

# STUDIES IN GALATIANS

## Study #1: Galatians 1:1-9

“You Were Running Well”

(Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free)

Key verse 5:7 — “You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”

### INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL:

Since this is a New Testament study you're going to have a homemade translation of the Greek text. You've got all six of the studies on the sheet plus the lessons just like we always have had. The only difference is, this is my working translation. What I have done in this particular study is I've taken the whole book and put it on a chart and then I picked one key verse for the whole book. I built all the study around that one verse. And you'll notice at the top of your page that that key verse is chapter 5 and verse 7: you were running well, who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

Every study will be built on that verse: you were running well until no runs, no hits and a big error. We will look at it from the standpoint of the big error that you're going to see and there's a key verse for that very particular study and I'll share it with you in a minute.

The apostle Paul likens the beginning of the Christian life to a race. He obviously was involved in the Olympic games in Athens, I'm sure. And was very much aware of sports and competition.

There are number of verses that set the stage for today and there is a verse in Galatians that also talks about running the race.

Let me just remind you of these verses. First of all, 1 Corinthians 9:24:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (DAV)

Are you not knowing that those who are running in a race are indeed all running, but one is receiving the prize? Be running in such a manner in order that you may win. ...

Philippians 3:14, you're familiar with that:

Philippians 3:14 (DAV)

I am pressing onward toward the goal for the prize of the call from above of God in Christ Jesus

And Hebrews 12:1-2. Remember when we studied the book of Hebrews, these Jewish Christians were planning on going back under Judaism. You've got the same kind of a problem here in the book of Galatians. But the apostle gave that plea in Hebrews 12:1-2 that's a classic statement.

## Hebrews 12:1-2 (DAV)

Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us, ...

So you could say from Paul's point of view that when you become a Christian, it's like entering a race. You are beginning to make distance between the time of your salvation to the time that you're called home to be with the Lord. And the challenge, of course, if I made it in one statement is run in order that you might achieve the prize.

One of the things that I've learned in doing biographical studies in the Scripture is that most people really crank it up a notch the older they get if they are going to finish. **As you know many of our folks here have gone home to be with the Lord and it's been a difficult time for many of you of losing loved ones and family members. So many of those folks when you meet them at their bedside will usually begin by saying "It's a shock that I have so little time left" and secondly, "I didn't get to do all the things that I wanted to do."**

The way the Lord designed life is that we get more intense the later we are in the game because we treasure every day we have. That's why he said in John 9:4, "I've got to work the works of him that sent me while it is day for the night is

coming when no man can work.”

So the challenge of this study, if I were to put it in a sentence or two, would be never, ever, ever have to hear from the Lord that you were running well. You want to hear from Him: “Well done good and faithful servant. You are running well you’re making progress. You’re growing in Christlikeness.” Those of the kinds of statements we want to hear, but to the Galatian church He has to say something different.

He has to tell them “You were running well, you made a great start but that’s not true anymore. You are in fact not running well and then He asked the question about “Who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”

Now having said that, I want to launch into the book of Galatians with a little bit of introductory material.

The book of Galatians is the book that Martin Luther said he was married to. It was Catherine, his wife. This is the book that he chose to blow the trumpet for the Reformation. That’s how significant the message of this book is and it is loaded with phenomenal truth. The apostle Paul is the author. He wrote 13 books and if you have the book of Hebrews that makes 14 that he wrote.

As you remember in the early chapters of the book of Acts, he is a Jew of all Jews. In Philippians chapter 3 he gives us a little capsule of his life:

## Philippians 3:4-7 (DAV)

although I myself could be having confidence also in the flesh. If anyone else is presuming to have confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; [that means he had full-blooded Hebrew parents on both sides] according to the Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the church; according to righteousness which is in the Law, become blameless. ...

So he was intensely involved in religious activity. He sat under the tutelage of Gamaliel and was way out in front as he's going to tell you a couple weeks from now, he was blazing the trail as far as commitment to Judaism.

You will remember he was so zealous about that that in Acts chapter 9, he secured credentials (papers) to get the Christians in Damascus to bring them back. In Acts chapter 7, he is standing outside the Sanhedrin while they stoned Stephen to death. He affirmed that. He let them lay their garments at his feet while they stoned him to death. He affirmed that. He made life miserable for a lot of Christians in Jerusalem before he headed to Damascus.

