

**BIBLE
BOOK
SERIES**

**1 & 2 THESSALONIANS
AND
GALATIANS**

FOR FURTHER STUDY

In today's lesson there are four special words which we should study. Each of these words tells us something which Christians should do in order to help each other.

1. **RESTORE** is found in Galatians 6:1. This word is used 15 times in the New Testament. It means: repair, mend, bring back to its former condition. "Restore" is a medical term. It suggests the work which is done when a bone is broken or out of joint. Thus we are taught to restore, repair, mend and lead back the sinning brother or sister into Christ's way. We restore in a spirit of tender gentleness. Each believer who is restored gives a testimony to the power of Christ's love and forgiveness. This testimony furthers the kingdom of God on earth.

2. **BEAR**, or carry, is found in Galatians 6:2, 5, 17. This word, referring to carrying loads, is found 27 times in the New Testament. It means to carry a pitcher of water, shoes, a purse and is used in reference to Christ bearing his cross. We are invited by Jesus to follow him, "bearing our cross." Here in Galatians, the main teaching is about carrying our own burdens and the loads of others. It was the way of Christ in both his teaching and his life.

3. **SHARE** is found in different forms, more than 50 times in the New Testament. Thus, it is a very important word. Read Galatians 6:6. In the Bible, share means: to be partner of, to be in fellowship with, to give to or to hold in common together. Because our pastors give their time to God's work, we should mutually share with them in both support and fellowship. A kind word or something from your garden would let him know you care.

4. **Do good** is a special instruction for Christians in Galatians 6:10. Doing good was the example set for us by Jesus. This includes our Lord's command, "Love one another," and Paul's words, "Be kind to one another."

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Look back at the four key words given under "For Further Study." Ask yourself these questions: 1. In our church, how are we living by these words (restore, share, etc.)? 2. Am I personally doing all I should to bear the burdens of other people? 3. What could our class do differently because of this lesson?

1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS, GALATIANS

1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS, GALATIANS

*Published by
Baptist Publishing House
P.O. Box 31995, 10101
Lusaka, Zambia*

*Printed by
Baptist Printing Ministry
P.O. Box 31995, 10101
Lusaka, Zambia*

*© Copyright 1993
Baptist Publishing House
All Rights Reserved
Printed with Permission
of Baptist International Publications Services*

states clearly once again that religious laws, such as circumcision, do not really matter. The important thing is faith in Christ which changes us into new and different people. May everyone who lives by faith enjoy peace and mercy. This is Paul's prayer and blessing.

In the last two verses of Galatians, Paul appeals to his readers on the basis of his own suffering and God's grace. Paul's wounds and scars are the brand marks of Christ's ownership. These marks show him as a slave of Christ. His scars were another witness to his Lord. Then comes Paul's last word: GRACE. For him, God's grace, love and blessing are all that really matter.

As you examine your life and how you spend your time, what is it that really matters to you?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What are some ways to help a Christian who has fallen into sin?
2. What are some examples of "reaping what we sow"?
3. In what way do you suffer for Christ?

Paul continued by speaking against pride and conceit. Instead of comparing ourselves with a neighbour, we should ask: "Have we done our very best?"

Twice in this passage Paul spoke about bearing burdens. We should help others carry their heavy loads or problems, troubles or sorrows. Let us give healing, forgiving support to each other. In so doing we fulfil the law of Christ to obey the Lord's command. There are personal burdens however which a man must bear alone. Every person has duties and responsibilities which no one else can do for him. We have seen some of these in earlier lessons when Christians were instructed to do their own work and to take care of the needs of their families.

In the Christian community, both aspects are necessary. Each person needs to do all he can to care for himself and to provide for his family, but when there is a burden too great to bear, we have one another on whom we can depend.

SOWING AND REAPING (6:6-10)

Verse 6 tells us to help support our pastor-teachers. Church members should give generously to help pastors who teach the eternal Word of God. This allows pastors to have more time for prayer, preaching, visiting and winning the lost to Christ. To learn more about this matter, read Romans 15:27 and 1 Corinthians 9:11-14.

Verse 7-10 reminds us that we reap what we sow. Sowing for the flesh brings a harvest of ruin, but sowing for the Spirit brings eternal life. Let us not be discouraged, for we will receive a harvest of blessings. Whenever we can, we should be kind and generous, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters. A Christian is not to suffer alone in his failures, nor struggle alone with his troubles and sorrows. You will find that others have experienced the same or similar problems as yours. They have experienced forgiveness and healing. Let us give healing, forgiving support to each other.

NEW AND DIFFERENT PEOPLE (6:11-18)

Paul wrote this last part of his letter to the Galatians in large letters. This is an indication that Paul wanted them to know that this was his authentic letter, even if perhaps he had dictated the rest to a scribe. It also emphasizes the boldness he feels in this letter. In his own hand he re-emphasizes a few points from his letter, giving further feeling to these issues he takes seriously. He

Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGES
1. Christian Examples	5
2. Help for Christian Living	9
3. A Reason to Live for Jesus	13
4. More Teaching about the Second Coming of Christ.....	17
5. Living by Christian Traditions	21
6. The Only Gospel	25
7. The Gospel Changes People.....	29
8. Saved by Faith	33
9. Faith and Law in God's Plan	37
10. Faith Brings Freedom.....	41
11. Defend Your Freedom by Love	45
12. Living in the Spirit.....	49
13. Faithful to Christ	53

SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS OF 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS AND GALATIANS

Paul is the author of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Paul came to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey in about A.D. 50. Many converts came to know the Lord Jesus through Paul's ministry and his preaching concerning freedom in Christ. The unbelieving Jews were jealous of his ministry and incited a riot to get rid of Paul. Paul believed the new believers faced persecution also, so he sent Timothy back to visit the Thessalonian Christians. He was very happy with the report he received about them and wrote his first letter to them. He shared his joy with them, replied to the charges made against him by the Jews, encouraged them to persevere in their trials and showed the great superiority of Christianity over idol worship.

Not long afterward, Paul might have received word that someone else had sent a letter claimed to be from him. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2). The Thessalonians were confused about Christ's return. So Paul wrote another, more demanding letter. He dealt mostly with the Lord's return in speaking to the confusion in the church. Scholars believe these letters were written from Corinth, probably in late A.D. 50, making them one of the earliest New Testament writings.

The book of Galatians was written to address the problem of salvation by law or salvation by faith. Soon after the conversion of the Galatians and Paul's departure, some Christian Jews came into the group and began to teach a different gospel. These people, known as Judaizers, had an unsettling effect on the churches by insisting on circumcision as necessary for salvation. Paul sent this urgent letter to them to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is one of the greatest documents of the Christian faith, speaking clearly of religion based on the Spirit and calling men to free dom in Christ.

