECEIVE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW OR BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH?"

Whereas:

QUESTION #1 had to do with **"WHO,"**

QUESTION #2 has to do with **"HOW."**

It is a **MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION** and that question is:

“[HOW] DID YOU RECEIVE THE SPIRIT?”

There are **TWO POSSIBLE ANSWERS:**

1. **“BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW”** or
2. **“BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH.”**

Paul wants to know one thing from them:

“How did you receive the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, the evidence of life in Christ?”

Romans 8:14 (DAV)

For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

How did you receive the Spirit? Did you have to work for the Spirit of God to come in? Or did He come in when you put your faith in Christ?

Paul answers this question in:

Ephesians 1:13 (DAV)

In Him you also, having heard the Word of the truth, the good news of your salvation: in Him also having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

There is no human effort in seeking. We receive the Spirit by the message of faith. When we accepted Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit came in to guide into all truth. He came in to baptize us into the body of Christ. He came in to take us out of Adam and to place us in Christ.

Paul gives **TWO CHOICES** in answer to the question, “[**HOW**] **DID YOU RECEIVE THE SPIRIT?**” It was:

1. **“BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW”** or
2. **“BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH?”**

These Galatian Christians have been pressed to the point where, when they are honest, they must admit that the Spirit of God was given to them through the **“MESSAGE OF FAITH.”** When they, by faith received Christ, the Holy Spirit came to dwell within them. And it was not by the works of the law that they received this precious indwelling presence of the **THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY.**

Anders says:

3:2. Paul in verses 2-5 asks four rhetorical questions to demonstrate that salvation is through faith alone. These questions concern the reception and work of the Holy Spirit.

p. 36

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

(3) The conduct of the Galatians is inexplicable because it was so totally contrary to their initial experiences of Christianity. How did they begin? This is what Paul would like to hear from them, and he is not interested in hearing anything other than the basic answer to this basic question. Did they receive the Holy Spirit by living up to some formal statutes? Or did they enter into the Christian life simply by believing and receiving what they heard concerning the death of the Lord Jesus Christ?

p. 720

Bartlett says:

Sanctification, no less than regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit, conditioned by faith on the part of the Christian. This is a further reason why all forms of legalism should be cast out root and branch. Is it reasonable, Paul asks in effect, that you can by conforming to rites and ceremonies bring to fruition that which the Holy Spirit alone could initiate in your souls? Merely to ask such a question is to answer it is the negative. What has been implanted by the Spirit must be unfolded in the Spirit. What He begins He will complete (Phil 1:6). The source of spiritual nativity points the course to spiritual maturity.

p. 56

Eadie says:

This only—this one thing out of many; for this one point is sufficient for the purpose, and is in itself decisive of the controversy. There is no irony in the language (Luther); he wished information on this one point.

p. 219

Fergusson says:

3. As regeneration and saving grace is the work of God's spirit in the elect; so the ordinary mean whereby he conveyeth grace to the heart, is, by hearing the word preached; for they had "received the Spirit by the hearing of faith."

p. 46

Hendriksen says:

Paul's question is filled with significance and applies to every age. Let the tree be judged by the fruits it produces. It is as if Paul were asking, "My dear Galatians, does the course which you are now following make you more happy and contented than that which you previously selected? By what avenue were you first made conscious of having the Holy Spirit in your hearts? Was it by the avenue of rigorous bondage to ceremonial ordinances or was it by the exercise of faith in Christ, so that you listened and listened and eagerly took to heart the marvelous message of the gospel?"
p. 113

Hogg & Vine say:

. . . a crucial question, the answer to which would settle the whole matter in dispute. There is, perhaps, a tinge of irony in the query, consistent with the word 'foolish' which he applies to them. If they were sagacious enough to revise the gospel by which they had been saved, surely they had not allowed such an evident consideration as this to escape them.
p. 107

Lange says:

A definite, keenly importunate question, with an "either—or," from which there is no escape, appealing to actual experiences, in which no debate is possible . . .
p. 64

Lenski says:

He pours out question upon question. He wants no answer for himself, *he* needs none; the Galatians need them for themselves. It is high time they did a little plain Christian thinking.
p. 125

Lightfoot says:

'I have only one question to ask you. The gifts of the Spirit which ye have received, to what do ye owe them? To works performed in bondage to law, or to the willing hearing that comes of faith? What monstrous folly is this then! Will you so violate the divine order of progress? After taking your earliest lessons in the *Spirit*, do you look to attaining perfection through the *flesh*? To what purpose then did ye suffer persecution from these carnal teachers of the law? Will ye now stultify your past sufferings? I cannot believe that ye will.' pp. 134-5

Luther says:

There is a touch of irony in these words of the Apostle. "Come on now, my smart Galatians, you who all of a sudden have become doctors, while I seem to be your pupil: Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the Law, or by the preaching of the Gospel?" This question gave them something to think about, because their own experience contradicted them. p. 90

MacArthur says:

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the believer's most unmistakable evidence of God's favor, his greatest proof of salvation and the guarantee of eternal glory. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16), Paul assured the Roman Christians. Conversely, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (v.9). John writes, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13; cf. 3:24).

It is therefore ludicrous to maintain, as some Christians do, that the full gift of the Holy Spirit comes through an additional work of experience. A person who does not have the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not need a second blessing; he needs salvation. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the new birth. At no time before salvation can a person *have* the indwelling **Spirit**, and at no time after salvation can he *not* have Him. "Having also believed" in Christ, Paul explained to the Ephesians, "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13-14). p. 66

Pinnock says:

He suggests that the Galatians reflect for a moment on their own spiritual experience. How did their Christian life begin? The Spirit did not come on them because they were morally good. He came as they heard the gospel and believed it. And if they began on the supernatural level, what sense does it make to drop back down to a religion of works? The questions are rhetorical; the answers are obvious. One cannot be a Christian without knowing that salvation is a free gift of God.
pp. 35-6

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

In this verse, Paul contrasts obedience to the law with faith. **The hearing of faith** is probably what Paul had in mind in Rom. 10:17 when he said, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It may also be closely related to Paul's concept of obedience to the faith, since the Greek word for "hear" can also be translated "listen" or "obey" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).
p. 1521

Ridderbos says:

The apostle refers his readers to this, because the receiving of the gift of the Spirit is surely the most unmistakable evidence of God's favor and the plainest guarantee of eternal redemption. This being so, from what source and along which way had these gifts come to them: by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? If they could answer that, they could also figure out whether or not they were now on the right path.
pp. 112-13

Wuest says:

Translation. *This only am I desiring to learn from you. By means of law works did you receive the Spirit or by means of the message which proclaims faith?*
p. 85

(Same Kind of Different as Me: A Modern-day Slave, an International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together by Ron Hall, Denver Moore, and Lynn Vincent) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group. Copyright – Ron Hall, 2006.

“I heard that when white folks go fishin they do somethin called ‘catch and release.’”

Catch and release? I nodded solemnly, suddenly nervous and curious at the same time.

“That really bothers me,” Denver went on. “I just can’t figure it out. Cause when colored folks go fishin, we really proud of what we catch, and we take it and show it off to everybody that’ll look. Then we eat what we catch . . . in other words, we use it to *sustain* us. So it really bothers me that white folks would go to all that trouble to catch a fish, then when they done caught it, just throw it back in the water.”

He paused again, and the silence between us stretched a full minute. Then: “Did you hear what I said?”

I nodded, afraid to speak, afraid to offend.

Denver looked away, searching the blue autumn sky, then locked onto me again with that drill-bit stare. “So, Mr. Ron, it occurred to me: If you is fishin for a friend you just gon’ catch and release, then I ain’t got no desire to be your friend.”

The world seemed to halt in midstride and fall silent around us like one of the freeze-frame scenes on TV. I could hear my heart pounding and imagined Denver could see it popping my breast pocket up and down. I returned Denver’s gaze with what I hoped was a receptive expression and hung on.

Suddenly his eyes gentled and he spoke more softly than before: “But if you is lookin for a *real* friend, then I’ll be one. Forever.”

p. 107

v. 3 Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit now are you being brought to maturity in the flesh?

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

Are you so foolish? Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort?

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God. If you weren't smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

(2) *How will you be sanctified?* Presupposing the answer that the Galatians became Christians by faith, Paul asked if they were **so foolish** as to think they could begin the Christian life in one way (by faith) and move on to spiritual maturity in another (by works). This was what the Judaizers promoted . . . but the means of justification and sanctification were (and are) the same. There was no provision under the Law for the Holy Spirit to do a work of sanctification. The Galatian believers probably thought that keeping the old Law would aid them in their spiritual lives, but it would not.

QUESTIONS #3 & #4 are here in verse 3.

QUESTION #1—**“WHO”**—was in verse 1.

QUESTION #2—**“HOW”**—was in verse 2.

Now he wants to know what is their **ORIENTATION** with these **TWO QUESTIONS** here in verse 3.

Paul wants to point up the fact that the Source is the same for the beginning and the carrying on to maturity—that is, the Spirit of God.

The Galatians felt that by themselves, in the observance of the law, they could be brought to spiritual maturity. Peter surely learned his lesson and he gives us the answer here in:

1 Peter 5:10 (DAV) – **I love Peter for this!**

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Philippians 1:6 (DAV)

Being sure of this very thing, that He who began in you a good work will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

I would not work my soul to save,
 For this my Lord has done;
 But I work like any slave,
 For love of God’s dear Son.
 (source unknown)

Here the Galatians have fallen from the Spirit into the flesh. They are guilty of taking everything Christ could give and then endeavoring to move on to maturity in the flesh.

It is sort of like getting a brand new Cadillac and putting it in the garage and running around in your old beat-up model-T that has a fender missing and that rattles and bumps and the wipers do not work and the tires are worn out. Yet, we want to drive around in it because everybody notices us. We say, “God, give me some new parts and give me another motor.” When God would say, “Get into your Cadillac that I have provided.”

When you are concerned about people seeing and appreciating what you are doing, it is probably being done in the flesh.

John 6:63 (NASB)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

God expects nothing from our flesh. He has no delusions about what we are apart from what He is.

The late CAPTAIN REGINALD WALLACE used to say:

Far too many people have shared in the “Old Adam Improvement Society.” We so often adopt the attitude of, “Well, if I try a little harder, I know I will be what the Lord wants me to be.”
(source unknown)

Gutzke points out on this particular verse:

Christian living is something far different than the world would think. I can understand this, as I was a grown man when I became a believer. I used to have the idea that a Christian was a person who was trying to be good—like a person would cut out weeds from a garden. By cutting out all evil, such a person would become better and better. Thus a person would become a Christian as he would discipline the flesh, and make himself clean, neat, sweet, and good. The idea was that being a Christian was an achievement, the result of a resolution on my part. I was encouraged to hold such a view because many people would make it obvious they were doing their best, and would say, “I don’t see why things don’t turn out well with me, because I’m doing everything I possibly can.” All this is “works” and such efforts would be in my own strength. But this is not the gospel. In speaking of works the Bible says, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”
p. 52

It is like buying a brand new car with a 360 horsepower motor in it, and when we want to go anyplace we push it until someone comes along and says, “Why don’t you get in and turn on the switch?”

Christ is waiting for us to come to the end of our frustrated working and futile efforts and to let him take over. It is like a scuba diver down with the tanks of oxygen, refusing to take a breath because he feels he can hold his breath long enough, when finally in exhaustion he takes a breath of air. He takes that which has been provided as a very source of his life.

These Galatians are endeavoring within their own power and strength to produce Christian maturity, and so Paul has to level a very hard question:

**“ARE YOU SO FOOLISH, HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT NOW
ARE YOU BEING BROUGHT TO MATURITY IN THE FLESH?” or
BY YOUR OWN HUMAN EFFORTS?**

That reminds me of the experience of my first dive in the Grand Caymans. When I learned to appropriate the oxygen that was available, I was able to enjoy a whole brand-new way of living.

I am reminded of the story of the Aggie who went to the power saw company to buy a chainsaw. He went out and worked hard all day and did not feel like the saw was doing what it was cracked up to do. So he took it back to the company and told the owner that it did not do nearly as well as his old axe. The owner promptly took hold of the starting cord and pulled it. The saw immediately started running and the Aggie was heard to say, "What is that sound?"

This is the **KEY STATEMENT** in this fifth study:

"You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself."

In other words:

"They were running well" in their Christian life and experiences as long as they were dependent upon the Spirit of God to produce the life of Jesus Christ in and through them.

"They were running well" until they decided to take over and produce spiritual maturity on their own.

They are saying:

"I DID IT MY WAY. I DID IT ON MY OWN."

Matthew 7:20-23 (DAV)

For I am saying to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. You heard that it was said by those of a previous time, 'You shall not commit murder,' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court;' but I am saying to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire. If, therefore, you are bringing your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother is having something against you,

Barclay says:

But now we come to the much more difficult word, *sarx*, the flesh. Here is one of the characteristic words of Paul, one of the words which run through his letters, and especially through the letters to the Romans, the Galatians and the Corinthians. It is a word of which there is no adequate English translation, a word of which the meaning cannot be sharply and simply defined, a word towards the meaning of which we have to grope our way, and yet a word which stands for certain facts in the human situation which are part of the basic experience of life of every man. Let us then seek to penetrate into its meaning. We may begin with two fundamental facts about it.

i. *Sarx* is the deadly enemy of *pneuma*. The warfare in the soul is precisely between flesh, to use the ordinary translation of the word, and spirit. 'These,' says Paul, 'are opposed to each other' (Gal. 5.17). Whatever else is true, these two are the opposing forces in the being of man.

ii. *Sarx* is every much more than the body. In the thought of Paul the sins of the flesh include far more than the fleshly sins which have to do with the body. When Paul lists the works of the flesh he certainly begins with immorality, impurity and licentiousness, but he goes on from there to enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, and party spirit which are not sins of the body at all. The sins of the flesh in the normal modern sense of the term are far from being the only sins of the flesh in the Pauline sense of the term. It is in fact true to say that they are not even the main and the most serious sins of the flesh.

pp. 17-18

Bickel & Jantz say:

The bottom line for Paul is this: The Galatians began their lives being justified by their faith, and the sign that Christ is living His life in them is the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. Why would they now choose to finish their lives in the power of the flesh?

p. 68

Hendriksen says:

It is as if Paul were saying, “How hopeful was your beginning, and how sad your continuation! And just think of it: those false guides whom you are now beginning to follow have a name for this process of going downhill. They call it *becoming perfected*! What tragic irony!”

p. 114

Hogg & Vine say:

Are ye so foolish?—*i.e.*, so reluctant to exercise your senses that you have not seen an inconsistency so glaring as this.

p. 109

Hogg & Vine say:

Having appealed to the fact that He had come into their lives at the outset of their Christian experience, the Apostle now approaches the subject from the other side, and asks whether they expect themselves to complete by rites and ceremonies the work the Holy Spirit began within them. The idea is preposterous that a work begun in the higher sphere, the spirit, should be perfected in the lower, the flesh, that they who with the gift of the Holy Spirit had received the righteousness that is of God by faith, should now seek to establish their own righteousness by works of law.

pp. 110-11

Ironside says:

“Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” In other words, if the Holy Spirit came to dwell in you in the condition you were when you came to Christ, do you think you need to complete the work by your own self-effort and by putting yourself under legal rules and regulations? You who know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ have received the Holy Spirit.
p. 91

Lange says:

—You have made a beginning in the Christian life through the receiving of the Holy Ghost (ver. 2). Where a beginning is made, the next question is about the completion. Now—remarks Paul with cutting irony, bringing home the sense of this . . . of their conduct—such a completion there is also with you; but **with the flesh!** *i. e.*, according to your and your false teachers’ fancy, this now is the true completion; yet, in truth, it is no completion, but the direct opposite of it, an annihilation of the work begun, because it is a completion with the flesh.
p. 62

Lange says:

It is not enough to have begun well, the matter must also be carried through. The beginning and the continuing of our salvation must be after one way, and we must not desire to be perfected otherwise than we have begun, else is it folly to us.
p. 65

Lovett says:

BEGUN. If one begins a life by means of the Holy Spirit, it is only reasonable such a life cannot be completed by any other agency. What the Holy Spirit begins, only He can complete. In effect Paul is saying, “Do you think by performing rites (circumcision, etc.) and ceremonies you can bring to completion that which only the Spirit could start?” That’s like asking, can a fish swim on land? It’s impossible. Then he asks about the persecutions the Galatians suffered for Christ, as did all in those days. It would have all been for nothing, he says, if they could have been saved by practicing Judaism. Indirectly he is asking, “Why throw away all the rewards you gained suffering for the Name of Jesus? Are you ready to trade them off for the worthless codes of Judaism?”
p. 33

Luther says:

“Flesh” stands for the righteousness of reason which seeks justification by the accomplishment of the Law.
p. 96

MacArthur says:

Are you so foolish? Incredulous at how easily the Galatians had been duped, Paul asked a second rhetorical question, again rebuking them for their foolishness. ***Begun in the Spirit . . . by the flesh.*** The notion that sinful, weak (Matt. 26:41; Rom. 6:19), fallen human nature could improve on the saving work of the Holy Spirit was ludicrous to Paul.
p. 1665

McGee says:

What Paul is asking is this: “If the Holy Spirit is the One who converted you, brought you to Christ, and now you are indwelt by the Spirit of God, are you going to turn back to the Law (which was given to control the flesh) and think you are going to live on a high plane?”
pp. 164-5

Pinnock says:

Spirit and flesh stand for two religions. We are saved by God's grace, not our achievement. To go back to legalism as the Galatians were proposing to do was spiritual desertion and the height of folly. Surely all that they experienced of the Spirit and His gifts was not in vain. To taste of Christian freedom and then to go back to the law is sheer lunacy.
p. 36

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Paul reminds the Galatians that their Christian life was **begun in the Spirit** by faith alone (v. 2; 2:16). **Being made perfect by the flesh** indicates that the Galatians were mistakenly trying to achieve perfection through their own efforts, especially through circumcision.
p. 1521

Ridderbos says:

They were engaged in falling back from the divine power of the Spirit into the impotence of man.
p. 114

Vos says:

Verse 3 continues the questioning. "Are you so foolish?" Are you so irrational? You must acknowledge that your salvation and spiritual power came on the basis of faith. Having begun "in the sphere of the spirit" do you now wish to be perfected "in the sphere of the flesh," that is, to go into the keeping of ordinances?
pp. 51-52

Wuest says:

Verse three. In verse 2, Paul speaks of the initial entrance of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the Galatian Christians when they put their trust in the Lord Jesus. In this verse, he is speaking of the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the lives of these saints. He asks the question, “Are you to such a degree irrational? Having begun your Christian life in dependence upon the indwelling Spirit, are you now being brought on to the state of spiritual maturity by means of self effort?”

p. 85

Wuest says:

By the word *flesh* here he refers to all that a person is as the product of natural generation apart from the morally transforming power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The word speaks of the unsaved man, body, soul, and spirit, controlled by his totally depraved nature, together with all his human accomplishments, positions, capabilities, and philosophies.

p. 86

Wuest says:

. . . the Galatians were turning away from the teaching and the reality of the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the believer in this dispensation of grace, and were starting to depend upon self effort in an attempt to obey an outward legalistic system of works. Thus these Christians who had begun their Christian lives in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, now were depending upon self effort to continue in them the work of sanctification which the Holy Spirit had begun. The present tense of the verb here indicates that the Galatians had already begun this attempt. Paul says in effect, “How foolish to think that you can bring yourselves to a state of spiritual maturity in your Christian lives. That is the work of the Spirit. Only He can do that for you.”

p. 86

The Difference Between Trash and Treasure

As Stan Caffy prepared for married life, he and his bride-to-be cleaned out their respective garages and sold everything to Goodwill. Between the two of them, they sold an assortment of clothes, bicycles, tools, computer parts, and a tattered copy of the Declaration of Independence that had been hanging in Stan's garage for the last decade.

Stan's trash turned out to be another man's treasure.

That particular version of the Declaration of Independence was a rare copy made in 1823. A man named Michael Sparks spotted it, and he purchased the document for \$2.48. Sparks later auctioned it for \$477,650.

Not a bad profit.

Caffy, the previous owner, was later quoted as saying, "I'm happy for the Sparks guy. If I still had it, it would still be hanging here in the garage, and I still wouldn't know it was worth all that."

Associated Press, "Sold! One Declaration of Independence Copy," MSNBC.com (3-23-07); submitted by David Slagle, Atlanta, Georgia

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(PreachingToday.com)

Mechanic Vows He Can Control His Drinking

A mechanic accidentally swallowed some brake fluid and really liked the taste. Before he knew it, he had finished off the whole bottle.

One of his co-workers caught him sneaking a swig the next day. "Man, that stuff will kill," said his friend, "you've got to give it up."

"Don't worry," the mechanic responded, "I can stop anytime I want."

Submitted by Van Morris, Mt. Washington, Kentucky

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The Choice: Christ's Righteousness or Our Own

My four-year-old, first-born daughter is—in typical first-born fashion—an agonizer. She agonizes over decisions, weighing her options, sometimes paralyzed by the fear of making a choice that will rule something out. A typical example might go like this: She decides she wants juice instead of the water in her glass at breakfast. She comes into the kitchen with her glass of water and asks for juice, but she clutches the glass instead of emptying it in the sink. “I want juice,” she says aloud, “but I want my water, too! What if I get thirsty for water? But juice is so sweet and yummy! Oh, what am I going to do?” She had a choice to make. It takes a little extra money to purchase juice, so we always tell the kids they have to choose during breakfast time—it’s one or the other. Plus, her little stomach couldn’t take both. So there she was, carton in hand while agonizing over her tap water.

It reminds me of how I often come to Christ. I come clutching whatever I’m sure of, whatever I think I have—my righteousness, my things—and ask him for, well, him. I pray, “Lord, fill me with your Spirit. Jesus, I want more of you.” But my heart continually goes after what I think will fill me, prove me, justify me, satisfy me. I clutch my reputation, my talents, my possessions. But here’s the painful truth: I cannot be filled with Jesus when I won’t empty out everything else.

In the third chapter of Philippians, Paul tells the Philippian church that he considers all his former qualifications as garbage because of the far greater worth of knowing Christ. But he doesn’t just say that his reasons for “confidence in the flesh” are considered trash in comparison to knowing Christ—although that is certainly true. In verse 8, he writes, “For [Christ’s] sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (emphasis mine). Paul knew that if he wanted Christ, he had to throw everything else in the dumpster. Just like—however difficult the choice is—my daughter has to choose between water and juice, we have to choose between Christ’s righteousness and our own, Christ’s riches or ours. We cannot have both.

Alison Ritch, Birmingham, Alabama

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(The Best of A. W. Tozer by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)
Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers. Copyright– Zur Ltd., 1978,
2000.

It may be said without qualification that every man is as holy and as full of
the Spirit as he wants to be.
p. 37

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand
illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of
C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press.
Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

The moment we glorify ourselves, since there is room for one glory only in the
universe, we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High. ME458
p. 47

Perhaps our greatest weariness is weariness of ourselves. The one person
that troubles me most is the one from whom I cannot get away as long as I
am here. 2726.223
p. 49

(The Barbarian Way: Soul Cravings by Erwin Raphael McManus) Nashville,
TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– Erwin Raphael McManus, 2005.

The maddening reality is that each and every one of us has been
created with a soul craving to become—to become something—something
better, something different, something special, something unique, something
admired, something valued, something more than we are.

At the same time, we are faced with the reality of our own mortality.
We are pulled by both eternity and brevity. We act as if we will live forever
and are constantly facing the painful truth that life can end at any moment.
p. (Entry #11)

Our greatest danger is living for whatever we can take and devour now
and destroying our future in the process.
p. (Entry #24)

(The Beautiful Fight: Surrendering to the Transforming Presence of God
Every Day of Your Life by Gary Thomas) Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan. Copyright— Gary L. Thomas, 2007.

But let's bring it home. Every time you enter a room, you bring *something* with you. Is it lust? If you allow your thoughts to roam into impure places, at that moment you are both creating and bringing lust into your environment.

When you walk along a sidewalk, stroll through the marketplace, or enter a church, what are you bringing with you: lust, or the Spirit of Christ?

When you walk into your house following a long day at work, do you bring selfishness, negativity, harshness, condemnation—or the meekness and gentleness of Christ?

p. 121

(Christ/Life by Ruth Myers) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ruth Myers, 2005.

*I freely acknowledge before You, my Creator,
these humbling facts about myself:*

*While You are infinite in capacity and power,
I am strictly and severely limited.
You are eternally existent—"from everlasting to everlasting,
You are God" (Psalm 90:2, NKJV)—while I am a breath,
a passing vapor that appears for a little while and then
vanishes away (James 4:14).*

*You are Lord and Possessor of all—and there's nothing I can keep or
hold or even touch that isn't a gift from You.*

*You are fully in control of the universe and everything in it,
of every detail, from the celestial sweep of galaxies to the slightest
movement of the smallest subatomic particles. There's no choice I can
make, no action I can take, that isn't subject to Your physical and
moral laws and principles, as well as Your sovereign will.*

When I do my own thing, sooner or later I'm the loser.

It doesn't pay to disobey!

p. 45

v. 4 So many things did you suffer in vain? If indeed it be in vain.

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

Have you suffered so many things for nothing?—if indeed it was for nothing.

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

Did you go through this whole painful learning process for nothing?
It is not yet a total loss, but it certainly will be if you keep this up!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

(3) *Did you suffer in vain?* The third question looked back on the persecution the apostles and new believers experienced in the region of Galatia. As Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps at the end of the first missionary journey, they warned the Galatian converts that they would suffer as Christians (Acts 14:21-22). Persecution evidently soon followed, and Paul reminded them that if they turned from grace to Law they would brand their former position in error and would then have **suffered so much for nothing**. But the apostle was unwilling to believe that this was so.

This is **QUESTION #5** in the **SERIES OF SIX QUESTIONS** in these first five verses.

This is a **CRUCIAL QUESTION** in understanding Paul's concept of **SUFFERING**.

1 Peter 4:12-13 (DAV)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which is coming upon you, as though something strange were happening to you; but inasmuch as you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, be rejoicing; in order that also at the revelation of His glory, you might shout for joy.

Romans 8:18 (DAV)

For I am of the opinion that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4 (DAV)

so that no one might be deceived in these afflictions; for you yourselves are knowing that we are destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were to be afflicted; even as also it came to pass, and you are knowing.

Philippians 1:29 (DAV)

Because to you it has been given in the behalf of Christ, not only to be believing on Him, but also to be suffering in His behalf,

Spiritual growth and development are sometimes accompanied by suffering and difficulty. The only way a Christian can grow and develop is to change. And to ask someone to change from what they are to what they should be involves pain. These Galatian Christians had already suffered, not only from the hands of God in the fact that they had grown to a certain point, but they were also suffering from those around them because of the stand which they took for Jesus Christ.

Now the Apostle Paul just asks them:

“SO MANY THINGS DID YOU SUFFER IN VAIN? IF INDEED IT BE IN VAIN.”

Hebrews 5:8 (DAV)

although being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered;

1 Peter 2:21 (DAV)

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footprints.

The Galatians, then, had experienced their share of suffering. This may be part of the reason that they were going back under Judaism. This was certainly the case with the Hebrew Christians as we studied the Book of Hebrews.