On the road to Damascus just before he got to the city, he saw a great light. That great light asked him "Why are you persecuting Me?" And Paul said, or Saul of Tarsus said, "Who are you?" "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."

Out of that experience he was blinded and for two or three days in the city of Damascus he was by himself. But then Ananias came, healed the blindness and told him that God had a message for him. He had an appointment. He went away to Arabia for a period of time, came back to Damascus and went to Jerusalem. Where ever he went he had to have a recommendation and Barnabas was his right-hand man to tell everybody that he was okay.

The apostle Paul then went back to Tarsus and began to travel. Scripturally he was on three missionary journeys. On the first journey he went to southern Galatia along with Barnabas. John Mark went with them initially but turned around and went back to Jerusalem, so it was the two of them.

And while they were in southern Galatia, in these cities, he had the privilege of sharing Christ in Antioch of Pisidia, Lyrstra, Derbe and Iconium. Those are in the area of southern Galatia. There are those who think this letter was written to northern Galatia, but there are no references to the fact that Paul was ever there or that he established any ministry there. But we do know that on that first journey he did in southern Galatia, establishes. Well after the first missionary journey, you will remember he went back to Antioch to tell the church about what wonderful things God was doing among the Gentiles.

He was a Jew preaching to the Gentiles and he established these ministries in those four cities. In Antioch there were

some guys that snuck in and said “you know, you guys have got to realize that since you’re preaching to Gentiles, those guys need to have part of the Law. They can’t go scot-free from this thing.” And so they started preaching in competition to Paul and Barnabas by saying you’ve got to be circumcised, you’ve got to keep certain parts of the Law, you’ve got to dah-da-dah, on it went on and on and on like this.

It got so furious that the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas south to Jerusalem to have a counsel with the head honchos down there. That’s called the Jerusalem Council and that was Acts chapter 15.

After the Council was over, it is really neat because you’re going to get to see a little clip of the Council in chapter 2 in a couple of weeks from now when we get over there.

What happened in that Council was with those Jewish Christians said don’t put anything additional upon them. It is the grace of God that has provided eternal salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and by faith they enter into the same relationship we now have with the Lord Jesus. Well man, that was ecstatic to the nth degree! So they go back to Antioch and tell them about it, but then they go on the second journey. On the second journey they stop off in these four cities to give him the good news. Gentiles don’t have to be participating in the Law other than don’t drink blood and a couple of the other things that were just a matter for them to do and remember the poor Saints in Jerusalem, something similar to that.

Well, that was great. They all accepted and were excited.

Paul goes back to Antioch and then on the third missionary journey, after he makes all of this time, his last journey he's in Corinth. He's there for about 18 months and he gets word that there are some Judaizing teachers that have gone into those four cities, they have told them that Paul does not have the credentials of apostleship because he was not one of the original 12 and what he is teaching is error and they need to come back under Judaism and they're being successful.

So Paul just goes up in smoke about them undoing everything he had done in those four cities. And that sets the stage for this letter. So he sits down and writes these six chapters to these folks back there. And I want to say, get ready for a ride because this is a different letter.

You heard me teach Philemon last spring and all those warm fuzzies about him, and the love which they're having for everybody and the fact that he's praying for everybody. You notice that almost all the letters. You're not going to see that tonight. He doesn't say anything nice about them. Literally, he's just going to, you're going to watch, he's just going to jump right in the middle.

I've dated the letter 56 AD. This seems to fit well with the third missionary journey. There are going to be some great contrasts in the letter. You're going to have Law and grace. You're going to have works and faith. You're going to have

cursing and blessing. You're going to have death and life, servants and sons, bondage and freedom, and the list goes on and on all the things that could be contrasted in the book.

Just remember, it is Luther's favorite book. It is free grace without any human works. Are we saved by believing or achieving? And the message is, by faith it'll get it done.

Now, if you'll look at the top of your page it says, because I'm using Galatians 5:7 as your key verse, "You Were Running Well." And then every study starts with the word "Until."

"You Were Running Well Until: No Runs, No Hits and a Big Error" (Galatians 1:1-9)

We'll look at that.

Next week we will look at

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: You Forgot what God was Doing in Your Life (1:10-24)

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: Divine Direction was not Discerned (2:1-10)

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (2:11-21) (Boy! I can't wait to get to that one!)