Throughout history, man constantly wants to have a religion of the law, often attached to a religion of faith. Paul knew that these two are incompatible. Paul's profound stand on this issue has made a tremendous difference in the expression of the Christian faith until today. For Paul, a right relationship with God was only possible through a person, Jesus Christ, and not a code or law. These truths are needed in our lives today.

CHAPTER 13

FAITHFUL TO CHRIST GALATIANS 6:1-18

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 6:1-18

MEMORY VERSES: *"Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."* Galatians 6:7

CENTRAL TRUTH: Christians are being faithful to Christ when they love and help each other.

The church members were divided in their opinions about Mary. She had just returned home from boarding school because she was pregnant. One elder of the church said, "If Mary were my daughter, I would beat her and send her away." But other Christians felt that, although Mary had sinned, they should help her instead of condemning her.

Finally, another church elder spoke on Mary's behalf, "Let us remember the words of Jesus. He said that we should not judge one another. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery that he did not condemn her. I think we should act on the words of truth in Galatians 6:1, *'...If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.'*"

How would a matter like this be handled in your church? What would be the basis of your opinion in the matter? As you study this lesson, look for some guidelines for dealing with these problems in the church.

SHARE EACH OTHER'S TROUBLES (Galatians 6:1-5)

If someone falls into the mud, we help him to stand on his feet again. This is the idea of verse 1. When a Christian slips into sin, our Christian duty is to assist him by putting him on the right path again. Let us not judge others harshly. We are to be like a doctor who gently sets a broken arm. Harsh attitudes and criticism will be put aside while we repair the damage, bringing our brothers back into the love of a Christian fellowship. The idea is not to punish, but to help, heal and cure.

It is important that we walk close with Christ and grow in him. Then when we see others who are struggling, we can offer help without always being tempted to enter the sin they have been in.

Paul gives 15 examples of the works of the flesh, sin.

First, sexual sins: fornication, impurity and licentiousness. These sins refer to immoral sex relationships. A Christian must put to death the lust and sins against the body. (Colossians 3:5)

Second, pagan acts: idolatry and sorcery. We destroy true worship of God when we love and worship any thing other than God. Sorcery and witchcraft use fear to harm other people. God commands his people to avoid witchcraft. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Third, sins of hatred: enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit and envy. These sins are opposed to Christian love. Christ is not at the centre of lives ruled by hate, quarrels and divisions.

Finally, sins of indulgence: drunkenness and carousing. These sins offend both God and man. The way for Christians to avoid these works of the flesh is to live in the presence of Christ with the inner power of the Spirit.

Now consider your own life as you study the fruit of the Spirit.

First, there are three inner personal qualities: love, joy and peace. Love is best understood by reading 1 Corinthians 13 and by looking at the life of Christ. Love is unselfishly caring for other people. All the rest of the characteristics result from deep love. Joy is the deep happiness which comes from God. Peace is life at its best, completely happy and secure. Such peace comes from God and results in harmony with God and man.

Second, there is the fruit of the Spirit which is evident in human relationships: patience, kindness and goodness. Patience means never giving up hope no matter how difficult the situation. Kindness shows itself by lovingly caring about other people. Goodness means an open-handed generosity.

Third, there are principles of conduct: faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Faithfulness is seen in Christ, on whom we can totally depend. Gentleness means a meekness which is strong, and a kindness which is humble. Self-control shows itself in restraint and discipline, and only by God's Spirit is this fruit possible. These great qualities are love gifts from God to Christians.

CHRISTIAN EXAMPLES 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 - 3:13

VERSES TO STUDY: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2:3-14; 3:6-13

MEMORY VERSE: *"And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit; so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia."* 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

CENTRAL TRUTH: Faithful believers challenge others to grow by the example of their dedicated lives.

"Take a second wife!" Josiah was shocked when he heard his father's advice. He and Anna had already suffered so much. Their two children had died seven years earlier, and Anna had not been able to bear other children. His father's advice only added more pressure to the problem. Many other people agreed with his father's opinion.

Josiah and Anna loved Jesus. They led the youth group and the choir at their church. "What kind of example would we be if we disobeyed God in our marriage?" they wondered. Josiah and Anna prayed and received strength to go against tradition. Their example of Christian faith was known throughout their area.

The Thessalonian Christians were examples to all Christians living in their province. They were loyal to the gospel preached by Paul. Paul wrote this letter to encourage and instruct them. As you read this letter, look for ways to become a worthy example of faithful, Christian living.

PAUL, AN EXAMPLE (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6)

Paul followed God's call to the province of Macedonia, Greece. Paul and his co-workers, Silas and Timothy, preached the gospel to people who had never heard it. In the city of Thessalonica, the Holy Spirit filled their words with power and meaning. They spoke with great conviction because they knew the power of the gospel in their own lives. Many Thessalonians became believers and followed the example of Paul, Silas and Timothy in following the Lord Jesus. Are you able to speak with conviction concerning the gospel in your own life?

THE THESSALONIANS, EXAMPLES TO ALL CHRISTIANS (1:7-10)

The Thessalonians' lives changed from the worship of idols to the worship of the living God. Those who refused to believe began to persecute the new Christians. The Christians endured the persecution with joy because of the power of the Holy Spirit. Can a person be joyful during trouble? Yes, because joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit to Christians.

The joy of the Thessalonian Christians in persecution became an example to other Christians. Words were not necessary. Daily living in faith was a more powerful message.

Someone has said, "Our lives are like a book which people read." What do people know about Jesus when they "read" your life?

EXAMPLES IN WORDS AND LIFE (2:3-14)

Paul heard criticism of his life and his preaching after he left Thessalonica. Jews who had not believed in Jesus spoke against him. Paul reminded the Christians of his own life. He had never used tricks or magic to persuade people. He lived a respectable life and spoke words true to God's message. He had been open and honest in all matters. Paul and Silas preached to please God not to please people.

Paul and Silas had not preached to get money. They worked hard. Most scholars believe they supported themselves by making tents. They were not lazy or a burden to the new believers at Thessalonica.

Paul also reminded them of his gentle care, "like a nurse" and "like a father." He loved the church, God's people.

All Christians should share the good news of Jesus Christ like Paul. We call this witnessing. We witness because we love Jesus and have confidence in his power in our lives. Many people do not know about Jesus and we need to witness to them through our lifestyle and our words.

THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE AND JOY (3:6-13)

Paul was concerned for the new Christians because he had spent little time among them. When he sent Timothy to teach and encourage them in following Christ, Timothy found the believers in Thessalonica faithfully following Christ and loving one another. Paul expressed his joy by thanking God for them and praying that he might see them and teach them again. Paul also

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER (5:24-26)

The victory over the works of the flesh, and the producing of the fruit of the Spirit, come from new life in Christ. They come when we die in Christ's death. So, the Spirit makes Christians alive and helps them continue by the Spirit. As we live by the power of the Spirit, we overcome such sins as conceit and envy. Let us seek to be filled with the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit. Let us keep coming to Jesus daily, increasing in the Spirit's power more and more.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Why is there warfare between good and evil?
2. How is it that we are sometimes led by the Spirit and still we sin?
3. How can a Christian avoid the works of the flesh?
4. Which of the fruit of the Spirit are least developed in your life?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 6:1-5

Tuesday: Galatians 6:6-8

Wednesday: Galatians 6:9-10

Thursday: Galatians 6:11-14

Friday: Galatians 6:15-18

Saturday: Galatians 6:1-18

who is controlled by the Spirit does not need any law to live by. The Spirit is a guard on his behaviour.

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH (5:19-21)

If anyone follows his own wrong desire, his life produces evil results. Paul calls these evil results “...*the works of the flesh*...” (Galatians 5:19). There is a war between two opposing forces: the flesh and the Spirit. The Bible teaches of this conflict between the evil nature and the good nature. The flesh is the deadly enemy of the Spirit.

Read again the list of nine vices produced in the flesh in Galatians 6:9-21. These evil things are not a full list of all sins. Jesus spoke of other sins such as evil thoughts, murder, theft, false witness and slander in Matthew 15:19. Such sins come from our lower evil nature, coming out of our hearts, because of the lust of the flesh.

Paul gave a stern warning in verse 21: “...*Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” God cannot rule in their lives, and they cannot enter heaven. They cannot please God nor receive eternal life in God’s kingdom.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (5:22-23)

God’s people are like a garden. God comes to the garden looking for fruit. He wants to find the fruit or harvest of his Spirit in each Christian life. What does God see when he looks at you?

Paul gives a list of nine virtues produced in the believers’ life by the Holy Spirit. These lovely virtues are the fruit of the spirit. Read again the nine Spirit-made virtues in Galatians 5:22-23. Each fruit can come only from God. Like good seeds planted in good soil, only the Spirit of God can nourish the nine lovely virtues in our Christian lives.

It is well to think of your life as a fruit garden. In this garden, God wants “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” Thinking of the fruit of the Spirit, ask yourself: What is the garden of my life producing? What kind of crops come from it? Is God satisfied with the fruit he sees? Is God getting from me the kind of harvest he desires? Have his efforts been in vain, or is there a fruitful yield? If we wish to see an increase in the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, let us follow the words of John: “*He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30).

prayed that the Thessalonians would love each other and grow spiritually.

The example of the faithful Christians at Thessalonica challenges us today. They remained faithful to Jesus in pain and sorrow.

If someone wrote a report on your church, what would it say? Would it reveal that members are Christian examples? Would it say that they love each other?

Each Christian and each congregation make up part of the body of Christ. Every member must commit himself to growth and to helping his church grow. What we are becomes an example, good or bad, to all who see our church and our individual lives. Let us search ourselves to see what kind of examples we are in our communities.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Why did Paul write his letter to the Thessalonians?
2. Name the good points in Timothy’s report.
3. Do you believe the Holy Spirit can give you joy during trouble?
4. In what ways can you be a Christian example ?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK’S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-6

Tuesday: 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

Wednesday: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Saturday: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Thessalonica was the capital of the province of Macedonia in Greece. Greeks and Romans living there worshipped idols. The Jews built synagogues and followed Jewish laws and practices. Paul, Silas and Timothy experienced opposition when many people left the old religions to become Christians. Acts 17:5-8 tells about the fierce attack on Paul.

The new Christians sent Paul and his companions away during the night so their lives might be spared. After Paul left, his enemies told lies about his life and message.

Paul was upset when he had to leave Thessalonica quickly. He had only been there a few weeks. How could he leave the new Christians who needed a teacher? Paul never forgot the believers he had left in Thessalonica. He wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians while at Corinth. Most scholars think 1 Thessalonians is the earliest book of the New Testament written only 20 years after Jesus' resurrection. It contains encouragement and instruction for all of us.

Three words stand out in this lesson. They are: gospel, imitator and example. The gospel is God's good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, his Son. His death and resurrection make eternal life available to everyone who believes in him.

The word, imitator, means to copy or duplicate. It also means to follow in another person's footsteps. These days people use a machine to copy important papers. Sometimes the copy is clear and easily read. At other times the ink is smudged or the print is too light. It is not a good copy. The Thessalonians were imitators of the Lord and Paul. They were good copies of the gospel. Is your life a good copy of the gospel? Whom do you imitate?

"Be an example." An example is a pattern or a standard to follow. The Thessalonian church was a pattern which other churches copied. The Thessalonians' joy during persecution, their faithfulness, hospitality and conversion from idol worship were examples all could follow.

When we imitate Jesus, we become good Christian examples. We must feel responsible to new believers who usually need a human example of Christianity as they learn to discover more about Christ. Our lives can have a tremendous positive impact on new believers.

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT GALATIANS 5:16-26

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 5:16-26

MEMORY VERSE: *"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law."* Galatians 5:22-23

CENTRAL TRUTH: When the Holy Spirit controls us, our character becomes like Christ.

Rocks, weeds, tangled roots and bushes were everywhere in the fields. But Mr. and Mrs. Thomas began to cut and dig. They worked with hope and joy. They dug with a song in their souls, for they saw beyond the stones, weeds and hard soil. In their hope, they could see rain falling on the good earth, green plants in their fields and baskets filled with fruits and vegetables.

God must do something similar in our lives. We are not naturally "good ground." We have stony hearts of sin and lives choked with the works of the flesh. In today's lesson we see how God wants to lead us by his Spirit so we exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

BE LED BY THE SPIRIT (Galatians 5:16-18)

All Christians possess the Spirit. We received the Spirit of God by faith when we accepted Christ as our Saviour. (Galatians 3:2, 14 and 4:6) God gave us everything when we united with Christ. We have already been blessed *"...in Christ with every spiritual blessing..."* (Ephesians 1:3).

However we confess our great need for the Spirit to lead us and to give us his full power in our lives today. We all have failure and weaknesses within us. We hunger and thirst for more of God's power. How do we receive the "fullness" of the Holy Spirit? How can the Spirit help keep us awakened and revived? How can he lead us toward his goal for us?