(Destined For Glory: The Meaning of Suffering by Margaret Clarkson)

We may work with God to allow Him to bring His glory out of our suffering, or we may resist Him and frustrate His purposes for us. In either case, we will suffer, for suffering is the common lot of humanity. But how sad to suffer without hope when God means us to rejoice in the hope that His glory and our eternal good are being worked out through our pain! May we seek God's grace that we may lose nothing of the glory God has for us in our suffering!
pp. 68-69

(Grace Grows Best in Winter: Help for Those Who Must Suffer by Margaret Clarkson)

Oh, what I owe to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus . . .
Why should I start at the plow of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know that He is no idle Husbandman: He purposeth a crop!
p. 67

John 15:11 (DAV)

These things I have spoken to you, in order that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Anders says:

Suffer probably does not mean persecution as some believe but in this context may be translated *experienced*. Paul is asking, "Have you experienced so many blessings of the Holy Spirit in vain?" By turning to a works message, they were discounting the saving and sanctifying work that the Holy Spirit had exemplified in their lives.

p. 36

Eadie says:

3. To the sufferings endured by them on their first conversion, when the Crucified One was so vividly set before their very eyes, and they received the Spirit, and began in the Spirit.

p. 224

Eadie says:

If what has been said is true, and it must be true, those sufferings are in vain—though he is loath to believe it.

p. 225

Fergusson says:

He cleareth what he said of the folly and madness, which is in following the way presently spoke of, by showing, if they should hold on to seek justification by works, or partly by faith, and partly by works, they would lose all the fruit of their former constancy and sufferings, sustained by them for that truth which he did now preach; this he speaketh not positively, but as it were doubtingly, and suspending its certainty, upon the hopes he had of their amendment.
p. 47

Hendriksen says:

The implied lesson, always applicable, is surely this, that the Lord wants everyone to profit spiritually by the experiences through which he has passed. He wants his people to use those experiences—in the present case *blessings*, but the lesson applies to *all* experiences—to good advantage. In the old dispensation Laban, though he refers to what he has learned from experience, made a selfish application (Gen. 30:27). The Galatians likewise were showing by their erring ways that theirs was not the proper response.
p. 115

Hogg & Vine say:

if it be indeed in vain.—through all his argument and expostulation the Apostle assumes the genuineness of the Galatians' faith. So here in this word, spoken aside as it were, he shows that he is unwilling to believe that they had actually turned away, that he hopes they will yet shake themselves free from the trammels of this false teaching . . .
p. 113

Ironside says:

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain?” All that they had gone through for Christ’s sake—was it in vain? Was it simply a profession? If not, how is it that they seem to have lost their assurance? And then he adds, “If it be yet in vain.” He cannot believe that it is in vain, for he looks back and remembers the exercises they went through, the joy that came to them when they professed to receive Christ, and the love that seemed to be welling up in their hearts one for another, and for him as a servant of God and for the Saviour Himself. He says, “I remember the afflictions you were ready to endure on behalf of the gospel; I cannot believe you were not converted, that it was not real. You have been misled, you have gotten into a fog, and if I can, I want by the grace of God to deliver you.”

p. 94

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . persecution from Jews and from unbelieving fellow countrymen, incited by the Jews, at the time of your conversion. **in vain**—*fruitlessly, needlessly*, since ye might have avoided them by professing Judaism [GROTIUS]. Or, shall ye, by falling from grace, lose the reward promised for, all your suffering, so that they shall be “in vain” . . .

p. 1265

Lightfoot says:

It is hard to believe this; the Apostle hopes better things of his converts.

p. 135

Luther says:

Paul wants to say: “Consider not only the good start you had and lost, but consider also the many things you have suffered for the sake of the Gospel and for the name of Christ. You have suffered the loss of your possessions, you have borne reproaches, you have passed through many dangers of body and life. You endured much for the name of Christ and you endured it faithfully. But now you have lost everything, the Gospel, faith, and the spiritual benefit of your sufferings for Christ’s sake. What a miserable thing to endure so many afflictions for nothing.”

p. 96

Luther says:

The Apostle adds the afterthought: “If it be yet in vain. I do not despair of all hope for you. But if you continue to look to the Law for righteousness, I think you should be told that all your past true worship of God and all the afflictions that you have endured for Christ’s sake are going to help you not at all. I do not mean to discourage you altogether. I do hope you will repent and amend.”

pp. 96-97

MacArthur says:

Did you suffer so many things in vain? Paul asks next. **Suffer** is from *paschō*, a word that carries the basic idea of experience and sometimes that of pain or hardship. Since the context suggests nothing of suffering or hardship, it seems best to take the word here to refer to experience, the believers’ personal experience with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father. Paul is asking, “**Did you experience so many things in vain?** Did you learn nothing at all from them? Can’t you think things through and see that the claims of the Judaizers cannot possibly square with the gospel you have been taught and have experienced yourselves?”

p. 68

Machen says:

“Have ye suffered so great things in vain?” Paul asks. But what things does he mean; what were the sufferings to which he here refers? The only answer, if we hold to the usual translation of this verse, can be that the sufferings here referred to were persecutions which the Galatian converts had been called upon to endure. We may surmise that they were persecutions instigated by the non-Christian Jews, persecutions which might have been avoided by the Galatian converts if they had not evoked the jealousy and ire of the Jews by insisting on the freedom of Gentile Christians from the ceremonial law.

p. 169

Patrick & Lowth say:

As it must be upon your hypothesis of the necessity of the observance of the law, for “then is the scandal of the cross ceased” (v. 11), and all necessity of suffering persecution is removed; these deceivers themselves doing and urging others to these things, only “lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ” . . .

p. 729

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

This statement implies that the Galatian Christians had previously **suffered** for their faith, before they were tricked by the false gospel.

p. 1521

Ridderbos says:

The point is not merely that they are losing the fruit of the suffering which they once bore: they—who were tried and appointed to suffer as Christians—must fear that their denial of this suffering will reckoned to them as guilt, and the blessing be converted into curse. The past must do more than put them into a different frame of thought. It was also, if they persist in their present deflection, constitute them as guilty.

pp. 115-16

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

Strength Through Suffering

1 Peter 2:19

“All suffering must lead the Christian to the strengthening of his faith and not to defection.”

—TEMPTATION

While we may wish that it was otherwise, suffering and difficulty are an integral part of life. Suffering can sour us or it can help us grow. Suffering sours us when we become overwhelmed and lose God’s love and encouragement in the situation. It can help us grow when we make positive responses to our difficulties. Suffering resulting from our own wrong-doing calls us to repent; suffering resulting from the wrongdoing of others calls us to forgive; and suffering that comes from God’s hand of discipline challenges us to learn the lessons He wishes to teach us.

Thought

Suffering only becomes disastrous when we fail to learn its growth-producing lessons.

(July 30)

(Grace Notes: Daily Readings with a Fellow Pilgrim by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Someone Cares Charitable Trust, 2009.

The last few paragraphs of Hebrews 10 reveals much about the original readers of Hebrews. Converting to Christ has brought them abuse; confiscation of property, public insult, and even imprisonment. In the early days they accepted such persecution gladly, even joyfully. But as time has gone on, and the trials continue, some are beginning to lose heart.

To these discouraged people, Hebrews 11 presents a stirring reminder of what constitutes “true faith.” It’s tempting to think of faith as a kind of magic formula: if you muster up enough of it, you’ll get rich, stay healthy, and live a contented life, with automatic answers to all your prayers. But the readers of Hebrews are discovering that life does not work according to such neat formulas. As proof, the author painstakingly reviews the lives of some Old Testament giants of faith. (Some have dubbed Hebrews 11 the “Faith Hall of Fame.”)

“Without faith,” Hebrews says bluntly, “it is impossible to please God.” But the author uses rather pointed words in describing that faith: “persevere,” “endure,” “don’t lose heart.” As a result of their faith, some heroes triumphed: they routed armies, escaped the sword, survived lions. But others met less happy ends: they were flogged, chained, stoned, and sawed in two. The chapter concludes, “These were all commanded for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.”

p. 137

(10 Lies About God: And The Truths That Shatter Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. Copyright– Erwin W. Lutzer, 2009.

In the face of the terrifying upheavals of nature, our first response should be worship. When Job lost his ten children to a windstorm, he did not know the prologue to his book; he did not know that Satan and God had had a dialogue and that he had been singled out for a special trial. Without explanation, without Job's knowing the fine print of God's purposes, a natural disaster wiped out his children. With ten fresh graves on the side of a hill, he faced a choice, and chose worship: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:20)

The next day, things went from bad to worse. By then Satan had permission from God to smite Job with "painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head" (Job 2:7). Again, Job had to choose what to do: should he worship or curse?

Satan told God that if Job had his possessions taken from him, he would curse God to his face (Job 1:11). While Satan predicted that Job would curse God, and though Job's wife, unable to bear his suffering, encouraged it with the cryptic remark, "Curse God and die!" Job would have no part of it. With the keen insight of a theologian, he corrected her. "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" (Job 2:9-10). He knew that both the good times and trouble came from God. He would bless and not curse.
p. 116

(Seeking Him by Nancy Leigh DeMoss & Tim Grissom with Life Action Ministries) Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Life Action Ministries, 2004.

As Elisabeth Elliot has said, suffering is "having what you don't want, or wanting what you don't have"; it can range in scope and severity from "traffic jams to taxes to tumors."
p. 93

"When you are in the furnace, your Father keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat."

—Warren Wiersbe

p. 94

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford
selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust.
Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

I exhort you in the Lord to go on in your journey to heaven, and to be content of such fare by the way as Christ and his followers have had before you; for they had always the wind on their faces, and our Lord hath not changed the way to us, for our ease, but will have us following our sweet guide.

pp. 62-63

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford
selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust.
Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

His cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bare: it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour.

Ye have God's promise, that ye shall have his presence in fire, water, and in seven tribulations.

p. 72

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

One of the classic stories of adversity in the Bible is about Joseph. At the beginning of his life, Joseph is the favorite son of his father, envied by his brothers, with dreams of being the one everybody bows down to. Then he is kidnapped by his brothers and ends up serving as a slave in the home of Potiphar. He loses his home, his culture, his security, and his status as favorite son. What does Joseph have left? He is in a strange bed, in a strange house, in a strange land, with no friends, no prospects, and no explanation. But he has one gift—and that one thing makes all the difference.

Scripture says, “The LORD was with Joseph . . .” Joseph is not alone.

What happens to someone who loses everything but God, then finds out that God is enough? As a powerless stranger, he experiences the presence of God in his life in a way he never did in the comfort of his own home. Rivers of living water begin to flow from his belly that he had never known before, because hope comes from the promise that “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” God wasn’t at work producing the circumstances Joseph wanted. God was at work in bad circumstances producing the *Joseph* that God wanted.

pp. 236-7

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)
Grand Rapids, MI.:Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications, 1985.

Again, the circumstances of the Lord’s people are a great difficulty: some of those who love God best, and who serve Him most, seem to have nothing but trouble all their days; their way on earth is a weary one, and their path a dark path, so far as the world’s observation goes; while perhaps those who have no care, and indeed little thought for God, seem to have all prosperity,

...

p. 423

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

The highest and the greatest expression of faith in the whole Bible is—
“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).
(October 31)

(Abba’s Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging by Brennan Manning) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright - Brennan Manning, 1994.

Passion is not high emotion but a steely determination, fired by love, to stay centered in the awareness of Christ’s present risenness, a drivenness to remain rooted in the truth of who I am, and a readiness to pay the price of fidelity.
p. 137

Knowing the Apostle Paul's athletic vent and his competitive spirit, I could just feel him hoping that this is just a temporary setback for these Galatian Christians and they'll get it together to make a strong finish.

I am reminded of Paul Hamm:

"It Ain't Over Till It's Over."

(Finish Strong: Amazing Stories of Courage and Inspiration by Dan Green)
Naperville, IL: Simple Truths, LLC. Copyright– Simple Truths, LLC,
2008.

It Ain't Over Till It's Over

Going into the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, expectations were very high for Paul Hamm. **He was the reigning world champion—the first U.S. man to ever win a world all-around title. . . .**

Hamm started strong in the first three events and held a first place lead in the all-around by .038 points. Then, disaster struck. During his vault performance, he under-rotated and missed his landing, causing him to sit down and nearly fall off the platform. . . .

But, this is where Paul Hamm demonstrated the difference between mediocrity and greatness. **He decided at that point in time to put his fall behind him and move forward, giving his best effort to finish strong. . . .**

As I sat and watched the broadcast I could see Paul pour his heart into his routine—you could feel his energy, focus and determination. . . . And as it turns out, in one of the most dramatic comebacks in all of sports he won the gold medal in the men's all-around by 0.012 points, becoming the first U.S. man to ever win the Olympic title. Talk about finishing strong.
pp. 34-37

v. 5 Therefore the one supplying the Spirit to you and working miracles among you (Is He doing it) by the works of the law or by the message of faith?

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

Does God then give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law or by your believing what you heard?

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving or because you trust him to do them in you?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

3:5. (4) *On what basis did God perform miracles?* That **miracles** were performed among the Galatians by divine power was recorded in the Book of Acts (14:3, 8-11). It was clear, furthermore, that these supernatural works were not the result of the works of **the Law** but from the hearing that leads to faith. The Galatians did not know the Law, and Paul's message was that of justification by faith.

Whenever you find a **"THEREFORE,"** you find out **WHAT IT IS THERE FOR.**

This **"THEREFORE"** tells us that Paul wants to bring us to a settled conviction about this matter. And that is that the same Holy Spirit who came to dwell within us at salvation is the same Holy Spirit who is carrying us on to spiritual maturity.

This is **QUESTION #6**.

This person who fascinated you—back in verse 1—now he is:

“THE ONE SUPPLYING THE SPIRIT TO YOU AND WORKING MIRACLES AMONG YOU.”

QUESTION #6:

“(IS HE DOING IT) BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW OR BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH?”

Once again, as we had back in **QUESTION #1**, we have a **MULTIPLE CHOICE** and it is the same multiple choice that is recorded in verse 2. You can make your choice. It is either:

“BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW” or

“BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH.”

The obvious answer to his question here in verse 5 is the same as that of verse 2. The **ANSWER**:

“BY THE MESSAGE OF FAITH.”

If the Holy Spirit comes in when we accept Christ by faith—and He does—then the obvious answer to our maturity in spiritual things is the in-living Christ who wants to be released to operate in our lives by the same faith.

Ian Thomas calls it:

Allowing the Holy Spirit to occupy the whole of your personality with the adequacy of Jesus Christ.
(source unknown)

Galatians 2:20 (DAV)

With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.

Whereas works can keep us from salvation in Christ, so even after we become a Christian works once again can keep us from spiritual growth.

How subtle and easy it is for us as Christians to feel that any fruit that is going to come out of our lives in being changed is going to be something which we are going to do on our own efforts. And so we contribute greatly to hypocrisy and phoniness and real insincerity by feeling that Christian growth and development is dependent upon us. We need to recognize His analysis of things in John 15:5, and that is, without Him we can do nothing.

John 15:5 (NASB)

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost in his book Man's Problems and God's Answers, in talking about Saul in the Old Testament, says:

Saul's irritability must be recognized as the product of the flesh, not the product of the Holy Spirit. That which characterizes the Holy Spirit is quietness, peacableness and rest. He will never produce that which is contrary to His own character in a child of God. Thus the Holy Spirit never produces irritability in a child of God. That is the product of the flesh or the old nature. The child of God who walks in disobedience or is controlled by the flesh will manifest the irritability and restlessness of his father, the devil. If the Spirit of God is in control, he will reproduce the quietness and peacefulness of Jesus Christ. Can you imagine Christ being irritated and snapping somebody's head off? It is ludicrous to even talk about it. We need to recognize that irritability such as Saul experienced is a product of the flesh, a manifestation of the sin nature and that it comes when one is out of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

When a man is out of fellowship with the Lord Jesus and is not walking in dependence upon the Holy Spirit these are some of the by-products that result from that relationship, whereas it is obvious when the Spirit of God is producing the qualities of Jesus Christ within the life of the growing child of God.

The Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians wants it quite clear that even as they have received the Spirit by the message of faith, so they were to go on growing and developing in Christ through the same Holy Spirit working in their lives.

Anders says:

Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles . . . because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? The Holy Spirit enters the believer's life because of grace and not the law.
p. 36

MacArthur says:

Paul's argument is itself powerful: If a person has received eternal salvation through trust in the crucified Christ, received the fullness of the Holy Spirit the same moment he believed, and has the Father's Spirit-endowed power working within him, how could he hope to enhance that out of his own insignificant human resources by some meritorious effort?
p. 69

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

What Paul meant here by the working of **miracles** is uncertain. Perhaps his resuscitation from near death after being stoned (Acts 14:19, 20) is part of what he had in mind.
p. 1521

(The Best of A. W. Tozer by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)
Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers. Copyright– Zur Ltd., 1978, 2000.

Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by One who will expect obedience to the written and living Word? Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by One who will not tolerate the self sins? For instance, self-love. You can no more have the Holy Ghost and have self-love than you can have purity and impurity at the same moment in the same place. He will not permit you to indulge self-confidence. Self-love, self-confidence, self-righteousness, self-admiration, self-aggrandizement, and self-pity are under the interdiction of God Almighty, and He cannot send His mighty Spirit to possess the heart where these things are.
p. 211

The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.
p. 208

v. 6 Even as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness.

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

Just as Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

Don't these things happen among you just as they happened with Abraham? He believed God, and that act of belief was turned into a life that was right with God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles this next section and then says about verse 6:

BY THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM (3:6-9).

3:6. The Judaizers claimed to have the Old Testament on their side, especially looking to Moses as their teacher. But Paul went centuries farther back and said, **Consider Abraham.** How was he, the father of Jewish people, justified? The answer was simple and direct. Noting Genesis 15:6, Paul declared, **He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.** Abraham's faith in God's ability to perform what He promised was accepted by God as righteousness and so the patriarch was justified—before he was circumcised (cf. Gen. 17:24). How then could the Judaizers insist that circumcision was essential to being accepted by God?

The words “EVEN AS” introduce us to one of Paul’s illustrations—ABRAHAM.

Here Paul is quoting from:

Genesis 15:6 (NIV)

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

He also uses the same verse in:

Romans 4:3 (DAV)

For what is the scripture saying? “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

Abraham was before the law and God counted his faith for righteousness.

ABRAHAM will be mentioned:

here in verse 6,

verse 7,

verse 8,

verse 9, and then in

verse 14.

Romans 4:20-21 (DAV)

yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not vacillate in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised, He was able also to do.

Romans 4:20-21 (NASB)

yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

Anders says:

Argument from Abraham (vv. 6-9)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Abraham, who lived before the law, was saved by faith. The blessings of Abraham (inheritance, sonship, and eternal life) were received by faith. Therefore, grace is superior to the law.*

p. 36

Anders says:

The Judaizers pointed to the Law of Moses as the means to salvation. Paul demonstrates that Abraham, who preceded Moses by 430 years, was saved by faith and not self-effort. Quoting Genesis 15:6, Paul states Abraham **believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness**. To further discredit the Judaizers' emphasis on circumcision, Paul noted that Abraham was justified prior to his circumcision (Gen. 17:24). Therefore, the Judaizers could not argue that the law and circumcision were necessary for salvation because Abraham was saved apart from both of them.

I know a man who married a woman who was extremely wealthy. When he accepted her as his wife, all her money was added to his bank account. In the same way, when Abraham placed his faith in God, all God's righteousness was added to Abraham's spiritual account. My friend became as wealthy as his wife, and Abraham became in God's eyes as righteous as God. How? God **credited to him** his own divine righteousness.

p. 36

Barclay says:

Now the easiest way to grasp an idea is to see that idea embodied in a person. In a sense, every great word must become flesh. So Paul pointed the Galatians to a man who embodied faith. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the man to whom God had made the great promise that in him all families of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 12:3). He was the man whom God had specially chosen as the man who pleased Him. Wherein did Abraham specially please God? It was not by doing the works of the law, because at that time the law did not exist; it was by taking God at His word, by trusting God entirely, by abandoning all earthly things and surrendering himself in one great act of faith.
p. 25

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul begins his argument by linking his OT example to the Galatians' spiritual experience, showing that what they had known to be true in their own lives (salvation by faith alone) was also true for others and is confirmed by Scripture.
p. 721

Bickel & Jantz say:

In his second proof in this section, Paul does something really clever. He appeals to Abraham, considered the father of the nation of Israel. Abraham predates Moses, and therefore he precedes the law of Moses. Look at what Paul does here. He points out that Abraham lived before Moses, and he was saved *by faith* (Genesis 15:6). Isn't that beautiful? Take that, you Judaizers!
p. 69

Calvin says:

Having appealed to facts and experience, he now gives quotations from Scripture. And first, he brings forward the example of Abraham.
p. 83

Eadie says:

The apostle does not answer his own question: he takes for granted that every one will reply, “By the hearing of faith,”—faith being the leading term, which is now illustrated in the case of Abraham.
p. 227

Gaebelein says:

The second argument is concerning righteousness. These false teachers made much of Abraham and the Jews honored him as the father of the nation. How did he obtain righteousness? It was not by the works of the law, for there was no law and no ordinances. “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.” He believed and grace imputed this to him for righteousness.
p. 215

Hendriksen says:

Abraham’s life is, in fact, an illustration of the manner in which men, in all ages, are saved. *Confidence* in God, come what may, and *resulting obedience* to God’s revealed will, characterized Abraham’s life. Of these two—confidence and obedience—the former is basic throughout. Abraham obeyed because he believed. He heeded God’s command because, *first of all*, he trusted God. The *work* of obedience proved that the confidence was genuine.
p. 120

Hogg & Vine say:

or by the hearing of faith?—the answer to this question was inevitable; from the beginning of the gospel among them its blessings were imparted to those who “had faith” to be made whole”, Acts 14. 9.

v. 6. **Even as**—so plain is this that the Apostle does not wait to supply the answer, but assuming it to be ‘by faith’, he goes on to adduce as illustration the well-known case of Abraham . . .
p. 116

Lange says:

This reckoning somewhat for righteousness rests most of all on God's taking pleasure in faith, and on the fulfilling of His promises, those to which faith trusts. True, even faith gives God the honor, and is in this respect greater than any work. But even faith cannot always give to God the honor so willingly, so fully, with such victory over all doubts arising from the reason, as it should. Therefore God's *imputation* is still the best, according to which good pleasure of His will He counts even a weak spark of faith for righteousness, and therefore I may be assured that, though I now and then be somewhat doubtful of His gracious will, which He has towards me, mistrust Him, become in spirit sad and heavy, I am yet surrounded and overspread with the broad heaven of His promises, and especially of His forgiving grace, and even then His gracious imputation remains valid.
p. 72

Lenski says:

Verses 6-9 epitomize Romans 4. The conclusion that Galatians and Romans must therefore have been written at about the same time disregards the fact that this exposition of Gen. 15:6 and of the whole Old Testament account of Abraham goes back through the entire ministry of Paul.
p. 133

Lucado says:

Just like Abraham, we are made right with God by faith alone. And just like Abraham, we are commissioned to bless all nations by sharing and showing the good news of God's forgiveness. God's intention is for us—now forgiven and free—to be bright beacons of hope and life in the world. But when we forget that salvation is by grace, we stop shining. Living in our own strength darkens our hearts and deadens our enthusiasm. What's more, when we fall into the trap of trying to earn God's approval, we paint a misleading and unattractive picture of what it means to be a child of God. Revel in the astonishing good news that you are—now, already—fully accepted in Christ. Then spend your life revealing that amazing grace to others.
p. 39

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

There are several reasons for Paul's reference to Abraham's faith as an example. (1) Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation (Gen. 12:1-3). (2) Abraham is the clearest example of justification in the OT. (3) The Judaizers almost certainly were pointing back to Abraham, probably in connection with circumcision (2:3; 5:2, 3). The example of Abraham's faith is also developed in Rom. 4; Heb. 11; James 2. Paul quotes Gen. 15:6 from the Greek translation of the OT to show that **Abraham** was justified by faith alone. This verse communicates precisely what Paul called "the truth of the gospel" (2:5, 14).

p. 1521

Simpson says:

II. HIS ARGUMENT FOR FREE GRACE

1. He proves it from the covenant with Abraham. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. . . . And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:6, 8, 9). The authority of Abraham, their father, was supreme with every Jew, and therefore Paul appeals to it and reminds them that the covenant of salvation made with Abraham for himself and his seed was purely one of faith and grace. For even in Genesis we are told that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

p. 12

Wuest says:

Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith, not by circumcision. In Romans 4:9, 10, he proves his case conclusively when he shows that Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised, which demonstrates that his circumcision had nothing to do with his acceptance of salvation.

p. 89

Wuest says:

Thus Abraham believed God, and his act of faith was *placed to his account* in value as righteousness. He believed God and his act of faith *was credited to him* for righteousness. He believed God and his act of faith was *placed on deposit for him and evaluated* as righteousness. He believed God and his act of faith was *computed as to its value, and there was placed to his account*, righteousness. He believed God, and his act of faith *was credited to his account* for righteousness. Finally, he believed God, and his act of faith *was credited to him*, resulting in righteousness.

p. 89

(10 Lies About God: And The Truths That Shatter Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. Copyright– Erwin W. Lutzer, 2009.

Like all of us, I face the danger of idolatry, that is, the temptation to manufacture a god based on my own inclinations and experience. Social scientists tell us there is compelling evidence that each culture creates its own gods; in fact, such gods are often indistinguishable from the culture itself. Agricultural peoples develop gods of the sun and rain; ocean people worship the god of the sea and the moon. And we Americans, obsessed with consumerism and pleasure, have created a god who is tolerant of our lifestyles, lets us be in charge, and serves mainly to help us fulfill our potential. He is a god “just for us.”

No one, I believe, would dare create the idea of the holy, transcendent God of the Bible. This sovereign One probes our most hidden thoughts, tells us that we must repent, and commands worship that ends all thoughts of personal self-aggrandizement. This god, as we shall see in the chapters that follow, has been revealed from heaven. Our task is to understand Him as He has chosen to reveal Himself, not as we think He ought to be.

p. xi

v. 7 You are knowing therefore that those who are of faith these are sons of Abraham.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

so then, understand that those who believe are the sons of Abraham.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

Is it not obvious to you that persons who put their trust in Christ (not persons who put their trust in the law!) are like Abraham: children of faith?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Striking a tremendous blow at the Judaizers, Paul linked the past with the present and declared that just as **Abraham** was saved **by faith** so were those who now claimed to be his **children** . . . Abraham and his spiritual descendants, both Jews and Gentiles, have all been declared righteous by faith.

Those **"WHO ARE OF FAITH"** are identified with Abraham in that they are **SPIRITUAL SONS**.

Wuest says:

The argument is, "Since faith was the way Abraham was justified, it follows that those who exercise like faith, are his true followers."

p. 92

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications
Association, 1992.

God wants you to understand that it is a life of *faith*, not a life of emotional
enjoyment of His blessings.
(October 31)

v. 8 Now the scripture, having foreseen that on faith God is justifying the Gentiles announced beforehand to Abraham all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the gospel to Abraham ahead of time, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

It was all laid out beforehand in Scripture that God would set things right with non-Jews by faith. Scripture anticipated this in the promise to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed in you."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Moreover, this conclusion is in harmony with **the Scripture** which states that **all nations will be blessed through** Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:3). Thus the justification of uncircumcised Gentiles was anticipated in the universal aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant when God **announced the gospel** (lit., "the good news") . . . **to Abraham**. It should not be overlooked that Paul referred to Scripture speaking as though God were speaking, so it can rightly be affirmed that what the Bible says, God says. This and similar verses (e.g., John 10:35b; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21) provide important support for believing in the absolute and total inspiration and authority of Scripture.

Now Paul is vindicating Gentile salvation as promised to Abraham. The Scriptures foresaw that this was going to be and that they would be made righteous by faith.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Arthur says:

Read Galatians 3 and mark the key words. You will see in Galatians 3:8 that the word *justify* is used. Since you have been marking *justified*, you should also mark *justify* in this verse. This form of the word is only used this one time in the book. Watch the flow of the thought.

p. 29

Lange says:

O man be assured, all thy temptations also, and needs, He hath seen beforehand! Only go with confidence to the Scripture, therein to seek God's consolations.

p. 72

(Faith & Doubt by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright–
John Ortberg, 2008.

Those who believe they believe in God
but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind,
without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair,
believe only in the idea of God, and not in God himself.

MADELEINE L'ENGLE

p. 39

v. 9 So that those who are believing ones (of faith) are being blessed with believing Abraham.

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

So then those who believe are blessed along with Abraham the believer.

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

So those now who live by faith are blessed along with Abraham, who lived by faith—this is no new doctrine!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The apostle concluded this phase of his argument by stating that though provision was made for “all nations” (v. 8), only **those who have faith** receive the blessing of justification. Thus Paul drew a distinction between God’s provision and human appropriation.

“SO THAT” gives us the **END** or **RESULT** of what he is saying. That is:

“THOSE WHO ARE BELIEVING ONES (OF FAITH) ARE BEING BLESSED WITH BELIEVING ABRAHAM.”

So his illustration has presented a **CASE FOR FAITH** as a basis for righteousness and Gentile salvation.

Thus far in the passage we have seen:

1. the Spirit was given by faith,
2. that maturity is in the Spirit and not in the flesh, and
3. Abraham was accepted before God on the basis of faith.

v. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written “Cursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

The NET Bible translates verse 10:

For all who rely on doing the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the book of the law.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

And that means that anyone who tries to live by his own effort, independent of God, is doomed to failure. Scripture backs this up: “Utterly cursed is every person who fails to carry out every detail written in the Book of the law.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles verses 10-12 and then says:

BY THE EFFECT OF THE LAW (3:10-12). HAVING ESTABLISHED THE FACT THAT JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THE GALATIANS AND OF ABRAHAM, PAUL THEN SHOWED THE ILLOGIC OF RELIANCE ON THE LAW.

3:10-11. Contrary to what the Judaizers taught, the Law could not justify; it could only condemn. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 27:26 to show that **the Law** demanded perfection and that **a curse** was attached to failure to keep any part of it. The breaking of only one command even once brings a person under the curse; and since everybody fails at some point, all are under the curse. The proposition that a person can gain divine acceptance by human effort is therefore totally destroyed.

The Law locks us in to **DOING!**

The difference between **FAITH** and the **LAW** is:

in **FAITH** the focus is on what **GOD DOES FOR MAN**, and

in **LAW** it is on what **MAN DOES FOR GOD**.

And it has all been **DONE!!**

Lovett says:

CURSED. A curse is the opposite of blessing. The faith-life offers blessing, life under the Law brings only a curse. Law and faith work on different principles. Justification by faith is based on what God does for man, whereas justification under Law is based on what man does for God. They proceed in different directions. The Law requires perfect obedience in all things—continually. It demands perfection. There is no room for failure. Seeking righteousness under the Law is like a man scaling a cliff—one slip and he's dead—for the Law demands the full penalty for even the tiniest transgression. He who violates any part of the Law is guilty of breaking the whole Law (Ja. 2:10). As breaking a single link causes a chain to fail, so does breaking a single requirement of the Law cause one's righteousness to crumble.

pp. 35-36

GOD DOES NOT GRADE ON THE CURVE.

I can remember when Bobby and his buddies were climbing up on a snow field. They were roped together and one of the fellows slipped and everybody slipped with him because no one was able to hold their ground in those slippery conditions. Bobby said they slid three or four hundred feet across the snow field and miraculously were not hurt. The only thing that they had when they finished were smoking britches from sliding across the snow.