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: You Said I Do it Myself (3:1-14)

YOU WERE RUNNING WELL UNTIL: You Failed to Read the Instructions (3:15-29)

And then there are six more studies if that's what the Lord has in mind for us.

With those remarks, I'm ready to dig into the text and trust that God is going to use it in a very special way.

Can I give you a warning? We're living in the times when you have got to be very careful about what you listen to and what you believe. This book will sound a huge warning of how subtle Satan is. How he can undo so much by getting individuals sidetracked. John the apostle in 1 John 4 said, "Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

The Lord Jesus Christ, as you will remember in the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 said: "for false Christ and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the very elect."

Second Corinthians 11:13: "for such are false apostles, deceitful workers."

First Timothy chapter 4 verse 1: "the spirit expressly is saying

that in the latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits.”

Second Peter sounds the same warning in chapter 2. In the book of Jude we learned again, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you concerning our common salvation, I felt I had to write you, urging you to contend earnestly for the faith.” (Jude 1:3)

One of the biggest problems as Christians living in this day is to discern truth from error. It’s understanding the fact that it’s the voice of the Spirit of God who uses the truth of the word of God to instruct us. And if there’s apprehension or anxiety about any one of those you’ve got to be very, very careful in what you’re listening to and what you buy into.

Can I give you what I would consider the two greatest tools to protect you and keep you on track before you actually watch what happens to these Galatian churches?

The first key is the centrality of Jesus Christ, your focus needs to be on Him and Him alone. He is the one you’re going to meet. He’s the one to whom you’re accountable and when you meet Him face-to-face. You’re going to hear from Him “well done” if you kept your focus on Him.

The second is, that’s the Living Word, the second is the written word. The Scripture. Stay by the book. There is a little book called *Radical* by a Baptist minister in North Carolina and he experimented with his flock by trying to recreate some

of the people over in the foreign countries who at the speaking in and study the word incognito and he experimented in his church with telling them that there were going to duplicate that in the church and that there were going to have a Friday night Bible study that started at six and would go to midnight and they would stop in the middle just to pray a little bit. And he said “I didn’t think anybody would show up” but there were over a thousand people and now they have to take reservations for people who are so excited to spend six hours studying the Word.

There is a deep hunger for the Word right now and God help us to use every tool and means to expand and to proclaim the message that’s certainly my heart’s cry and my longing is to finish well in communicating the truth of His Word.

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Are you ready? I had to do all that introduction to get you lined up for what’s getting ready to happen. Here we go, verse 1.

**v. 1 Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the father who raised Him from the dead (out from among the dead ones).**

Now, the very first thing that he has to confront is that he is a legitimate apostle. They have been spreading rumors all

around these four cities saying he does not qualify as an apostle because he was not one of the original 12.

So right away he's got to introduce himself with the credentials and he tells you how he became an apostle. It was not by appointment. It was my choice of God the Father and God the Son.

“Paul, an apostle, [negatively] not from man, nor [negatively] through man.” Man didn't have anything to do with it. “But through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.”

Now, why does he mention the resurrection? Well, He's alive, so therefore He can appoint me, He could speak to me on the Damascus Road and He did just that. The word “apostolos” literally means “appointed to proclaim God's message” and he has those credentials.

Now, what you're going to learn before we actually get to the text that deals with the problem, these first five verses are introductory and it's setting the table with some of the wonderful things and he says, so we want to milk it for all of its worth and the first thing he does is “I want you to know I was, Saul, and I became Paul the apostle, and I was appointed to a ministry to the Gentile world.”

And then in that very first verse then, his salvation and apostleship are granted by God.

Number one: All that Paul was came through Jesus Christ. All that he was came through Jesus Christ. That verse one tells you that they came through God the Father and through Jesus Christ. Who's the one responsible for the change in his life? Christ. Who was responsible for stopping him in his tracks and turning him around in a new direction? Jesus Christ. Who's responsible for changing him into a child of God? Jesus Christ. The person responsible for the way Paul was, was Jesus Christ.

Now, next week in verse 12 you're going to read a little statement that says "all that he had to say came through Jesus Christ." Not all that he was in this first verse but all that he had to say came through Jesus Christ in verse 12.

And then we'll jump down to chapter 2 and verse two. Are you ready for this? All that he did came through Jesus Christ. Now, can people say that about you tonight? All that you are is because of Jesus Christ? All you have to say came through Jesus Christ and all that you did today came through Jesus Christ? You were on divine appointment. You were sensitive to what He wanted you to do and you did it?