We must drink deeply of the Spirit every day. The Lord invited us to come to him and drink. We are to keep coming to Jesus everyday and drinking of the Spirit by prayer, Bible study and obedience. True Christians are always spiritually thirsty, so we must continue to drink spiritually. Thus the Spirit leads us when we live in God's will and are controlled by his Spirit. A person

Today's lesson can be understood much better by studying these five key words:

1. **CIRCUMCISION:** God ordered this ceremony for Abraham and his descendants. See Genesis 17:9-14. Circumcision was the sign of agreement between God and his people. But under grace no account is taken of this Jewish ceremony. Faith alone, without circumcision, is the only condition necessary for full salvation. Read Romans 4:9-12; 10:10-13 and Galatians 5:2-6.

2. **HOLY SPIRIT:** Paul uses this name 18 times in Galatians, so we know he places great importance on the Holy Spirit. God gives his Spirit to every Christian. He enters into us when we believe. The Holy Spirit is God's power in us, helping us to live by faith. He gives us special "gifts" so the church can be built up, and he produces in us a harvest of Christian virtues.

3. **LOVE:** This special word in its different forms is found over 250 times in the New Testament. In our lesson today the word for love is "agape." Read Galatians 5:6 and 13. This love means self-giving action, or doing what is best for other people. God shows his love in his day-to-day blessings on us and in the gift of his Son. Christian love is the fruit of God's Holy Spirit in us.

4. **TRUTH:** The idea of "the truth of the gospel" is implied each time this word is used in Galatians. Read Galatians 2:4-5 and 5:7. The truth is Jesus. His word is true; his promises are true. We can know God only through the truth of Jesus and the true teaching of the gospel.

5. **CROSS:** In Galatians the cross refers to the good news of the death of Christ, the cross meant pain, agony, shame and death. To Christians, the cross means sins forgiven, and an open way to God. We who follow Christ must deny ourselves, take up our cross and live with the highest motives and virtues.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Study silently the Memory Verse, Galatians 5:1. Now ask yourself these questions: 1. Have I thanked God for my freedom in Christ? 2. What are some of the old rules and traditions from which I am now free? 3. Are any of my people still living under a "yoke of slavery" to sin and tradition? 4. How can I proclaim to them "freedom in Christ"?

HELP FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-18

VERSES TO STUDY: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-18

MEMORY VERSE: *"For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness."* 1 Thessalonians 4:7

CENTRAL TRUTH: God requires his people to live holy lives.

How happy John and Martha were in their marriage! They and their children went to church every Sunday. Then John moved to another place to earn money for his family. He missed Martha's attention to him. He longed to hear her voice, but she was so far away. He began to talk to a beautiful young woman at work. Each day, he liked her more. Soon she invited John to her flat. He accepted her invitation and began to live with her. Did John sin? What do you think happened to John and Martha's marriage?

Today in Africa we see great changes in our society. The family system of the past is breaking down. Young people leave home at an early age and fall into sin. Greed often possesses us. As a Christian, how shall I live in this changing world?

The Thessalonian Christians faced similar problems. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians will help us in our daily Christian life.

LIVE A HOLY LIFE (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

Paul knew the old way of life of the Christians at Thessalonica. Most of them came from religions which practised sexual sin. People did sex acts in their temples as a part of pagan worship. Stories of their gods and goddesses included sex sins. These new Christians needed to know the difference between a Christian life and a pagan life.

Paul's letter taught them to leave their old ways to live by Christ's standards: Follow the commandments of God for holy living; don't have sex outside marriage; do not be a part of selling or buying sex.

Paul also taught that in marriage Christians must respect each other. Marriage does not give a man a right to treat his wife like a prostitute. Sex must not be a selfish act. Each partner in Christian marriage will honour the other.

Christians must act honestly with all people. They should not take what does not belong to them. This includes all property and another person's wife or husband. They should not take advantage of a weaker or unlearned brother or sister. Christians must respect uneducated elders in the community. Christians must be honest in business, at school and in all daily affairs.

God's rules for the Thessalonians are the same for us today. We sin against the Holy Spirit when we disobey. Paul warns that God's anger comes upon us when we sin against a person.

LIVE IN LOVE TOWARD ALL PEOPLE (4:9-10)

In the Greek language which Paul used there were several words meaning "love." The word Paul used in these verses described a blood brother/sister relationship. Remember, the Thessalonian Christians came from many religions and cultural groups. Usually these groups did not mix. This practice changed when people became Christians. They became one family in Christ's love.

They learned to love each other because they loved God. Other Christians in the province knew about their love for each other and for all Christians.

Paul urged them to let their love increase. Christian love has no limit. It overcomes hate and distrust of other cultures. Christians of different tribes can become one family because of Christ's love.

WORK WITH YOUR HANDS (4:11-12)

Paul gave two practical rules for daily Christian living. He said to work hard, taking care of your own needs. Let other people take care of their own affairs. Paul also told them to live a quiet life.

Paul always worked hard to support himself. He learned that some of the new Christians had stopped working. They expected Jesus to return very soon so they quit working. Their spare time made it easy for them to gossip. Working Christians had to support those who had quit working.

Paul spoke against this way of living. Earlier in the letter he said they must be examples to all believers and to non-Christians, too. The Thessalonian Christians would have what they needed if they worked.

Each member of the church has work to do for Jesus. All suffer when one fails. Some church members do most of the work for the church because others do nothing. The church grows when members share their work and love together.

fellowship. True freedom has its limits. True freedom acts only in love; and, in return, such love will safeguard freedom.

Therefore, as Paul says in Galatians 5:14, Christian love fulfils religious law. What exactly does this mean? Love leads a Christian to do the real requirements of the law. Jesus said, *"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them"* (Matthew 5:17). God's law is too high for us to completely obey in every part. Thus we open our lives to the love and power of Christ. When this happens we become devoted to the deepest intent of God's law, loving our neighbour as ourselves.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What does this mean: "Freedom is the fruit of grace"?
2. What do these words mean: "Faith working through love"?
3. In what ways have others tried to limit your freedom? What are the "laws" that many Christians in your area feel must be followed?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 5:16-18

Tuesday: Galatians 5:19-21

Wednesday: Galatians 5:22-24

Thursday: Galatians 5:25-26

Friday: Galatians 5:16-26

Saturday: James 3:13-18

follow their laws have “fallen from grace,” but in verse 4 Paul said that the ones who are bound to the law have fallen from grace. In fact, they have severed themselves from Christ.

Verses 5-9 are about faith working through love. Accepting by faith alone brings forgiveness and full salvation. The Holy Spirit assures believers that Christ’s death clears away all sins. However, Paul gives one warning: let no one hold you back from following the truth. Instead live by faith and serve by love.

FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE (5:10-12)

The Christians in Galatia struggled with a big question: Is faith alone enough for salvation, or should we add on something else? Paul said in verse 10 that the Lord would lead the Galatian Christians back to the correct way. He would bring them back to believing in Christ alone for full salvation.