The curse of those who are endeavoring to be made right before God by the works of the law is like a Damocles sword hanging over them. The law is a unit and you cannot pick out a part of it and say, I am going to keep this part or that part. It is all, or not at all, Paul says here; and this agrees with what James has to say in:

James 2:10 (DAV)

For whoever pays attention to the whole law and yet sins in one respect, he has become guilty of all.

(Welcome To The Family by Stephen W. Brown) Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1990.

At the dog track, dogs are persuaded to do something as dumb as run around the track because they are convinced they will catch a mechanical rabbit which is always kept just so far in front of them as they run. Those dogs think they are scaring the mechanical rabbit. They think they will catch it. They might even think they will beat that rabbit around the track. But it will never happen because the man who runs the mechanical rabbit is always in control. The rabbit will always get to the finish line before the dogs. The Christian's life is like that mechanical rabbit. The world may think it will destroy, hurt, and devour it, but it won't because Jesus is in control and the end is already decided.

p. 153

Revelation 20:12, 15 (DAV)

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which had been written in the books, according to their works.

And if anyone was not found having been written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

(You Don't Have to Quit by Ray & Anne Ortlund) Nashville, TN: Oliver-Nelson. Copyright - Anne and Ray Ortlund, 1988.

1. Everybody gets discouraged. You're not at all alone. A forlorn-looking Charlie Brown comes up to the information desk and asks, "Where do you go to give up?"

Jim Berkeley says a pastor can tell things are bad when . . . "he's elected Pastor Emeritus and he's only twenty-eight!"
p. 73

I circled the words **"ALL THINGS"** in verse 10 on my chart to cause it to stand out. Listen once again to what Paul is saying in verse 10:

"CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO IS NOT REMAINING IN ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO THEM."

To show the affirmation of this statement, let's **GO BACK** to Exodus 20 and review the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**, just to give us a little part of the law where we can grade ourselves with regard to our own personal performance:

1. Exodus 20:3 (NIV)

“You shall have no other gods before me.

2. Exodus 20:4 (NIV)

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

3. Exodus 20:7 (NIV)

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

4. Exodus 20:8 (NIV)

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

5. Exodus 20:12 (NIV)

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

6. Exodus 20:13 (NIV)

“You shall not murder.

7. Exodus 20:14 (NIV)

“You shall not commit adultery.

8. Exodus 20:15 (NIV)

“You shall not steal.

9. Exodus 20:16 (NIV)

“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10. Exodus 20:17 (NIV)

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Anders says:

3:10. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to prove that, contrary to what the Judaizers claimed, the law cannot justify and save. It can only condemn. The breaking of any aspect of the law brought a curse on the person who broke the law. Since no one can keep the law perfectly, we are all cursed. Paul, with this argument, destroys the Judaizers’ belief that a person is saved through the law.

p. 37

Barclay says:

HERE again Paul's argument seeks to drive his opponents into a corner from which there is no escape. "Suppose," he says, "you do decide that you are going to take the course of trying to win God's favour and approval by means of accepting and obeying the law, suppose you do try to get into a right relationship with God that way, what, then, is the logical and inevitable consequence?" First of all, the man who does that has to stand or fall by his decision; if he chooses the law he has got to live by the law. Second, it is impossible to do it; no man ever has, and no man ever will, succeed in always keeping and obeying and satisfying the law. Third, if that is so then you are accursed, because scripture itself says (Deuteronomy 27:26) that the man who does not keep the whole law is under a curse. Therefore, the logical and inevitable end of trying to get right with God by making law the principle of life is a curse. But scripture has another saying, "It is the man who is right with God by faith who will really live." (Habakkuk 2:4). So, then, the only way to get into right relationship with God, and therefore the only way to peace, is the way of faith, of acceptance, of surrender.
pp. 27-28

Bickel & Jantz say:

Christ has always offered the narrow road. He's never been the popular way to God for one simple reason: You don't have to work to get there. Every other religion ever devised by humankind has "works" as the centerpiece. Want to get to heaven, or achieve perfect consciousness, or find peace in the afterlife? Do good stuff. Pile up the brownie points. Do all you can to be a good person. Follow a long list of rules and regulations.
p. 70

Calvin says:

The argument is drawn from the contradictory nature of the two schemes; for the same fountain does not yield both hot and cold. The law holds all living men under its curse; and from the law, therefore, it is in vain to expect a blessing.
p. 88

De Haan says:

To say that I by myself cannot keep the law of God perfectly is an admission of the holiness, the perfection, the righteousness of that law. I confess that the law is so high, so good, so holy, that I, a poor, weak, depraved sinner cannot in myself meet its high and holy demands. I extol the holiness of the law and exalt it; I establish the law by admitting my inability to keep it and turning from the law I flee to Christ for mercy, for pardon, for grace, and say:

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.
Not the labor of my hands,
Could fulfil Thy law's demand.

Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow.
These for sin could not atone.
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

p. 86

De Haan says:

IN these unmistakable words of the Holy Spirit, Paul asserts that any man who at any time, or in any measure has ever broken one of the laws of God, only once, is under the curse of the law and is lost, condemned and hopeless as far as the penalty of the law is concerned. It is well to ponder these words carefully, and to ask yourself the question, "Am I under the law?" Then if you have not kept the entire law in every detail all of your life without a single interruption, then according to these unmistakable words, you are under the curse of God and must suffer the penalty of the law which is eternal death and separation from the presence of your Creator.

p. 99

Dunnam says:

With an unbelievable boldness, almost verging on arrogance, Paul attacked his opponents where they themselves felt invulnerable. Again he uses Scripture with which the Jews would be familiar to make his case on behalf of the gospel. He quotes Deuteronomy 27:26, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the books of the law, to do them." One has to read all of Deuteronomy 27 to understand the powerful meaning of this quote. Twelve verses of that chapter begin with the word "cursed," and the response of the people is "Amen." To be cursed was to be condemned to the torments of hell.

p. 59

Eadie says:

The . . . introduces another argument from the opposite point of view. Believers alone are blessed; and that they who are of faith are alone blessed is plain from the fact, that they who stand in antagonism to them, or they who are of the works of the law, are under curse—are not only negatively unblessed, but positively under curse.

p. 241

Fergusson says:

Here is a third argument, to prove that we are justified by faith and not by works, because they who seek to be justified by the works of the law are under the curse of God, and so not justified; which he proveth, because, according to Scripture, Deut. xxvii. 26, the law pronounceth the curse upon every man who fulfilleth not the whole law in every tittle or jot of it; now he taketh it for granted that none fulfil the whole law, and so doth leave unto them to gather that the law doth fasten the curse upon all who seek justification by it.

p. 50

Gaebelein says:

The law demands obedience, but it has no power to give a nature which delights in the law to keep it, nor can it bestow the power to fulfill its demands. Nothing can the law give to the sinner, but the curse.
p. 216

Gutzke says:

Did you know that the Bible never teaches you to work for blessing?

Salvation is the free gift of God. But the Christian is going to have to work to eat. He will work for his daily food. The Christian will plow the fields and will scatter the seed in order to raise a crop. "And whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" is the law that prevails so far as day-in-and-day-out living is concerned.

Receiving blessings from God is a good deal like belonging to a family. A child does not work to be a son. A little girl does not work to be a daughter. They belong to the parents. So it is with reference to the things of God. If a person belongs to God, he belongs to Him! And it will be the free gift of God that brings salvation: God will save to the uttermost those that come to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:25).
p. 58

Harrison says:

2—Works of the law leave the worker "under the curse" (Gal. 3:10). When we consider the real nature of the law, as we will in our next chapter, we realize that all we may do under it is powerless to lift its curse. All our works are wasted effort, all to no purpose.
p. 50

Harrison says:

The law is a system that requires continuous obedience, not to one point but to the whole. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). If I break one law I cannot plead my obedience to a score of other laws to get me off; I am in the toils of the law for breaking just one.

p. 54

Hendriksen says:

10. Having shown that righteousness comes by way of faith, Paul now expresses this same truth negatively. What he states in verse 10 ff. may therefore be considered a corollary of the thought expressed in verses 6-9.

p. 126

Hogg & Vine say:

. . . those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who depend in whole or in part upon obedience to the Law for justification. The assumption that complete obedience to the law lies beyond the power of man underlies the whole of this argument. This is not an assumption likely to be disputed . . .

p. 126

Hogg & Vine say:

The fig-tree that disappointed its Creator in failing to fulfil the end of its existence, and was condemned therefore by the Lord Jesus to perpetual barrenness, was said by Peter to have been "cursed" by Him, Mark 11. 21. Men who because of their alienation from God fail to fulfil the end of their being, and so disappoint their Creator, are finally to be pronounced "cursed", *i.e.*, they are to be rejected from the eternal kingdom and to be judged worthy of, and sent into, the eternal fire, Matt. 25. 41.

pp. 126-7

Hogg & Vine say:

. . . the Apostle was well aware that the Galatians had not seen what is involved in submission to the law of Moses; they had not realised that failure to do all, always and everywhere, just as it is written, involves the professed law-keeper in eternal disaster. Law is unbending, it yields nothing to weakness, its standard is never lowered, not even by a hairbreadth; law makes no compromise, and finds no room for mercy; “a man that hath set at nought Moses’ law dieth without compassion”, Heb. 10. 28.
p. 128

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

PERFECT *obedience* is required by the words, “in all things.” CONTINUAL *obedience* by the word “continueth.” No man renders this obedience . . .
p. 1265

Lange says:

The force of this is: it must be those “of faith” who are blessed; for those who busy themselves with “works of the law” (the only alternative possible, if not “of faith”) cannot be blessed; since these are under the curse, and therefore a bestowal of blessing cannot avail for them.
p. 68

Lange says:

HEUBNER:—If we will be saved by the law, we must do all, and must be able to say, that we have never neglected any thing commanded, nor done any thing forbidden. In brief, the matter stands thus: if we will merit salvation, amazingly little will come of it, for our virtue is piece-work; against one or two legal performances God can oppose ten transgressions. Whoever does not view the requirements of the law with the diminishing glass of light-mindedness, and his own works with the magnifying glass of self-love, must acknowledge this.

p. 73

Lightfoot says:

10, 11, 12. Having shewn by *positive* proof that justification is of faith, he strengthens his position by the *negative* argument derived from the impossibility of maintaining its opposite, justification by law. This negative argument is twofold: *First*, It is impossible to fulfil the requirements of the law, and the non-fulfilment lays us under a curse (ver. 10): *Secondly*, Supposing the fulfilment possible, still the spirit of the law is antagonistic to faith, which is elsewhere spoken of as the source of life (vv. 11, 12).

10, 11. 'On the other hand all who depend on works of law are under a curse. This the Scripture itself declares. It utters an anathema against all who fail to fulfil every single ordinance contained in the book of the law. Again the same truth, that the law does not justify in the sight of God, appears from another Scripture which declares that the just shall live by faith.'

pp. 137-8

Lucado says:

The apostle Paul is instructing the Galatian Christians not to listen to false teachers urging them to surrender the freedom they have in Christ for bondage to the Jewish law. Here he shows why religious rules are incapable of helping a person become right with God and why only Christ is able to save us.

p. 42

MacArthur says:

as many as are of the works of the law. The attempting to earn salvation by keeping the law. ***under the curse.*** Quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26 to show that failure to keep the law perfectly brings divine judgment and condemnation. One violation of the law deserves the curse of God. Cf. Deuteronomy 27, 28.
p. 1665

MacArthur says:

all things. See James 2:10. No one can keep all the commands of the law—not even strict Pharisees like Saul of Tarsus (Rom. 7:7-12).
p. 1665

MacArthur says:

But Paul turns the tables on them again. “Don’t you realize,” he says, “that **as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse?**” That question would have utterly perplexed the Judaizers, who would have responded vehemently, “We know no such thing. How can you speak such foolishness?” “Have you forgotten Deuteronomy, the last book of **the Law?**” Paul asks, in effect, “**for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them’**” (see Deut. 27:26). A curse is a divine judgment that brings the sentence of condemnation.
pp. 76-77

McGee says:

The important word here is “continueth.” I am willing to grant that maybe there was a day in your life when you felt very good, when you were on top of the world and singing, “Everything’s coming up daisies.” On that day you walked with the Lord and did not stub your toe. Then you say, “Well, because I did that, God saved me.” But notice what this verse says, “Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in all things which are written in the book of the law.” How about that? Do you keep the law day and night, twenty-four hours every day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks out of the year in thought, word, and deed? If you are a human being, somewhere along the line you let down. You are not walking on top of the world all of the time. My friend, when you let down, the law can only condemn you.
p. 168

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

3:10 Being **under the curse** through trying to be justified by **the works of the law** is contrasted with being blessed as a believer (v. 9). The quotation from Deut. 27:26 says that those who do not keep the whole law are **cursed**, proving that all are *cursed* who follow the law, because all fall short of the law’s standards (Rom. 1:17; 3:10-18, 23).
p. 1522

Ridderbos says:

10-12 In these verses the apostle confirms (*for*) what has gone before by an argument *e contrario*. First he has pointed out from Scripture that righteousness is by way of faith. Now he proceeds to show, again by an appeal to Scripture, that righteousness cannot be by way of the law. To that end he establishes the point that all who seek their justification out of the works of the law in reality lie under the curse, quite the opposite of Abraham’s blessing.
p. 122

Spurgeon says:

I want thee, then, in the sight of God, to answer me this all-important and solemn question before I begin—Art thou in Christ, or art thou not? Hast thou fled for refuge to Him who is the only hope for sinners? or art thou yet a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, ignorant of God, and of His holy Gospel? Come—be honest with thine own heart, and let thy conscience say yes, or no, for one of these two things thou art to-night—thou art either under the wrath of God, or thou art delivered from it. Thou art to-night either an heir of wrath, or an inheritor of the kingdom of grace. Which of these two? Make no “ifs” or “ahs” in your answer. Answer straightforward to thine own soul; and if there be any doubt whatever about it, I beseech thee rest not till that doubt be resolved.

p. 289

Spurgeon says:

So then, sir, you mean to assert that you have continued “in all things which are written in the book of the law.” Surely the very reading of the law would be enough to convince thee that thou art in error. Dost thou know what the law is? Why, I will give thee what I may call the outside of it, but remember that within it there is a broader spirit than the mere words.

p. 289

Spurgeon says:

“Aye, but,” cries another, “I have very many times striven to keep the law, and I think I have done so for a little.” Hear ye the sentence read again—“Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Oh! sirs; it is not some hectic flush upon the cheek of consumptive irresolution that God counts to be the health of obedience. It is not some slight obedience for an hour that God will accept all the day of judgment. He saith, “continueth”; and unless from my early childhood to the day when my grey hairs descend into the tomb, I shall have continued to be obedient to God, I must be condemned.

p. 290

Spurgeon says:

Oh! there is no man here that can hope to escape. We must every one of us bow our heads before God, and cry, “Guilty, Lord, guilty—every one of us guilty—‘Cursed is *every one* that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them.” When I look into thy face, O law, my spirit shudders. When I hear thy thunders, my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels. How can I endure Thee? If I am to be tried at last for my life, surely I shall need no judge, for I shall be my own swift accuser, and my conscience shall be a witness to condemn.
p. 291

Spurgeon says:

Oh! would to God that some poor soul in this place would say, “Then I am cursed to-night; I am cursed of God, and cursed of His holy angels—cursed! cursed! cursed!—for I am under the law.” I do think, God the Spirit blessing it, it wants nothing more to slay our carelessness than that one word—“cursed!” “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”
p. 292

Vos says:

Paul now proceeds to show the impossibility of justification by the law, and deliverance from the works of the law through Christ. He had a reminder for Jews who held that their submission to the law entitled them to special blessings as sons of Abraham. “As many as are of [whose manner of life is characterized by] the works of the law are under a curse.” Those who are under the law stand condemned rather than blessed or justified.
p. 57

Wuest says:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under curse, for it stands written, Cursed is every one who is not remaining constantly in all things which stand written in the book of the law in order to do them.
p. 204

Wuest says:

III. *The Judaizers taught that the law was a means of justification. But Paul shows that the law is a means of condemnation, and that it is the Lord Jesus who rescues us from its condemnation through the blood of His Cross (3:10-14).*
p. 94

v. 11 But that in the law no one is being made righteous before (in the sight of) God is clear (evident) because the righteous (man) shall live by faith.