All that he was and all of his words and all of his works came through Jesus Christ.

Now, if we want to really impress God and know that we're going to hear "well done" then it's "all that we are, all that we

have to say, and all that we do comes through Jesus Christ.”

That involves our character, our conversation and our conduct. And if you’re going to do a little devotional with this just tack on John 15:5: “without me you can do everything?” No. “Without me you can do absolutely nothing significant of any sort.”

He’s ready to change us. He’s ready to speak through us and He’s ready to act through us. So that’s the key to being the kind of witness for the Lord Jesus Christ right here in the beginning of our study. And He was raised from the dead, the Lord Jesus, therefore He qualifies as the one to make the endorsement.

Why does He do that? Well, the resurrection was the Father’s endorsement on God the Son, for if He had not qualified by satisfying God’s justice in the giving of His life, He would have left Him in the grave. But He broke the bands of death and raised as an endorsement of such that is so great.

Now, there might be other reasons why, as we’re studying tonight, that you feel like you’re a little guilty inside that you were running well and that would be what the Lord would say right now. And it has nothing to do with your theology. Maybe it has something to do with what happened to you or what is happening to you and so you’re just a little bit bitter. You’re feeling inside that there was a time when you were doing a whole lot better and you’re not doing so good right now.

I know if you read our *Grapevine* you read about Ron Hall and *Same Kind of Different as Me*. I was so thrilled that Jane interviewed Ron and Deborah. We knew them way back in the early days of ministry.

I love the way Denver in the book, if you haven't read it yet you'll love it too, this homeless man lectures Ron about Deborah's cancer because he was really ready to throw at him because God had put his hands upon his precious wife.

"I know you is hurtin and questionin God," I told him. "I'm hurtin, too. And you is probably wonderin why a saint like Miss Debbie is in that room sufferin when all them street bums she ministered to seem to be gettin along just fine. Well, let me tell you somethin: God calls some good ones like Miss Debbie home so He can accomplish His purposes down here on the earth."

Mr. Ron just stared at me. That's when I noticed his eyes was all red and swoll up. His throat was just a-workin, like he was fixin to break down on me, but I went right on anyway, 'cause I felt like if I didn't, he was gon' turn his back on God.

"I ain't sayin God can't use the bums and the addicts to work His will down here-He's God, and He can sure 'nough do anything He wants. I'm just tellin you He sometimes needs to call the good ones home to bring glory to His name. And I can tell you something else-I don't care what no doctors say, Miss Debbie ain't goin nowhere till she finished the work here on

earth that God gave her to do. You can take *that* to the bank.”  
(p. 170)

Isn't that great for guy who can't even write and can't even read could have such an experience through Ron and Deborah and coming to know Christ to lecture a man of faith about what was going on. Then the book just brings tears to your eyes when Deborah finds out that she has just a few days left. And all she can have his ice chips. She said “How do you live the rest of your life in just a few days?” (p. 172)

You know, it is those things that can create distance and create bitterness and create guilt that makes us have to face the fact that maybe the Lord is saying to us “you were running well, what was it that caused you to lose your confidence in Me, to lose your love for Me, to lose your devotion and your passion and your eagerness to finish well?”

Now you know when you're dealing with a controversial issue, you like to have lots of company with you? Well that's what you've got in verse two.

## **v. 2 And all the brethren with me to the churches of Galatia.**

It's plural, “churches.” Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lyrstra, Derbe—the four cities. And so this letter is a circular letter to all four of these churches because they have been affected.

But he's saying that everybody who's with me, believes what

I'm telling you, so I just want you to know this is not just something that I'm saying by myself.

Now what do you miss? Well you miss all the personal greetings. You miss all the saints saying I've been praying for you night and day. You miss the "I'm encouraged by your love for the brethren. I'm thrilled to death about how you're sharing your faith." Nothing, nothing there.

But what is he saying in verse 3? That's about as formal as you can get. He says that in all the letters, doesn't he?

### **v. 3 Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

And of course, that's wonderful. And they are never reversed, are they? He experienced grace before he experienced peace. You know you've experienced grace when you have peace. "The work of righteousness will be peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness of assurance forever."

Now, when you get to verse four, it's the most powerful verse on the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ and a clear presentation of the gospel. Oh, this is a great verse. Are you ready?