Paul clearly warned those people who troubled the Galatians. God himself would deal with anyone who confuses God’s people. The false teacher will not escape God’s judgement. Paul strongly wishes (verse 12) that those misleading people leave his Christian converts alone.

In verse 11 Paul said he was being persecuted. Why was this happening? Paul was persecuted because he preached salvation through faith in the cross of Christ alone.

GUARD YOUR FREEDOM WITH LOVE (5:13-15)

How must we use freedom? Paul gives the answer to this important question in two ways. First, he says our freedom in Christ is not freedom to do wrong things. We are free to love and serve each other. The highest purpose and goal of love is to continually help and serve one another.

Thus, one word sums up the whole law of God: LOVE. Paul quotes from Leviticus 9:18, “...*You shall love your neighbour as yourself...*” Christ’s life shows us clearly the law of love. Christ’s love cares for everyone. Christ-like love does good even to those people who hate us and oppose us. It frees us to love and serve anyone God leads us to love and serve.

Verse 15 tells us the second way to use freedom. Our freedom in Christ is not freedom to attack with words, tearing one another into pieces. Human nature is drawn to living by a law because we can use that law to measure the behaviour of others and to judge them accordingly. Such behaviour will destroy our Christian

BE READY FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (4:13-18)

The Thessalonian Christians did not understand about the second coming of Jesus. Paul explained that death brings sorrow for all of us. Non-Christians grieve without hope, but Christians have eternal life because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Therefore, when a Christian loved one dies, we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Paul told us that dead loved ones are with Jesus.

One great day, Jesus will return with a “cry of command.” He will be in charge. It will be a day of joy and victory! Christians will live with the Lord forever. There will be no more separation, no more dying and no more tears. The Lord lives, and we who live in him shall live also.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Did Paul say sex is wrong?
2. Describe the daily life of a good Christian.
3. Why did some of the Thessalonian Christians stop working?
4. Describe Jesus’ return to earth.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK’S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

Tuesday: 1 Thessalonians 5:4-7

Wednesday: 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11

Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Saturday: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Throughout the New Testament, the writers stress the importance of Christian love. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 3:12, "...*May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men....*" In our lesson today, Paul wrote "...*Love one another*" (1 Thessalonians 4:9) and "...*do so more and more*" (1 Thessalonians 4:10).

The basis for love is God. He is the origin of true love. Read 1 John 4:7-11. We often quote John 3:16 because it explains God's love for the whole world. It is the gospel in one verse. Jesus came to die for us because of love.

Jesus gave two commandments: Love God and love your neighbour as yourself. He explained further that Christian love includes all people, even our enemies. The guidelines for holy living are followed when our lives are founded on these two commandments.

Paul taught that love is necessary for good relationships. Christians will respect their neighbours and their property. Holiness and purity become important. Christian love eliminates wife beating and adultery. A part of Christian life is to work hard to support oneself and one's family. Depending on your brother to support you leads to trouble. We cannot be lazy and expect someone else to feed and educate our family. That is self-love.

Christians will not be respected if they live like their sinful neighbours. The world admires a Christian whose life is filled with love. Love removes greed, therefore love destroys bribery and corruption. Love replaces prejudice toward other tribes, religions and nations. We will no longer cheat and lie. Those sins show that we do not love the one we cheat. Ask yourself, "Can I lie to a husband (or wife) whom I truly love?"

How is true Christian love expressed? Paul says it well in his letter to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) These verses are a beautiful description of Christian love. Such love is possible only when we have accepted God's love through Jesus.

Paul wrote in Ephesians that we must be rooted and grounded in love. Roots give life and growth. Our love shows growth when Christ's love is firmly rooted on our hearts. All areas of our daily life will be right when we love God and each other.

DEFEND YOUR FREEDOM BY LOVE GALATIANS 5:1-15

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 5:1-15

MEMORY VERSE: "*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*"

Galatians 5:1

CENTRAL TRUTH: Religious law is fulfilled by Christian love.

A small gazelle struggled to get free from the trap. Slowly the snare of the hunter came loose. He was free at last! The little gazelle then walked along a path enjoying his freedom from the trap, but suddenly he almost walked into a mouth of a waiting lion.

In today's lesson we read how the Christians of the province of Galatia were in danger of making a similar mistake. They had been set free from the trap of obedience to religious law, but there was a new danger. Paul said, "You were getting along so well! Now, who is confusing you? You have been set free by Christ, but take care that you do not lose that special freedom."

Are you confused about Christian freedom? Many unbelievers do not wish to follow Christ because they think it is only a set of rules. As you study this lesson, try to learn the truth about freedom in Christ.

REMAIN FREE (Galatians 5:1-9)

In these scriptures Paul summarizes his message to the Galatians: Christ has set you free, but make sure you stay free. Freedom is the fruit of God's grace; now remain firm in your Christian liberty. Freedom from the slavery to sin and religious laws is a free gift from Christ. Freedom is always threatened, so do not submit again to the slavery of trying to obey all the religious laws.

Paul gives an example in verses 2-4. His example is circumcision. Paul says that no such religious ceremony can put people right with God. Circumcision was not necessary in order to please God. Jewish law required circumcision, but Christians did not need circumcision.

Christians who strive to follow the law are often condemning those who do not follow their rules. They say those who do not

Jesus said that a wise man builds on a solid rock. Paul suggested the value of using stones. "Word studies" are much like stones used in building a strong house. We have already done word studies on eight very important words in Galatians.

The eight vital words we have studied are: Jesus Christ, God the Father, grace, peace, gospel, insincerity, justified and faith. Such word studies increase our basic knowledge of God's Word. Four more important Bible words are:

1. **SLAVE:** This word, in several forms, is used seven times in chapter four of Galatians. Notice it in Galatians 4:3 and 9. A slave has no rights, belonging totally to his owner. The non-Christian is a slave of sin. (Romans 6:16) He has no power to release himself, but a Christian has a new service of freedom. He is a servant of God, becomes a friend of Christ, (John 15:15) and a son of God. (John 1:12)

2. **LAW:** Law is used 200 times in the New Testament, more than half of which are in Romans and Galatians. Law means both the commandments of God and the Jewish religious rules. Jesus and Paul clearly said that the law has no power to save. It can describe the disease, but it cannot produce a cure.

3. **ADOPTION:** See Galatians 4:5-6. Our adoption as God's very own children is at the centre of the Christian message. As believers we have a special family relationship of love with God. No more a slave - now a son. As adopted sons and daughters of God, we have full rights to the inheritance of Christ.