The NET Bible translates verse 11:

Now it is clear no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous one will live by faith.

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

The obvious impossibility of carrying out such a moral program should make it plain that no one can sustain a relationship with God that way. The person who lives in right relationship with God does it by embracing what God arranges for him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Quoting the Old Testament again, Paul showed that even during the dispensation of **Law** legal obedience was not the basis for a **justified** standing **before God . . . because**, as the Prophet Habakkuk wrote, **The righteous will live by faith** (Hab. 2:4).

Let's meditate for a moment or two on the fact that:

"IN THE LAW NO ONE IS BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE (IN THE SIGHT OF) GOD IS CLEAR (EVIDENT)."

That doesn't mean that it doesn't look righteous before men. Yet the Lord's evaluation of that is in:

Luke 16:15 (NASB)

And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 (NIV)

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (DAV)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Here Paul quotes this verse that is from **HABAKKUK** the prophet.

Ironside in his commentary has an interesting note on this:

When it is quoted in **ROMANS**, the emphasis is on:

“the **JUST** shall live by faith.”

In **GALATIANS**, the emphasis is on:

“the just **SHALL LIVE** by faith.”

In **HEBREWS**:

“the just shall live by **FAITH**.”

p. 107 (paraphrased)

This verse became famous in the **REFORMATION** in that this is the verse the Lord used with **MARTIN LUTHER**. On this occasion Martin had gone to Rome. It was considered to be an act of great merit to climb the **SCALA SANCTA**, the great sacred stairway, on hands and knees. He toiled upward seeking that merit that he might win and suddenly there came to him the voice of heaven, “the just shall live by faith.”

“The just shall live by faith,” not by works of the law. This is the whole argument of the epistle.

Rock of Ages

Words: Augustus M. Toplady, 1776

Not the labor of my hands
 Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears forever flow,
 All for sin could not atone;
 Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
 Simply to the cross I cling;
 Naked, come to Thee for dress;
 Helpless look to Thee for grace;
 Foul, I to the fountain fly;
 Wash me, Savior, or I die.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/r/o/rockages.htm>

Gutzke points out:

Believing is to the soul what swallowing is to the body. Now swallowing is something a person does. When it is said that swallowing is the way one lives, what is really meant is swallowing food, not just any substance. A person could swallow poison, but that would be fatal. The same thing is true of believing. When it is said “the just shall live by faith,” it is meant that the just man will live by believing the promises of God. It does not mean believing anything and everything. As a person can swallow poison to his hurt; so he can believe error to his hurt. Both will be fatal. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ brings life eternal, and that is vital.

To say, “It doesn’t make any difference what you believe, just so you believe,” means that one might just as well say, “It doesn’t make any difference what you swallow.” But that is obviously false. It’s *what* a person believes that makes the difference. Or should it be said *whom* a person believes makes the difference? Believingly only commits the person to the things in which he believes. If he happens to believe the right thing, he is fortunate. If he believes the wrong thing, he’s fooled. How is anybody ever cheated? How does one person ever take advantage of another? Is it not true that one person believes in the other? It happens when one believes another person is honest, when he actually is not. Believing in his honesty did not make him honest. It does make a difference whom one believes, what one believes; even so with reference to the things of God. It makes a difference whether a person believes in Him.

p. 60

How much the church needs to get a hold of this message anew because so many are brought into the confines of the church and then immediately put to work rather than given an opportunity to grow.

(Welcome To The Family by Stephen W. Brown) Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1990.

But by far the greatest number of new Christians come into the Church and wither away on some committee (a group of the unwilling, appointed by the incompetent, to do the unnecessary). They develop “churchitis,” a disease which affects the spiritual nerve tissue and destroys the power cells. And then they become frustrated, empty, unfruitful Christians. As Sam Shoemaker put it, they never go far enough for the fun.

p. 38

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

Did you hear the story about the drummer in the mission band who was asked to give his testimony on a street corner at Christmas? Stepping in front of the band, he started boldly: "There was a time in my life when all I did was go to parties and run around and gamble and drink and look for excitement. . . ."

Just then the expression on his face changed and he paused. When he started again, it was not what anyone expected. He said, "And now all I do is beat this stupid drum."

Of course, I wouldn't suggest that we Christians go back to our old pagan life. But we know life ought to be a whole lot better than it is now. It is getting to the point where we need testimonies for three stages of Christians growth: first, how Christ saved us from the pagans; second, how He saved us from the Christians; and third, how Christ brought us to Himself.
pp. 176-77

Anders says:

3:11. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4: **The righteous will live by faith.** This verse reveals that even during the time of the law people were justified by faith and not obedience to the law. The Judaizers would have been wrong in their fundamental message even if they had lived during the time of Moses, because they misunderstood the purpose and power of the law.
p. 37

Barclay says:

. . . therefore the only logical choice is to abandon the way of legalism and to venture upon the way of faith, of taking God at His word and of trusting His love.
p. 28

De Haan says:

THE burden of the Epistle to the Galatians is the place of the law of God in salvation. Paul had stated again and again that if salvation depends even in the least bit upon our works, then the sacrifice of Christ becomes the most colossal mistake of eternity. If there were one man who could be saved by his own efforts, or works of the law, then the death of Christ was unnecessary.
p. 93

Eadie says:

Justification is not of works, for legalists are under curse, since they cannot render perfect obedience, is the one argument; but the second is, Justification cannot depend on works, for the Scripture asserts its connection with faith.
p. 243

Harrison says:

God's method of making men good is through the goodness of Another; not by man's doing anything, but rather by his believing what God Himself has done.
p. 51

Hendriksen says:

The law has no power to subdue man's sinful tendencies. It cannot destroy the power of sin within man (Rom. 8:3). How then can a sinner ever attain to the ultimate blessing of being righteous in the sight of God? How can that true, rich, full life in which man is at peace with his Maker, and abides in sweet communion with him, ever be reached? The answer, which holds for both dispensations, the old and the new, and for people of every race or nationality, whether Gentile or Jew, is this: "The righteous shall live by faith." It is the man who has placed his entire confidence in God, trusting him implicitly, and accepting with gladness of heart the gracious provision which that merciful Father has made for his salvation, it is he, he alone, who shall live. This *living* consists in such things as: *a.* enjoying the peace of God which passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7), in the knowledge that in the sight of God's holy majesty the believer is *righteous* (Rom. 5:1; 8:15); *b.* having fellowship with God "in Christ" (John 17:3); *c.* "rejoicing greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8); *d.* "being transformed into the image of the Lord from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18); and *e.*, last but not least, striving to be a spiritual blessing to others to the glory of God (I Thess. 3:8).
p. 127

Lange says:

STARKE:—The regenerate, who are already righteous through faith, continue in their righteousness and blessedness, and become at the last perfectly blessed, but still only through faith.
p. 73

Lightfoot says:

The same proposition proved in another way; . . . 'Then again.'
p. 138

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Paul quotes Hab. 2:4 to demonstrate that a person can only be **justified** through **faith**. He cites Lev. 18:5 to prove that keeping **the law** to gain salvation is utterly incompatible with faith.

p. 1522

Spurgeon says:

It is through faith that a man becomes just, for otherwise, before the law of God he is convicted of being unjust: being justified by faith, he is enrolled among the just ones. It is through faith that he is at first quickened and breathes the air of heaven, for naturally he was dead in trespasses and sins. Faith is the first sure sign of the spiritual life within the human breast. He repents of sin and looks to Jesus, because he believes the testimony of God's Son; he believes that testimony because he has received a new life. He depends upon the atoning blood of Jesus because his heart has received the power to do so by the Holy Ghost's gift of spiritual life.

p. 294

A Faith As Wild As the World

Speaking about preaching God's word, Michael Heher writes:

Don't make promises God doesn't keep. Account for the shaky ground and patches of quicksand. Don't deny our disappointments or turn away from our broken hearts. Explain the beasts lying in wait, the damaged goods that can't be fixed, and the trouble in the streets. Show us God in the horrors hidden under cover of night and the prayers that don't get answered. Make your words equal to our predicament. Give us faith as wild as the world. Describe that, and we'll hang on every word.

Michael Heher, "Words to Match," Image Journal (Summer 1999)

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Good Works Cannot Liberate Us

When I was a teenager, I became fascinated, appalled, and grieved by the literature of the Holocaust . . . One scene that haunts me is a picture from Auschwitz. Above the entryway to the concentration camp were the words, *Arbeit macht frei*. The same thing stood above the camp at Dachau. It means, “work makes free”—work will liberate you and give you freedom.

It was a lie—a false hope. The Nazis made the people believe hard work would equal liberation, but the promised “liberation” was horrifying suffering and even death.

Arbeit macht frei. One reason that phrase haunts me is because it is the spiritual lie of this age. It is a satanic lie. It’s a religious lie. It is a false hope—an impossible dream for many people in the world. They believe their good works will be great enough to outweigh their bad works, allowing them to stand before God in eternity and say, “You owe me the right to enter into your heaven.”

It is the hope of every false religion—*arbeit macht frei*.

But it’s the love of God that liberates. It’s the blood of Jesus Christ that liberates. He died in my place, and I am free.

From Johnny V. Miller’s sermon, “The Great Rescue,” PreachingToday.com (4-14-07)

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v. 12 Now the law is not of faith but the one who has done them shall live in them.

The NET Bible translates verse 12:

But the law is not based on faith, but the one who does the works of the law will live by them.

Peterson paraphrases verse 12:

Doing things for God is the opposite of entering into what God does for you. Habakkuk had it right: “The person who believes God, is set right by God—and that’s the real life.” Rule-keeping does not naturally evolve into living by faith, but only perpetuates itself in more and more rule-keeping, a fact observed in Scripture: “The one who does these things [rule-keeping] continues to live by them.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

3:12. But perhaps **faith** and **the Law** could be combined; perhaps both are needed. Quoting again from the Old Testament Paul proved this to be scripturally impossible. Law and faith are mutually exclusive. The basic principle of the Law is found in Leviticus 18:5: **The man who does these things will live by them.** Only perfect performance could win divine approval under the Law, but since that was not achievable the Law could only condemn a person (cf. James 2:10) and cause him to cast himself on God in faith.

In this first statement, the Apostle Paul says:

“THE LAW IS NOT OF FAITH.”

In other words, you do not mix the two together. They are **OPPOSITES**, just like **OIL AND WATER**. Even if a man kept all the law, the righteousness that he would have would be inferior, because it would be his own, whereas Paul's gospel offers us the righteousness of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Romans 4:4-5 (DAV)

Now to the one who is working, his wage is not reckoned as a favor but as what is due. But to the one who is not working, but is believing in Him who is declaring righteous the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Romans 1:16-17 (DAV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

(Healing Grace by David A. Seamands)

Pressure is a key element of life in the performance trap. There is the pressure of trying to live with a self we don't like, a God who seems hard to love, and others we can't get along with. Put all together, it's the pressure of feeling caught in a trap where we are expected to live up to unrealistic and impossible demands put upon us by God, ourselves, and other people. And, like the hamster on the treadmill, the harder we try, the faster we run; and the faster we run, the harder we have to try to keep up with the wheel. This feeling of being trapped generates in us some strong negative emotions which keep us emotionally disturbed and spiritually defeated.

p. 168

Man somehow has the notion that he should get something for keeping the law, when in reality he should get nothing.

Suppose a man were a resident in a city for 30 years and he faithfully kept the law. Would the authorities give him something for this? But if after 30 years he broke one law, the authorities would give him something—a jail sentence.

The law cannot give life. It can only condemn.

Hogg & Vine say:

He that doth them—lit., 'he that hath done them'; the standpoint is that of the Judgment at which the life as a whole is reviewed. The Heb. of the original of the citation is 'he that shall do', *i.e.*, 'he that shall have been found to do them'. Clearly, then, the doing is to be lifelong, unintermittent, and is never to fall by so much as a hairbreadth below the Divine standard. 'Doeth' is the emphatic word in the sentence.

p. 132

Lange says:

The law will have doers, that deserve Heaven by works. The gospel will have only sinners, who have done working, but who, repenting them of their sins (or broken into contriteness by the law), seek medicine, help and grace in Christ and His Father's compassion. They now see aright their guiltiness, together with the loathsomeness of sin . . .
p. 73

Lightfoot says:

12. 'Faith is not the starting-point of the law. The law does not take faith as its fundamental principle. On the other hand, it rigidly enforces the performance of all its enactments.'
p. 139

Wuest says:

The statement, "The law is not of faith" means that the two principles of law and of faith as a means of justification are mutually exclusive of one another. They are diametrically opposed to each other.
p. 96

(Faith & Doubt by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright—
John Ortberg, 2008.