### **v. 4 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.**

v. 4 who [referring to Jesus Christ] gave himself in behalf of our sins [result] so that He might [key word, you might want to circle it] rescue us out from this present evil age according to the will of our God and father.

Salvation is literally a “rescue.”

We understand Isaiah 53: “he’s borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” We understand His involvement in being made sin for us, 2 Corinthians 5. He did all of this for us so that He might rescue us. Did you ever think that God did all that to rescue you and rescue me? So many people preach salvation today as you got a favor and received the Savior. God took all the initiative. He put everything in place for the rescue.

The rescue is a picture of a drowning man going down the last time and the strong arm of the Savior, when he’s given up and his whole life is coming before him, there is the strong arm of the Savior, who lifts him out of the waters of sin and death and places him on the solid rock and gives him a new path.

First of all, we don’t even want to take the reign because we don’t want to be dependent upon Him or somebody else for our salvation. We’ve got to get over that. And in humility and brokenness realize we’re dealing with a life and death issue and we don’t have any choice. We’ve got to take what’s provided if we’re going to have eternal life.

And that's the picture kind of in verse four. What does it mean delivery route from this present evil age? I don't think there's one of you sitting here tonight who would question we're living in a present evil age.

But this is that present evil age and the Lamb of God came to rescue us out from that evil age. I've started singing that great old hymn, "Jesus, I Come." I'm ready to go to whatever you have for me and thank You that You are there to rescue me and I was going down into the pit, but Lord Jesus, thank You that you rescued me from this present evil world.

Now, if you want to put some words to define the present evil world, I put the words drugs, drink, divorce, despair, discouragement, depression, and you can list all other words you want to put their to embellish that so you understand what Paul is talking about of being delivered out of that by the wonderful rescue.

John Ortberg in his book *Love Beyond Reason*, says

How many sparrows would it take to equal the value of your life in God's eyes? Put every sparrow that has ever flown on one side of the scales, you on the other, and God will take you every time. If God attends to every mishap in any moment of every sparrow's life, try to imagine how closely he attends to you. (p. 34)

And how much He cares. He was not exaggerating when He said “the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” That’s how passionate His love is for you.

Eugene Peterson put it this way:

Thank you Lord Jesus for going all the way for me, to the cross and to death, making there a “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world” and for my sins. Amen. (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 299)

And that’s the way you walk away with deep gratitude for what God has done in your life and making the rescue in verse 4.

Stop and think about how unfair it is to a holy God that He would step down out of compassionate self, sacrificial love to wipe the slate clean and to be literally crying on the cross when the nails are in His hands and His feet, “Father forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing.”

I almost feel like stopping and singing a little “Rescue the perishing, care for the dying.” Get all you Baptists stirred up. That would be wonderful. Now, the introduction ends in verse five, and you know Paul likes to sing the doxology when he gets on a high note and there it is.

**v. 5 To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

“And we could sing to God be the glory, great things he hath

done!”

Ask me and that’s one of the wonderful groups of verses to put together. Now what I want to do is with the understanding of that kind of love that Christ has for us, I want you to see how hard it is on Paul to deal with these believers who were running well.

The next verse, verse 6, is going to be the key verse to the study. As we launch into that verse, listen to John Ortberg one more time:

This facet has to do with the heart of the one who loves. When I love you, it is not something I do simply out of duty or obligation.

I remember hearing a Christian speaker say that you should always love your spouse with an *in spite of* love, never with a *because of* love-but who wants to be on the receiving end of that? If, when I was proposing to my wife, I had said, “Well, there’s certainly nothing about *you* that any reasonable person could ever warm up to, but because of my noble character I will hold my nose and love you anyway” the proposing process would not have gone nearly as well as it actually did.

No, when we love someone the mere sight of them causes our eyes to light up. This is beautifully expressed in Exodus at the burning bush when God tells Moses his brother Aaron is on his way: “Even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you *his heart will be glad*.” When you see someone you love, it makes your heart glad. (*Love Beyond Reason*, p. 22)

God loves you. The fact that you're here studying His Word tells you that He loves you and He's smiling. There's great joy over the fact that you've opened up the Word of God. If I summarize those five verses, everything he was and everything he said and everything he did came through Jesus Christ.

Now to the problem in the text that's before us.

**v. 6 I am marveling that so quickly you are transferring yourselves from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ's grace unto a different gospel.**

The word "marveling" is in the present tense. And you know that when I do a homemade translation I always put the "ing" on those verbs because that lets you know the present tense is happening right now.