4. **FREE:** This word, used in different forms, is found 41 times in the New Testament. Freedom is used more times in Galatians than in any other book of the Bible. Galatians has been called "the Gospel of Freedom." Christ gives freedom. He frees men from sin, self and hell. Christ gives freedom to anyone who submits to him and serves him.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Restate in your own words the idea of "Christian freedom from slavery to religious laws." Prepare a personal illustration about freedom in Christ. If you know an African language, translate into that language the four key words studied in For Further Study.

A REASON TO LIVE FOR JESUS 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-28

VERSES TO STUDY: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28

MEMORY VERSE: "...always seek to do good to one another and to all." 1 Thessalonians 5:15

CENTRAL TRUTH: Christians are to work for the Lord, always ready for his return.

"Jesus is coming soon!" We often hear these words, but in a small town in America, a group of Christians thought they knew the exact day and hour.

Men, women and children came together to wait for that day. Farmers left crops rotting in the fields. Children quit school. Shopkeepers shut their doors. Women left dirty clothes unwashed, food to spoil in cupboards and pets to suffer. They waited for the day. Did Jesus return that day? He did not.

Many of the Thessalonian Christians quit work to wait for Jesus' return. The Thessalonian church experienced trouble because Christians had not understood or had not believed Paul's teachings about Jesus' return. Let us see what Paul taught them.

DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN UNKNOWN (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)

Paul described the day of Christ's return to earth in 1 Thessalonians chapter four. We know a little about that great day, but we do not know the day, the hour or the year. Paul said we do not need to know. We have all the knowledge we need in order to be ready. Trust Jesus as your Saviour, and you are on the right path. Jesus is the way!

Jesus' return to earth will be unexpected like a thief who comes to your house. Do we know when a thief will arrive? No, of course not. A thief may arrive at any hour. Jesus may come at any time. Paul warned, "Be ready!"

Those who are not ready will not have another opportunity to relate to God or to Christians after that day. On that day they will begin eternal separation from God.

There is no doubt that Jesus will return. Paul gave an example we can understand. A pregnant woman must give birth. As sure as that, Jesus will come to earth again.

LIVE RIGHT WHILE WAITING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN (5:4-11)

We have much work to do while we wait for Jesus to return. It is wrong just to sit and wait. Paul called Christians "sons of light." (1 Thessalonians 5:5) Christians are children of the day. Daytime is the time to work and to share the light of Jesus wherever we are.

The people of the darkness are those who do not yet believe in Jesus. Much evil is done at night. People steal. Prostitutes and adulterers hide their evil ways in dark places. People get drunk. Christians call places of pagan ritual "places of darkness."

Paul described a Christian as a person saved by Jesus, of the light, sober and of faith and love. A Christian is a warrior against darkness and evil. A Christian warrior has a shield of faith and love. His helmet is the hope of salvation. Salvation, faith and love help a Christian to stand firm against Satan's attacks, ready for Jesus' return.

RESPECT AND HELP CHURCH LEADERS (5:12-13)

In Africa we understand respect for leaders. African culture teaches respect for the leaders of our country, community and church.

Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians to honour and respect chosen leaders. A good leader cannot be lazy, but instead he must work hard. He works for all, not just for a few. A church leader must know God's Word.

Leadership struggles break the fellowship of the church. Some church members may want one leader while other members desire another person. Sometimes a person wants power over people and is not chosen by God at all.

Paul warns Christians to be "at peace among yourselves." Church leaders and members need to remember that Christ is the head of the church. Christians can let their light shine for Jesus by living in peace and in respect for their leadership.

The truth in this story is the contrast between slavery and freedom. The story shows us two ways of trying to please God. One was the system of law and works which the Jews set up. They tried to obey all the religious laws and to do many good works. Those who follow that system of law-works became slaves. They were enslaved like the slave child of Hagar.

On the other hand, true Christians are not slave children, bound to Jewish law and man-made religious rules. We Christians are like children of the free woman, Sarah. God accepts us by our faith in Christ. This is the only way to please God and to receive salvation.

Many times it is other Christians, even those you admire, who try to put you into slavery of the law. You must keep the joy of your salvation and remember that you are a son, not a slave.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What does it mean to you that you are a child of God?
2. Why does God dislike idol worship?
3. What are the dangers of trying to please God by keeping religious laws?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 5:1

Tuesday: Galatians 5:2-5

Wednesday: Galatians 5:6-9

Thursday: Galatians 5:10-12

Friday: Galatians 5:13-15

Saturday: Galatians 5:1-15

spending time with him, but it is by his hand that we become his children.

In Galatians 4:6-7 we see that God “...sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts....” Now we can correctly speak of God as our dear Father. God is a loving, forgiving Father. He cares deeply about each of us. Everything the Father has, now belongs to us. God’s gift to us is a new, close, loving relationship with himself. This special position which all Christians enjoy is God’s free gift, not one we must earn.

TURNING BACK FROM TRUTH (4:8-11)

In verses 8-11, Paul wrote about three times in the lives of the Galatian believers.

1. THE FORMER TIME OF THEIR WORSHIP OF FALSE GODS. At such time their minds were dark and confused. They made idols of stone and wood, carving them into animals, snakes, birds and men. Their lives had been full of sin, greed, hate, lying and fighting. They lived under a system of rules and religious laws.

2. THE TIME WHEN GOD FOUND THEM. The Galatian Christians were converted from idols, born again as true believers in Christ. The Holy Spirit came into their lives to guide them in God’s way. They were no longer under the slavery of Jewish law.

3. THE TIME OF GREAT DANGER. The Galatians were tempted to get to heaven by obeying religious laws and special days. That would mean becoming slaves to another poor, weak, useless religion. Paul wanted to awaken the Christians of Galatia to the serious danger of this kind of slavery.

As with the Galatians, so there is danger also for us. We need to fully realize this risk. Are we going to turn back from God’s truth? Are we about to forget our great freedom under the grace of God in Christ? We cannot know God nor please God by obeying man-made rules and religious customs. Let us, instead, live in the light of Christ’s love, grace and freedom.

AN EXAMPLE OF SLAVERY AND FREEDOM (4:21-26, 30-31)

In these verses, Paul uses the story of Sarah and Hagar to teach a great truth. Sarah was the wife of Abraham, and Hagar was her slave girl. Hagar had a son called Ishmael, and later Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Ishmael was born to slavery, but Isaac was free, having been born of God’s promise.

DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS (5:14-22)

“What shall I do to live a Christian life?” New Christians often ask this question. All of us need to know the answer. Paul gives clear, direct teachings in these verses. Let us apply a few to life today.

To admonish the idlers is to warn those people who are lazy. Christians need to work hard in their jobs and to grow in their faith. Many people get discouraged in their Christian lives when temptation is great or troubles come their way. We need to encourage one another so all can stand firm at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need to be harsh or critical of the weaker brother, but we can help him grow in his faith. We can do this by meeting with him for Bible study and prayer as a constant friend.