"Doubts," writes Frederick Buechner, "are ants in the pants of faith; they keep it awake and moving."
p. 143

My business is not to prove to any other man
that there is a God, but to find him for myself.
GEORGE MACDONALD

p. 151

I find myself humming an old song by Ray Charles:

I Can't Stop Loving You

Ray Charles

(I can't stop loving you) I've made up my mind
 To live in memory of the lonesome times
 (I can't stop wanting you) It's useless to say
 So I'll just live my life in dreams of yesterday
 (Dreams of yesterday) Those happy hours that we once knew
 Tho' long ago, they still make me blue
 They say that time heals a broken heart
 But time has stood still since we've been apart

(I can't stop loving you) I've made up my mind
 To live in memories of the lonesome times
 (I can't stop wanting you) It's useless to say
 So I'll just live my life in dreams of yesterday
 (Those happy hours) Those happy hours
 (That we once knew) That we once knew
 (Tho' long ago) Tho' long ago
 (Still make me blue) Still ma-a-a-ake me blue
 (They say that time) They say that time
 (Heals a broken heart) Heals a broken heart
 (But time has stood still) Time has stood still
 (Since we've been apart) Since we've been apart

(I can't stop loving you) I said I made up my mind
 To live in memory of the lonesome times
 (Sing a song, children)
 (I can't stop wanting you)
 It's useless to say
 So I'll just live my life of dreams of yesterday
 (Of yesterday)

<http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/raycharles/icantstoplovingyou.htm>

v. 13 Christ delivered us by the payment of a ransom from the curse of the law. Having become a curse in behalf of us because it is written cursed is everyone who is suspended upon a tree.

The NET Bible translates verse 13:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us (because it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)

Peterson paraphrases verse 13:

Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles the remaining two verses and then says:

BY THE WORK OF CHRIST (3:13-14).

3:13. The positive side of Paul’s argument emphasized that there is hope for all who have broken the Law and are therefore under its curse. That hope is not in man but in **Christ** who **redeemed us from the curse of the Law**. But how did Christ redeem (exēgorasen, lit., “buy out of slavery”; cf. 4:5; see chart “New Testament Words for Redemption” at Mark 10:45) man? The answer is **by becoming a curse for us**. This is a strong declaration of substitutionary redemption whereby Christ took the penalty of all guilty lawbreakers on Himself. Thus the “curse of the Law” was transferred from sinners to Christ, the sinless One (cf. 1 Peter 3:18), and He delivered people from it. The confirming quotation from Deuteronomy 21:23 refers to the fact that in Old Testament times criminals were executed (normally by stoning) and then displayed on a stake or post to show God’s divine rejection. When Christ was crucified, it was evidence He had come under the curse of God. The manner of His death was a great obstacle to faith for Jews until they realized the curse He bore was for them (cf. Isa. 53)

“CHRIST DELIVERED US”

NOT “will” deliver us after the keeping of some part of the law.

Here the graphic picture is complete. The curse was hanging over us and Christ came between us and the curse and it fell on Him instead of us.

Galatians 1:4 (DAV)

who gave himself in behalf of our sins so that He might rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

Isaiah 53:4-6 (NIV)

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (DAV)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God as it were is making His appeal through us; we are begging you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

During the assassination of President Kennedy, the story of the protection of Vice President Johnson came out in that when the shots were heard, the FBI agent threw Vice President Johnson on the floor of the car and covered him with his own body.

In essence, this is what Christ did for us—only it cost Him His life. Wonder of wonders that God could love like that.

By faith Christ changes places with us. He gets our sins and we get His holiness or righteousness.

(Knowing God by J. I. Packer) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Copyright – J. I. Packer, 1973.

‘Blood’, as we hinted earlier, is a word pointing to the violent death inflicted in the animal sacrifices of the Old Covenant. God Himself instituted these sacrifices by His own command, and in Leviticus 17:11 He says why. ‘The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement . . .’ When Paul tells us that God set forth Jesus to be a propitiation ‘by His blood’, his point is that what quenched God’s wrath and so redeemed us from death was not Jesus’ life or teaching, not His moral perfection nor His fidelity to the Father, as such, but the shedding of His blood in death. With the other New Testament writers, Paul always points to the death of Jesus as the atoning event, and explains the atonement in terms of *representative substitution*—the innocent taking the place of the guilty, in the name and for the sake of the guilty, under the axe of God’s judicial retribution. Two passages may be quoted to illustrate this.

‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.’ How? ‘Being made a curse for us’ (Galatians 3:13). Christ bore the curse of the law which was directed against us, so that we might not have to bear it. This is representative substitution.

p. 168

Pinnock points out:

In this section Paul has compared a religion of *do* with a religion of *done*. Trying to please God by a proud reliance on one's achievement leads only to condemnation and death. Trusting in what God has done in the death of Christ leads to blessing and salvation. Notice the solid theological content which lay beneath New Testament preaching. A proclamation full of content was made before an appeal was made to receive Christ. Much damage has been done in our day by those who called for decisions before they had informed people what they were deciding about. A meaningful decision for Christ requires the awareness of doctrinal truth.
pp. 42-43

Anders says:

3:13. The positive solution to the curse of the law is in **Christ** who **redeemed us from the curse of the law**. *Redeem* means "to buy out of slavery by paying a price." This word was used when someone purchased a slave for the purpose of freeing them. When Jesus died on the cross, he took our curse upon himself. Through his substitutionary atonement, Christ paid the penalty of the curse. When we believe in him, he frees us from the slavery of the law.
p. 37

Barclay says:

Even at his most involved, and here he is involved, one simple yet tremendous fact is never far from the mind and the heart of Paul—*the cost of the Christian gospel*. He could never forget that the pace, the liberty, the right relationship with God that we possess cost the life and death of Jesus Christ, for how could men ever have known what God was like unless Jesus Christ had died to tell them that He loves them like that?
p. 28

Calvin says:

The apostle had made all who are under the law subject to the curse; from which arose this great difficulty, that the Jews could not free themselves from the curse of the law. Having stated this difficulty, he meets it, by shewing that Christ hath made us free, which still farther aids his purpose. If we are saved, because we have been freed from the curse of the law, then righteousness is not by the law. He next points out the manner in which we are made free.

It is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Now, Christ hung upon the cross, therefore he fell under that curse. But it is certain that he did not suffer that punishment on his own account. It follows, therefore, either that he was crucified in vain, or that our curse was laid upon him, in order that we might be delivered from it.
p. 91

De Haan says:

Christ hath redeemed us from THE CURSE of the Law. The CURSE of the Law is the penalty of the LAW, even death. Christ by His death hath delivered us from ETERNAL DEATH, the penalty of a broken Law. A law without penalties is powerless. The only thing that makes a law something to be feared is the fact that it demands punishment. If the Law cannot punish, that is, if the penalty, the curse, is gone, it cannot touch the transgressor any more. That is what legislators mean when they say, PUTTING TEETH IN THE LAW, making the penalty so severe that men will be forced to keep it. But when the penalty is removed the teeth are taken out. To every believer, then, the penalty of the Law has been met by the Saviour. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.
p. 108

Harrison says:

What an antithesis is now before us! It is intended to remind us of the scene in Israel's history when, upon entering the land, they were to divide into two groups—an antiphonal chorus, as it were—the one on Mount Ebal, the other on Mount Gerizim. The group on Mount Ebal were to take the law with them, and from this mount was to go forth “with a loud voice” the warning of “Cursed be he,” “Cursed be he,” “Cursed be he” who disobeys its demands. Then across the valley came the echoing chorus of “Blessed shalt thou be” for heeding the voice of the Lord. Read Deuteronomy 27 and 28. Israel's history has been a prolonged experience of the curse, with but brief interludes of the blessing.
p. 53

Harrison says:

While the Jews executed by stoning to death, they had the custom of impaling the dead body on a tree. Their law said, “He that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deut. 21:23). Deliberately, voluntarily, the Blessed One, having proved Himself sinless, allowed the law to pronounce Him worthy of death and place Him on the tree, that He might Himself become “accursed of God.” Reading the psalms of the suffering Saviour—see Psalms 22 and 69—we are in the presence of an agony far greater and deeper than physical suffering. Forsaken of God! Hanging between heaven and earth, rejected of both, acceptable to neither. Despised; yes, made a curse!

Why all this? “For us.” “Made sin for us”; “Wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities”; “Bare our sins in His own body on the tree”; “Gave Himself for our sins”—to what purpose?—“that He might deliver us.” With this awful picture before our eyes of what the law could, would and should do to us, but did it instead to our Substitute, thus “redeemed from the curse of the law” we can sing from hearts filled with gratitude:

Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now are we free—there’s no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
“Come unto Me,” O hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all.

“Children of God,” O glorious calling,
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
Passing from death to life at His call,
Blessed salvation once for all.

—P. P. Bliss.

p. 55

Henry says:

A strange method it was which Christ took to redeem us from the curse of the law; it was *by his being himself made a curse for us*. The design of this was *that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*—that all who believed on Christ might become heirs of Abraham’s blessing, and particularly of that great promise of the Spirit.
p. 1841

Lightfoot says:

13. ‘Christ ransomed us from this curse pronounced by the law, Himself taking our place and becoming a curse for our sakes: for so says the Scripture, Cursed is every one that hangeth on the gibbet.’
p. 139

MacArthur says:

. . . “redeemed” was often used to speak of buying a slave’s or debtor’s freedom. Christ’s death, because it was a death of substitution for sin, satisfied God’s justice and exhausted His wrath toward His elect, so that Christ actually purchased believers from slavery to sin and from the sentence of eternal death . . .
p. 1666

MacArthur says:

. . . Christ took upon Himself the curse pronounced on those who violated the law . . .
p. 1666

MacArthur says:

The curse of the Law was the punishment demanded because no man could keep from violating its demands, but **Christ** took that curse upon Himself as a substitute for sinners and became **a curse for us** in His crucifixion, **for it is written** (Deut. 21:23), “**Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.**”

In ancient Judaism a criminal who was executed, usually by stoning, was then tied to a post, a type of **tree**, where his body would hang until sunset as a visible representation of rejection by God. It was not that a person became cursed by being hanged on a tree but that he was hanged on a tree because he was cursed. Jesus did not **become a curse** because He was crucified but was crucified because he was cursed in taking the full sin of the world upon Himself. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24; cf. Acts 5:30).

That truth was extremely hard for most Jews to accept, because they could not imagine the Messiah’s being cursed by God and having to hang on a tree. First Corinthians 12:3 suggests that “Jesus is accursed” was a common, demon-inspired saying among unbelieving Jews of that day. To them, Jesus’ crucifixion was final and absolute proof that He was not the promised Messiah.

p. 78

Radmacher, Allen & House says:

Paul knew that many of his readers would perceive that they were actually under **the curse of the law** (v. 10; Deut. 27:26). For them as for us, it is incredibly comforting to know that **Christ** became that curse **for us** on the Cross (Deut. 21:23). The picture is that of the wrath of God hanging over us—as Damocles’ sword—but Christ took that wrath. Thus, the *curse* is lifted **through faith** in Christ’s redemption and **the blessing of Abraham** and **the promise of the Spirit** to all believers. It is likely that the Jewish false teachers were stating that *blessing* came through keeping the Mosaic law, and that people were **cursed** if they did not.

p. 1523

Ridderbos says:

Now Christ's work of redemption is suddenly brought to the fore as the one possibility of salvation. For the question might arise how then the blessing promised to Abraham, and in him to all nations, can be obtained if the law brings curse upon all who do not fulfill it. For, surely, even faith itself cannot lift the curse of the law. That is why the name of *Christ* is set in the foreground so emphatically now.
p. 125

Spurgeon says:

So Christ was cursed in the stead of you, and you are secure, if you are truly converted, and really a regenerated child of God.
p. 289

Spurgeon says:

THE apostle had been showing to the Galatians that salvation is in no degree by works. He proved this all-important truth in the verses which precede the text, by a very conclusive form of double reasoning. He showed, first, that the law could not give the blessing of salvation, for, since all had broken it, all that the law could do was to curse. He quotes the substance of the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"; and as no man can claim that he has continued in all things that are in the law, he pointed out the clear inference that all men under the law had incurred the curse. He then reminds the Galatians, in the second place, that if any had ever been blessed in the olden times, the blessing came not by the law, but by their faith, and to prove this, he quotes a passage from Habakkuk ii. 4, in which it is distinctly stated that the just shall live by faith: so that those who were just and righteous did not live before God on the footing of their obedience to the law, but they were justified and made to live on the ground of their being believers.
p. 300

Spurgeon says:

. . . WHAT IS THE CURSE OF THE LAW HERE INTENDED?

It is the curse of God. God who made the law had appended certain penal consequences to the breaking of it, and the man who violates the law, becomes at once the subject of the wrath of the Lawgiver. It is not the curse of the mere law of itself; it is a curse from the great Lawgiver whose arm is strong to defend His statutes. Hence, at the very outset of our reflections, let us be assured that the law-curse, must be supremely just, and morally unavoidable.

p. 300

Spurgeon says:

But God's curse is something more than a threatening; He comes at length to blows. He uses warning words at first, but sooner or later He bares His sword for execution. The curse of God, as to its actual infliction, may be guessed at by some occasions wherein it has been seen on earth. Look at Cain, a wanderer and a vagabond upon the face of the earth! Read the curse that Jeremiah pronounced by the command of God upon Pashur; "Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it." Or, if you would behold the curse upon a larger scale, remember the day when the huge floodgates of earth's deepest fountains were unloosed, and the waters leaped up from their habitations like lions eager for their prey. Remember the day of vengeance when the windows of heaven were opened, and the great deep above the firmament was confused with the deep that is beneath the firmament, and all flesh were swept away, save only the few who were hidden in the ark which God's covenant mercy had prepared—when sea-monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of ancient kings, when millions of sinners sank to rise no more, when universal ruin flew with raven wing over a shoreless sea vomited from the mouth of death. Then was the curse of God poured out upon the earth. Look ye yet again further down in time. Stand with Abraham at his tent door, and see towards the east the sky all red at early morning with a glare that came not from the sun; sheets of flames went up to heaven, which were met by showers of yet more vivid fire, which preternaturally descended from the skies. Sodom and Gomorrah, having given themselves up to strange flesh, received the curse of God, and hell was rained upon them out of heaven until they were utterly consumed.

p. 301

Spurgeon says:

. . . “*for us*”—not on His own account at all; but entirely out of love to us, that we might be redeemed, He stood in the sinner’s place and was reckoned to be a sinner, and treated as a sinner, and made a curse for us.
p. 303

Vos says:

Christ was “made a curse for us” in the sense that He was born under the law and became sin for us. The curse of death for sin came upon Him, and His substitutionary death on our behalf released us from the curse (see 2 Co 5:21; Is 53:6). The last part of verse 13 is quoted from the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 21:23. His bearing this particular curse is a sample of the general curse He bore.
p. 59

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Oswego, IL: Fox River Press. Copyright– Fox River Press, 2005.

CURSE, THE 27

“As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” even as the Shorter Catechism puts it, “They have lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so are made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.” Dare you sleep to-night under the curse? Will you wake tomorrow and go forth to your business under the curse? Can you sport, and laugh, and frolic, under the curse? God grant that we may be sufficiently sensible to be filled with anguish at the sound of these dreadful words—“under the curse”! 2093.363
pp. 102-103

(Grace Notes: Daily Readings with a Fellow Pilgrim by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Someone Cares Charitable Trust, 2009.