This is something going on with Paul right now. He's gotten the message that this is happening and he's going to use present tense all through here. So it's going on and they're being successful in what they're doing.

"I am marveling that so quickly." I was with you on the second missionary journey and here I am, just a short time later and I'm finding out that you're throwing in the towel! You're going back on Judaism. You've been deceived by these teachers who've come in and the word "transferring" is in the present

tense. So it's going on.

"I am marveling that you are... transferring yourselves from Him who called you" your relationship to Jesus Christ into the sphere of Christ's grace unto a different gospel.

Now he has to define that for just a minute because there really isn't a different gospel. He just wants you to understand that the kind of gospel you're going for is a counterfeit. If we had two dollar bills here today, one that's real and one that's not. One would be worth a dollar and the other one would be worth nothing.

That's what he's saying when he refers to different. It's a counterfeit message. You've lost your enthusiasm. You've cooled off. You've moved in other directions and one of the things the evil one loves to do is to get people side-tracked, confused and distracted.

Now, the little word "gospel" is the keyword because it's going to occur five times in these remaining references here so you know what he's talking about. One of the things you understand about Satan is he does not mess around with things that aren't primary and of importance.

In the gospel messages involving eternal destiny for these folks, in these cities, and so the apostle now has to deal with it. You were running well until no runs, no hits and a big error.

You can feel the shock in the pen of the apostle, how grieved and amazed he is that this can happen so quickly that they would depart. Do you remember that verse in Jeremiah 2:13, where Jeremiah the weeping prophet says “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

He wept and so the apostle is grieving over what has happened with these people who so quickly took the opportunity to transfer themselves.

It provides an opportunity for us to realize what they have done and how much it hurts the apostle. They have literally gone AWOL. They are transferring themselves from the gospel of Christ.

Matthew 7:15: “Beware of the false prophets, who are coming to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

Matthew 24:11: “And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could just hear that there was recovery. We don’t know that. We don’t what the outcome of the letter’s going to be, but I know one thing, you can’t sit through these twelve without being a different person and having a different appreciation for all that God has done and to be encouraged by the fact that you can trust Him

completely.

Warren Wiersbe has written two little volumes and they're classic. Volume 1 is *Selections from A.W Tozer* and Volume 2 is *The Best of A.W. Tozer*. It's just the best of all of his writings done in this way.

Listen to what he says:

The problem is not to persuade God to fill us, but to want God sufficiently to permit Him to do so. The average Christian is so cold and so contented with his wretched condition that there is no vacuum of desire into which the blessed Spirit can rush in satisfying fullness. (p. 38)

You were running well, who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth? What is it that distracts us from God?

Peterson says:

I have a difficult time, God, silencing the competing voices, shutting out the seductive images. I want you, but I want a lot of other things, too. "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psalm 86:11). Amen. (*A Year With Jesus*, p. 39)

That You are first and dominant.

Now he jumps, that's our key verse, he jumps from there to verse seven.

**v. 7 Which is not another gospel [which he is talking about in verse 6] except there are certain ones who are troubling your minds and are desiring to change (pervert) the gospel of Christ.**

Two key phrases: “troubling your minds” and “desiring to change (pervert) the gospel of Christ.”

May I tell you, when Satan is at work, those are the two things he wants to do. He wants to trouble the mind and he wants to change or pervert the message and these Judaizing teachers are just following in his line to bring these folks out of the freedom that is theirs in Christ to put them back in the position of bondage in Judaism. And oh how he grieves as he shares, first of all, “this is not another gospel.”

Please be careful will you. There's a lot of people out there today that are preaching false good news. You must have the discernment of the Spirit. I'll tell you one thing, you can call me dogmatic and narrow, if you want to in a broad-minded society but I'm going back to John 14:6 when I read this verse “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me.” That's the truth and you can take to the bank with Denver.

And so oftentimes we want to impress others by being broad-minded. Please be very careful about how you're handling those circumstances.

Isaiah 43:11: “I even I am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.”

Now, the only problem you’ve got with verse 7 is everything is in the present tense. So what does that tell you? It’s going on right now so he’s writing right into the midst of the cauldron. The word troubling is in the present tense, “troubling their minds,” desiring to change or to pervert or to twist the gospel of Christ. Trying to create with them a desire to change to go in their direction. So it’s all going on right now there.