We should enjoy the preaching of the Word of God, always allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us. We need to know the Scriptures well enough to judge a message to see if it is of Christ. We need to know good from evil and cling to good and flee from evil.

Living for Jesus is not easy, but it is possible. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can follow these instructions and be ready to welcome Jesus when he comes back to earth. Are you ready?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. How can you be ready for Christ’s return?
2. How are Christian leaders to be treated?
3. What do you need to do to truly be a child of the light?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK’S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Tuesday: 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8

Wednesday: 2 Thessalonians 1:9-12

Thursday: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Friday: 2 Thessalonians 2:5-8

Saturday: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

Let us not forget that Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is to a church. What is a church? A church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ who worship and work together according to New Testament teachings. The church is the body of Jesus on earth. We have learned from Paul that its people are people of light, working and worshipping while they wait for Jesus' return.

Paul gives us three ways to measure a good church. First, is the church a happy fellowship? "Rejoice," Paul said. The church is to be a loving, caring, friendly fellowship. It is to be like a happy family where everyone shares in the work. The church can be happy when there is respect for leadership, avoiding quarrels.

Secondly, is the church a praying fellowship? In this Scripture Paul told us never to stop praying. A praying church will be peaceful, for you cannot hate a brother or a sister for whom you pray.

Thirdly, is the church a thankful fellowship? "Give thanks," Paul said. No matter what happens, even in suffering and death, a Christian rejoices in the will of God.

A thankful Christian is not a greedy one. We can be thankful for each small or large blessing. A thankful Christian brings joy into the fellowship and does not complain because he counts his many blessings. Love, respect and encouragement flow out of the life of a thankful person.

The Christian faith is growing at a fast rate among Africans. The old ways of worship and religion are being cast off. Churches are multiplying rapidly.

Good leadership was important as the Christian faith spread during Paul's time. Good leadership is important in our churches today. Power struggles weaken the church and its influence. Non-Christians laugh at our divisions. Christians cannot grow spiritually in such a climate.

God-called leadership is our goal. God is calling many people to serve him as the gospel spreads in Africa. Is God calling you to teach a Sunday School class? Is he calling you to preach or to start a new church? Every Christian must answer the question: How does Jesus want me to serve him?

FAITH BRINGS FREEDOM GALATIANS 4:1-31

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 4:1-11, 21-26, 30-31

MEMORY VERSE: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son...to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." Galatians 4:4-5

CENTRAL TRUTH: A Christian is a child in God's family and is free from religious law.

Gideon was excited! Soon he would become an adult. For eighteen years his father and uncle had told him what to do, but now he could be free. He could begin living his own life.

The custom in many African tribes is that, by a special ceremony, a boy becomes a man. It was the same in the time of Paul under Roman law. Until age sixteen the child did not control his own life. He had no legal power. He was required to do exactly as his parents or guardian told him. He could not really own anything. Then, on a special day, the boy's father placed a robe, called a toga on the boy. At that moment the child became a man. He was an adult with all legal rights.

Do you feel like you are a grown child in God's family, with all the rights and freedom that come to a grown child? As you study the Scripture, look for characteristics of a free child of God.

BECOMING A FULL GROWN CHILD OF GOD (Galatians 4:1-7)

Paul wrote that we once were like small helpless children. We lived under a system of rules and religious laws, living like slaves; but at the right time God sent his Son. Jesus came to give us freedom and to make us full grown children of God. Christ released us into adulthood, free from the laws of childhood. Now, we are God's free adults, no longer slaves of religious law.

God brings us into his family as growing children, able to understand spiritual truth (1 John 4:20, 26) This special event of becoming a full grown child of God is totally God's work. No human effort could make us God's children. We can be receptive to God's hand as he works in our lives by being open to him and

In our lesson today there are several important truths for people who worry about life and death.

First, a true Christian has surrendered himself to Christ. This is the meaning of faith, (surrender to Christ). Christ is Lord. (Read Romans 10:9.) There can be no half-way measure with Christ. Faith is completely giving up self to Christ.

Second, a true Christian is one who is trusting himself completely to Christ. He has no reason to fear life's hardships nor even death. As Christians we give Christ the opportunity of living his life within us. A Christian is one who has opened his heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith (trusting Christ) saves us because faith means wholehearted loyalty to Christ. Such faith brings hope in the face of any problem, even death.

Third, a true Christian does not depend on his good deeds for salvation. We have new life only because of Christ. We have assurance of heaven after death only because of Christ. The "works of the law" cannot bring salvation. We look by faith to God, and God looks back to the cross and saves us on the basis of Christ's death. Our behaviour comes as a result of Christ living in us. When he does, we cannot continue with the same evil deeds. Our deeds are a response to his living within us. Our deeds must never become a means of salvation.

Fourth, a true Christian will live forever with God. *"I give them eternal life,"* said Jesus, *"and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand"* (John 10:28). We have Christ's guarantee of safe passage in life, through death's door, to a home with God forever.

Therefore, we have seen in this lesson from Galatians that we are God's people through faith only in Christ. In Christ we have a new freedom, a new power, a new promise and a new home.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Ask yourself these questions now: Am I in any way depending on my good deeds for salvation? When I witness, is it about my life only, or about faith in Christ? How am I showing by my life that "all are one in Christ?" Could I go now and help someone become a Christian by faith in Christ?

MORE TEACHING ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

2 THESSALONIANS 1:1 - 2:12

VERSES TO STUDY: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:12

MEMORY VERSE: *"...and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire...."* 2 Thessalonians 1:7

CENTRAL TRUTH: All activity of Satan and his followers will be destroyed at the victorious coming of the Lord Jesus.

The police found more than 900 bodies lying in the jungle. Whole families lay together in death. Mothers held their dead children in lifeless arms. These people took their own lives because they followed Jim Jones, the evil man who tricked them.

They believed Jim Jones had great power. They sold all they owned and gave the money to him. Each day they worked in the terrible heat because they obeyed Jim Jones' laws. Many times they worshipped him all night. They did sex sins and other evil deeds because he told them to do so.

In his insanity this evil man ruled every area of their lives. One night he commanded them to drink poison. All of them died because they obeyed an evil man.

In today's lesson Paul teaches that evil will grow and spread in the world. Evil will rule before Jesus comes to earth again. Christians must remain faithful to Jesus, then they will have victory over Satan. Jesus will win the battle over evil!

GROWING IN FAITH (2 Thessalonians 1:1-4)

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians explains the return of Jesus further. The Thessalonians were confused. They needed more teaching so Paul wrote another letter.