. . . U.S. television personality Phil Donahue explains his chief objection to Christianity: “How could an all-knowing, all-loving God allow His Son to be murdered on a cross in order to redeem my sins? If God the Father is so ‘all-loving,’ why didn’t He come down and go to Calvary?”
p. 111

(The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren) New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. Copyright– Rick Warren, 2008.

When the Romans nailed Jesus to a cross, they stretched his arms as wide as they could. With his arms wide open, Jesus was physically demonstrating, “I love you this much! I love you so much it hurts! I’d rather die than live without you!” The next time you see a picture or statue of Jesus with outstretched arms on the cross, remember, he is saying, “I love you *this* much!”
p. 24

(The Passion of Christ and the Purpose of Life by Adrian Rogers) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright – Adrian Rogers, 2005.

What about Pilate, the compromising, pussyfooting politician who tried to wash his lily-white hands and protest his innocence (Matthew 27:24)? Was Pilate alone guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

We know the answer. Not the Jews alone. Not the Romans alone. Our sins were the nails that held Jesus to the cross, and our hard hearts were the hammers that drove those nails into His sinless flesh. Mel Gibson made an eloquent statement about who crucified Jesus when he put himself in the film—his hand held the hammer that drove the spikes into Jesus. Gibson was saying by that act, “My sin nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.” And we could put our hands around his in the same confession.
p. 35

(10 Lies About God: And The Truths That Shatter Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. Copyright– Erwin W. Lutzer, 2009.

In Africa a fire ravaged a hut, burning quickly and intensely, killing all in a family—except one. A stranger ran into the burning house and snatched a small boy from the flames, carried him to safety, and disappeared in the darkness.

The next day the tribe met to decide what should be done with the lad. Perhaps superstitiously, they assumed he must be a special child since he survived the fire. A man known for his wisdom insisted that he adopt the boy; another known for his wealth thought he was the best qualified.

As the discussion ensued a young, unknown man walked into the middle of the circle and insisted that he had prior claim to the child. Then he showed them his hands, freshly burned in the fire of the past night. He was the rescuer and therefore insisted that the child was rightfully his.

So our scarred Savior claims us. Bonhoeffer was right: only a suffering God can help. Only a suffering God can redeem.

The other gods were strong; but Thou was weak
 They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
 But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak
 And not a god has wounds but Thou alone.¹⁴

14. Edward Shillito, "Jesus of the Scars," *Areopagus Proclamation* 10, no. 7 (April 2000). pp. 76-77

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

There is no sin which a Christian cannot overcome if he will only rely upon his God to do it. They who wear the white robe in heaven overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and we may do the same. No lust is too mighty, no besetting sin too strongly entrenched; we can overcome through the power of Christ. Do believe it, Christian, that thy sin is a condemned thing. It may kick and struggle, but it is doomed to die. God has written condemnation across its brow. Christ has crucified it, “nailing it to His cross.” Go now and mortify it, and the Lord help you to live to His praise, for sin with all its guilt, shame, and fear, is gone.

“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast;
And, O my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come here’s pardon too.”

p. 419

v. 14 In order that to the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham might come in Jesus Christ, in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The NET Bible translates verse 14:

in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.

Peterson paraphrases verse 14:

And now, because of that, the air is cleared and we can see that Abraham's blessing is present and available for non-Jews, too. We are all able to receive God's life, his Spirit, in and with us by believing—just the way Abraham received it.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

3:14. Two purposes for Christ's redemptive work are given, each introduced by the Greek conjunction *hina*, "in order that" (cf. 4:5): (1) **Gentiles** might receive **the blessing given to Abraham**; as already stated (3:8) this is a reference not to personal or national blessings but to the promised blessing of justification apart from works of the Law, available to all who believe; (2) all who thus believe **might receive the promise of the Spirit**, that is, the Holy Spirit, who was promised (cf. v. 2). Again the apostle emphasized that salvation and sanctification come **by faith**, not by works.

Paul concludes this section with **TWO PURPOSE CLAUSES** as to why Christ Jesus became a curse for us, and in them he sums up his argument.

What a divine paradox that Christ would bear a curse that Gentiles might come into blessing.

The first of these **TWO PURPOSE CAUSES** in verse 14 is in the statement:

1. **“IN ORDER THAT TO THE GENTILES THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME IN JESUS CHRIST.”**

There would have been no hope for the Gentiles if Christ had not died.

Ephesians 2:12-13 (DAV)

because you were at that time separated from Christ, having been excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, not having hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near in the blood of Christ.

The **SECOND PURPOSE** clause is seen next:

2. **“IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH.”**

The Spirit came not by the works of the law, but by faith.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (DAV)

In Him you also, having heard the Word of the truth, the good news of your salvation: in Him also having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the first installment of our inheritance for a redemption through which you become God's property, to the praise of His glory.

It was on the basis of faith rather than by the performance of the works of the law that this promised Spirit came, not only to dwell in us, but to be that earnest of our inheritance, that down payment of that which we will receive when we get to glory.

The **KEY VERSE** in this study has been verse 3:

“Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit now are you being brought to maturity in the flesh?”

It is not by the flesh through the works of the law that we grow to maturity in Christ, but it is by faith appropriating Jesus Christ to live through us that life which He desires to live.

There have been several **CONTRASTS** in this study:

On one side we have **LAW**—on the other side we have **FAITH**.

On one side we have the **CURSE**—on the other side we have the **BLESSING**.

On one side we have the **FLESH**—on the other side we have the **SPIRIT**.

There are several **OBSERVATIONS** that we can make:

1. **BLESSING** comes through **FAITH**.
2. The **CURSE** comes through the **LAW**.
3. The **BLESSING OF ABRAHAM** comes in **JESUS CHRIST**.
4. The **PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT** comes through **FAITH**.

Free From the Law

Words & Music: Philip P. Bliss,
Sunshine for Sunday Schools, 1873

Free from the law, O happy condition,
 Jesus has bled and there is remission,
 Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
 Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now we are free, there's no condemnation,
 Jesus provides a perfect salvation.
 "Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
 Come, and He saves us once for all.

"Children of God," O glorious calling,
 Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
 Passing from death to life at His call;
 Blessed salvation once for all.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/f/r/freefrom.htm>

Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB)

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

Anders says:

3:14. Christ redeemed us, on the cross, for two purposes. First, he redeemed us so that the **blessing given to Abraham** (salvation through faith) **might come to the Gentiles**. Second, **he redeemed us . . . by faith** so that the promise of the Holy Spirit could be given to all who believe (compare v. 2).
p. 37

Gutzke says:

Do you realize that the benefits of the Christian gospel are available only through Jesus Christ personally?

Salvation is by faith. By salvation is meant all that God will do for any soul who will receive Jesus Christ. What God will do in Christ involves the daily living of the believer, how he acts and reacts as he goes along day by day. Will he do this because he prefers it, or because God wills it? This is the question and it will include his family, business, school, community. In other words, a person will act either according to what seems good to him or according to the way in which he feels inwardly led by God. Salvation is operative in this second way. Certain consequences will always follow, with various kinds of experiences for the person in anything he does.
p. 61

Lightfoot says:

14. 'Thus the law, the great barrier which excluded the Gentiles, is done away in Christ. By its removal the Gentiles are put on a level with us Jews; and, so united, we and they alike receive the promise in the gift of the Spirit through our faith.' The sequence of thought here is exactly the same as in Ephes. ii. 14-18: see also Gal. iv. 5.
p. 140

Spurgeon says:

Another blessing flows from this satisfactory substitution. It is this, that now the blessing of God, which had been hitherto arrested by the curse is made most freely to flow. Read the verse that follows the text: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The blessing of Abraham was that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Since our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the curse due to sin, a great rock has been lifted out from the river-bed of God's mercy, and the living stream comes rippling, rolling, swelling on in crystal tides, sweeping before it all human sin and sorrow, and making glad the thirsty who stoop down to drink thereat. O my brethren, the blessings of God's grace are full and free this morning; they are as full as your necessities. Great sinners, there is great mercy for you.
p. 304

Wuest says:

Christ delivered us by the payment of ransom from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in behalf of us, because it stands written, Accursed is everyone who is suspended upon a tree, in order that to the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham might come in Jesus Christ, to the end that the promise of the Spirit we [Jew and Gentile] might receive through faith.
p. 205

Wuest says:

There are two purpose clauses in this verse, each introduced by the word *that* (*hina*). These are coordinate, depending upon the statement in verse 13 to the effect of that Christ became a curse for us in order that the blessing of Abraham, justification by faith, and also the Holy Spirit, might be given to both Jew and Gentile (Joel 2:28). The law which was the barrier that separated Jew and Gentile, is done away in Christ. By its removal, the Gentiles are put on a common level with the Jew, and thus united, both Jew and Gentile are recipients of the Holy Spirit through faith.
pp. 98-99

(Signs of Life: Back to the Basics of Authentic Christianity by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– David Jeremiah, 2007.

Missionary E. Stanley Jones said, “When I met Christ, I felt that I had swallowed sunshine!”²

2. <http://www.pastorjeff.com/QuotesJ.html>, accessed June 11, 2007.
p. 12

(The Pastor In Prayer: A Collection of the Sunday Morning Prayers of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust. Banner of Truth Trust, 2004.

OUR FATHER, we dare call Thee by that blessed name, for we feel the spirit of children. We have an earnest love to Thee, and an implicit trust in Thee; and we desire in all things to be obedient to Thy will, and to seek Thine honour. All our dependence is placed on Thee since the day when Thou didst teach us to believe in Jesus Christ: and now, Thou art all in all to us, Thou art our fulness, and we lose ourselves and find ourselves completely in Thee.
p. 106

(The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren) New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. Copyright– Rick Warren, 2008.

So God came to earth as Jesus essentially to say: “You guys have got it all wrong! Of course doing good things matters, but it doesn’t make me love you any more or less. My love for you is unlimited, unconditional, unchanging, and undeserved. So let me teach you a new concept called grace. You can’t purchase it, work for it, or be good enough to merit it. It’s a gift that will cost me a lot, but it is free to you. Everything I do for you, to you, in you, and through you — every single blessing you have in life — is a gift of grace. I’ve done it all for you.”
p. 69

(Addresses by Phillips Brooks) Philadelphia, PA.: Henry Altemus. Copyright
– Unknown.

He stood once on the battle-field of our own State, and said of the brave men who had saved it words as noble as any countryman of ours ever spoke. Let us stand in the country he has saved, and which is to be his grave and monument, and say of Abraham Lincoln what he said of the soldiers who had died at Gettysburg. He stood there with their graves before him, and these are the words he said: –

“We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; and this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

May God make us worthy of the memory of Abraham Lincoln!
pp. 164-65

As he pauses here today, and from his cold lips bids us bear witness how he has met the duty that was laid on him, what can we say out of our full hearts but this – “He fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power.” The *Shepherd of the People!* that old name that the best rulers ever craved. What ruler ever won it like this dead President of ours?
pp. 162-63

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,
 2006.

Give me this water, Lord Jesus: satisfy my spirit at the deep well of eternal life, springing up abundantly. Let me drink of it daily and always, and never thirst again. Amen.

p. 250

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Gospel story begins with the death of the Lord Jesus. “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4 NASB).

LESSON #2: “Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5 NASB). Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness.

LESSON #3: “Yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom. 4:20 NASB).

LESSON #4: It is a very real possibility that we can get sidetracked by false teaching.

LESSON #5: God’s gracious gift in the Lord Jesus Christ is totally adequate for salvation, sanctification, and glorification.

LESSON #6: You cannot experience the new birth by the Spirit and then be brought to maturity in the flesh.

LESSON #7: Suffering is a vital tool of God for spiritual growth and development.

LESSON #8: The Spirit of God comes in when you become a Christian.

LESSON #9: Everything God does is on the basis of faith.

LESSON #10: The curse of the Law is that you must do it all to make it.
“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (Jam. 2:10 NASB).

LESSON #11: There is no gain without pain.

LESSON #12: Christ took the curse of the Law, that we might have the blessing.

Anders says:

Good Windshields Don't Go into the Space Shuttle

Imagine for a moment you are a glass manufacturer and you make the windshields for the space shuttle. You have a flaw in your manufacturing process: your windshield has a bubble. You might say to the people at NASA, "Look, this windshield is only flawed in one place. All the rest of it is flawless. What's more, the one imperfection in it isn't very bad, and it occurred a long time ago. It hasn't developed any imperfections since that very first one. Besides, it is a good piece of glass. It's a better piece of glass than the glass you now use in the shuttle."

If you were the quality control engineer for the space shuttle, you might listen patiently. You might even be sympathetic. Would you accept the windshield for use in the space shuttle? Of course not! The fact that its last flaw occurred a long time ago would be irrelevant. The fact that all the rest of the windshield is perfect except that one flaw would be beside the point. The fact that it is better than any other piece of glass would not matter in the least. The only relevant piece of information is that the windshield is not perfect. Because it is not perfect, it will not go in the space shuttle. Good windshields don't go into the space shuttle, only perfect ones.

So it is with people going to heaven. Good people don't go to heaven. The Bible says in Titus 3:5, God saves us, "not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." In Ephesians 2:8-9, we read, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

The reason good people don't go to heaven, therefore, is because they do not meet God's standard. God's standard is not goodness. It is *perfection*. Good people don't go to heaven. Perfect people do. That presents a problem because no one is perfect (Rom. 3:10, 23).

pp. 41-42

Arthur says:

Where are you in your relationship with God? Have you been justified by faith so that you are now crucified with Christ and living by faith? If you have been justified by faith, are you living by faith? Or have you slipped back under the law, so that your relationship with God is based on performance rather than faith? Do you think you're perfected by the performance of your flesh?

p. 31

Spurgeon says:

O God, make us faithful this night, and give the hearing ear, and the retentive memory, and the conscience touched by the Spirit, for Jesus' sake.
p. 289

(American Soldier by General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell) New York, NY: Regan Books. Copyright – Tommy Franks, 2004.

Then, on a warm Florida afternoon, Don Rumsfeld called. "Tom," he said, "do you know Jay Garner?"

"Yes, Mr. Secretary," It old Rumsfeld. "I love him. Great Army general." I repeated one of my favorite stories about Lt. General Jay Garner: When he retired, a reporter asked him whether he would change anything about his life if he had it to live again. "Sure, I'd change a lot of things," Jay answered. "But I'd marry the same woman, and I'd join the United States Army."
pp. 422-23

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson) San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

Cleanse me, Christ. Wash the stain of sin from my soul, blow the dust of doubt from my mind, wipe the dirt of evil from my spirit: "I long to be perfectly whole." Amen.
p. 314

Lord, what you put up with from me! You patiently wait through my rebellion, my hate, my rejection—until all the energies of my sin are spent, and then receive me in love, graciously and lovingly. Thank you. Amen.
p. 351

God in Christ: you probe my heart and discover behind the words that I speak the life that I live. Purify and sanctify that inner life so that I may please you and glorify your name. Amen.
p. 180