I found a little poem the other day about a centipede I thought would illustrate the point:

The centipede was quite happy  
Until a frog in fun said,  
“Pray, which leg goes after which?”  
That worked her mind to such a pitch,  
She lay distracted in a ditch,  
Considering how to run. (source unknown)

And that’s exactly what Satan would try to do. A troubled mind and a twisted gospel.

So therefore “you were running well.” Oh, how sad. How sad.

John Ortberg says:

If I think God's aim is to produce rule-followers, spiritual growth will always be an obligation rather than a desire of my heart. (*The Me I Want to Be*, p. 27)

Verse 8. Now here comes the strong language to wrap it up and it's so strong he has to repeat it twice. You were running well until there was no runs, no hits and a big error.

**v. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be Anathema.**

v. 8 But even if [contrast] we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be Anathema.

Anathema means to be set aside for judgment and certain destruction. You could say the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were set aside for Anathema. They had their chance, their opportunities, God's long-suffering impatience with those two cities, but there came a day when those two cities were eternally condemned. Set aside.

You cannot preach any other gospel, unless there be Anathema. The apostle Paul said, "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and that one having been crucified." Yes, dead, buried, risen again. He is the living Christ.

Paul is very stern isn't he. He's very dogmatic. It seems a little

bit out of character but he's standing on firm ground. Now do you understand why Martin Luther loved this verse? "Here I stand! God help me!" You can take my life. You can destroy me, but I know where I stand. And God help me. I don't care what the consequences are, I'm standing with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You get a little feeling of that in the Sermon on the Mount, don't you? "Many will say unto me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we done many wonderful works and I'll say depart from me. I never knew you. You workers of iniquity."

He was very exclusive and very detailed and very specific. We need to also learn that sincerity is not enough. You see that in the profits of Baal as they tried to call fire out of heaven. And finally, Elijah steps forward and the miracle takes place. Let him be accursed, let him be set aside for divine judgment. In the Old Testament that's exactly what's meant when it's said.

Does this make you kind of have just a little queasy thought in your heart about Mormonism tonight since it was the angel who gave Joseph Smith the tablets which form the theology of Mormonism? Lest an angel from heaven, or anybody else give a message that's different than what I told you, let him be set aside for judgment.

Well that's hard to take, isn't it? Especially since you let your pride get you at a distance with the Lord and now to have to come back and humbly in repentance say I'm wrong I want to make it right. That's hard.

Oswald Chambers hit this so hard the other morning:

The most difficult person to deal with is the one who has the prideful self-satisfaction of a past experience, but is not working that experience out in his everyday life. If you *say* you are sanctified, *show it*. The experience must be so genuine that it shows in your life. Beware of any belief that makes you self-indulgent or self-gratifying; that belief came from the pit of hell itself, regardless of how beautiful it may sound. (*My Utmost For His Highest*, 8/27)

He talks just exactly like the apostle Paul.

The fact that we insist on proving that we are right is almost always a clear indication that we have some point of disobedience [in our lives.] (Oswald Chambers, 6/30)

Want to hear old Denver in his second book, *What Difference Do It Make?* He and Ron did some little devotionals in the follow-up book. He says:

Listen, if the devil ain't messin with you, he's already got you. (p. 45)

Such insight for all of us.

Our last verse. Thanks for being so patient with me with regard to the introduction and all of the material we had to build the framework.

**v. 9 Even as we have said before, and now again I am saying, if anyone is preaching a gospel to you contrary to that which you received, let him be Anathema.**

“Even as we have said before”—you say it once but if you say it again, you can cast it in concrete can’t you. You’ve learned that over and over again in passages we’ve studied.

“Even as we have said before”—I want you Galatians to understand that I meant what I said in verse 8, and so I’m repeating it so there will be no question about what I said.

“and now again I am saying, if anyone”—this includes angels and everybody—“is preaching a gospel to you contrary to that which you received, let him be Anathema.”

Let him be set aside for divine judgment.

Lutzer wrote a great book called *10 Lies About God*:

There are some sacrifices God will not accept. One is the gift of *sincerity*; some think God should receive them because they mean well. Another is the gift of *service*; some remember all the good they have done and think God owes them acceptance for their basic decency. A third is the gift of their own *spiritual quest*. And many bring the gift of *guilt*; they

flagellate themselves, believing that if they feel sorry enough, they will pay for their own sins and God will accept them.

Martin Luther has a word for such people: “What makes you think that God is more pleased with your good deeds than he is with his blessed son?” Yes, we must bring an offering, a sacrifice to God, but it cannot be of our own making if we are to win His approval. *It must be the sacrifice He Himself made for us.* (p. 35)

Remember what the Lord said to Cain? “Why are you angry? Why are you downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But sin is crouching at the door, you must master it.”

Did Cain ever master it? We don’t ever know that. No, from the Scripture we don’t understand that.

Remember “Rock of Ages”?

Not the labors of my hands  
Can fulfill thy laws’ demands  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save and Thou Alone.

You will notice there are 10 lessons that come out of the study tonight. I hope that when you get home you take time to read it carefully. And just remember, if you and God are at a distance, guess who moved.

You were running well, who cut in on you? You are running well until no runs, no hits and a big error.

I don't know if you get excited about *Daily Bread* as much as I do and I use it so much. But did you read the reading yesterday morning? Many of you are smiling. It's the very passage that you have just finished studying. Listen to this.

Is It True?

Wednesday, September 22

“Trust, but verify.” My husband loves that quote from Ronald Reagan. During his time in office, the former US President wanted to believe everything he was told in his political dealings with others. But since the security of his country depended on the truth being told—he strived to verify everything.

Acts 17:11 tells us that the Bereans had a similar attitude with knowing the truth. “They received the Word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

[In other words, the Bereans didn't simply believe what someone else was telling them, they also verified it on their own on a daily basis.]

That's important for us to consider as well. Whether we receive our Bible teaching through church, Sunday school,

radio, or TV—we need to test what we hear against God’s inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We are to “be diligent to present [ourselves] approved to God, ...

Protection from false teaching comes  
The more we read God’s word.  
Once we know the Scriptures truth.  
What’s false will sound absurd. (Charles Spurgeon)

And then listen to Stephen Brown:

All you have left is Jesus. Of course, you don’t realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you’ve got. When He is all you’ve got, then you know that He is all you need. (*When Being Good Isn’t Good Enough*, p. 58)

## A Practical Study of GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

### Part 1 – Galatians 1-3

#### “Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free”

Key verse 5:7 — *“You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”*

#### **STUDY NUMBER ONE – UNTIL: NO RUNS, NO HITS, AND A BIG ERROR** **– GALATIANS 1:1-9**

##### **KEY VERSE 1:6**

v. 1 Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the father who raised Him from the dead (out from among the dead ones).

v. 2 And all the brethren with me to the churches of Galatia.

v. 3 Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ

v. 4 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.

v. 5 To whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

v. 6 I am marveling that so quickly you are transferring yourselves from Him who called you in the sphere of Christ's grace unto a different gospel.

v. 7 Which is not another gospel except there are certain ones who are troubling your minds and are desiring to change (pervert) the gospel of Christ.

v. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be Anathema.

v. 9 Even as we have said before, and now again I am saying, if anyone is preaching a gospel to you contrary to that which you received, let him be Anathema.

##### **NOTES**

##### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Galatians 1:1-9 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. What is the origin of Paul's apostleship, according to verse 1?

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3. Why did Christ die, according to verse 4?

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4. What were the Galatian Christians guilty of, according to verse 6?

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5. What two things were these false teachers doing, according to verse 7?

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6. What is your definition of the term "gospel"? (see 1 Cor. 15:3, 4)

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7. What does Paul mean by "let him be accursed" in verses 8 & 9?

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8. Why do you suppose the apostle repeats his warning in verse 9?

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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## **LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Salvation is ours by believing, not achieving.

LESSON #2: The centrality of Christ and the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures will keep us on the right path.

LESSON #3: After we become Christians our character, conversation, and conduct are all Christ-centered.

LESSON #4: All that we are, all that we say, and all that we do comes through Jesus Christ.

LESSON #5: Salvation is a rescue.

LESSON #6: If God thought you could do it, He would not have sent Jesus Christ into the world.

LESSON #7: Satan troubles the mind and twists the Gospel.

LESSON #8: The greatest protection against falling into error is to concentrate on one's personal relationship with the Lord.

LESSON #9: Remember always, the Lord is longing for a relationship not a performance.

LESSON #10: Christ's death would be unnecessary if we could accomplish salvation through the performance of the law.