The Thessalonian Christians were discouraged. They were tired of persecution. Paul, like a father, chose words of praise to help them. He was proud of these people. Their faith and love continued to grow even during persecution. Paul praised them in other churches. Steadfastness characterized the lives of the Thessalonian Christians. They showed courage and

determination in the face of affliction. Surely Paul's words brought joy to troubled hearts and can become an encouragement to us.

RESULTS OF EVIL AND GOOD (1:5-12)

God will punish evil. God will repay evil done to his children. He will judge and punish those who persecute his people. Christians do not suffer in vain. God sees the suffering of his children and will punish all those who do evil.

What will that punishment be like? Terrible! Those who do not know God will live forever separated from him. They will never see all that is good, such as love, joy and peace. Those who refuse Jesus will live forever in an evil, hate-filled, ugly place. The Bible calls that place hell, where Satan, the father of all evil, rules.

Christians in trouble who stand strong in faith will bring glory to Jesus. They know the Lord's presence daily. They can endure all persecution because Jesus is always present with them. Christ will reward them.

Paul says that we must be worthy of Christ's call. Every Christian's life should overflow with faith, good works and power. When God's purpose is accomplished in a life, that life brings glory to Jesus.

We must not be deceived to believe this world offers all there is to life. When we look around us and see the success of evil and are tempted to compromise, we must remember that life on earth is only a small part of eternity. Then we can trust God with the victorious outcome.

PROBLEMS ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (2:1-12)

Many Thessalonian Christians believed a false message. They feared that Jesus had already returned. They were confused, excited and worried. Had they missed the great day that Paul described in his first letter? If Jesus had returned to earth, where was he? Where were the dead loved ones whom Paul had said would return with Christ?

Paul's letter told them not to believe false messages. Of course, Jesus had not returned! Paul then explained those events which will happen before Jesus comes.

First, a time will come when all the powers of evil will try to end God's rule. The power of evil will be very strong.

In verses 26 to 29 we read some very precious truths. Here is a list of our special blessings as Christians:

1. We are all the children of God. (verse 26)
2. We have the family likeness of Christ. (verse 27)
3. We are all free and equal before God. (verse 28)
4. We are all one in Christ Jesus. (verse 28)
5. We are the true descendants of Abraham. (verse 29)
6. We will receive the promised inheritance. (verse 29)

So we see that salvation in all its fullness is available by way of faith. We have freedom in union with Christ. Nothing can ever remove God's love from us who belong to Christ. Is there anything in your life which is enslaving you and keeping you from experiencing full freedom in union with Christ?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Did you receive the Holy Spirit by doing good deeds or by faith in Christ?
2. How did Abraham become fit for heaven?
3. How is the law like a curse to us?
4. What are some blessings of being a Christian?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 4:1-7

Tuesday: Galatians 4:8-11

Wednesday: Galatians 4:12-15

Thursday: Galatians 4:16-20

Friday: Galatians 4:21-26

Saturday: Galatians 4:27-31

begun to disobey the truth about Jesus. They received God's Spirit by faith alone, not by doing good works. No one can complete by human effort what the Spirit has started. The saving power of God came as a result of faith. Was this power and faith only in vain? No, of course not. God gave his Spirit and worked miracles among his people, not as a result of their good works or obeying the Jewish law. God's Spirit and God's miracles come when we believe in Christ and fully trust him.

Now, notice verses six to nine. Here is the example of Abraham's faith. God counted Abraham righteous because of his faith. This was not by obedience to the law, since the law had not yet been given. The real "children of Abraham" are those who have faith as Abraham did. All who follow Abraham's example find salvation through faith, and all people of faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received.

FREE FROM THE CURSE OF THE JEWISH LAW (3:10-14)

The law was like a curse. Of course, God's law is not evil, but the law was a constant reminder of "failure." Break even one law, and you know you have failed. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 27:26 to prove this point. No one can claim he is right with God because he obeys all the laws.

So Paul used the Old Testament to prove to the Galatians that God's people were made right with God by faith. If anyone is righteous, he must live by faith. Faith alone, not law nor good works, saves us.

In verses 12 to 14, Paul says no one can keep each and every law of God. Anyone who tries to gain salvation by the law will get only what the law can give, a curse. Christ has provided salvation from the curse of the law. By his death, Christ accepted the curse of sin on our behalf. Through faith God removes the curse, gives the Holy Spirit, and pours his blessing upon us.

FREEDOM IN UNION WITH CHRIST (3:23-29)

Notice verses 23 and 25. Jesus came and made the way of faith plain. He leads all who follow him out of the prison-house of the law. Law could not change the sinner's heart of guilt. In fact, the law kept sinners locked inside a prison, with no door of escape. Then Jesus came and opened wide the prison door. He alone gives us right standing with God through faith.

Second, the greatest evil will be a man who will control the world. He will try to take the place of the living God saying he is God. He will stand against God and good. He will trick people with false miracles. Those who refuse Christ and his truth will follow the rule of this evil one, and they will perish with him.

Third, God will remain in control until he chooses to make known the truth of the false, evil god. Jesus will return when evil seems to be in complete control of the world. Jesus will destroy evil in all its forms as he returns in glory, light and power.

Christians must not believe lies and false teachings. Remember that Paul told us to test all messages. It is sad to see that many times Christians return to an old way of life. Many people worship false gods. Some return to witchcraft to get power. Other people love money, power and self rather than loving Jesus. Jesus must be first in our lives. Does it seem hard to follow Jesus when he has promised to return and reward his children?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What was the false message which confused the Thessalonians?
2. What will happen to those who follow evil?
3. Name two events to happen before Jesus returns.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

Tuesday: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Wednesday: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Thursday: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9

Friday: 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13

Saturday: 2 Thessalonians 3:14-18

Two facts stand out in this lesson: Jesus will return; He will judge all people.

Let us look deeper into the results of evil and good mentioned in Paul's letter. First, Paul teaches, "...those who do not know God and...those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" will suffer eternal punishment. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

Hell is the place of punishment where Satan rules. People who live in sin, refusing the gospel will be separated from God forever. *"And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur..."* (Revelation 20:10). *"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death"* (Revelation 21:8).

The greatest loss of the unbeliever will be that they will suffer *"...exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might"* (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Think of all that is good in this world and all the evidences of God and his power. Much of it is enjoyed by unbelievers as well as believers, but those who refuse belief in Jesus will be separated forever from all of that.

In our world, good Christians suffer because of evil. The Bible makes it clear that they will have their reward in heaven. *"...And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done"* (Revelation 20:12).

What is heaven like? That is the place where God the Father lives. Christ has gone to prepare a place for all God's children. Revelation 21:3-4 tells us, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." Heaven will be our home. Paul's letter tells us to be calm and faithful and to work hard while we get ready to go to heaven. Christians often feel afraid because there is so much evil in the world. We can live in victory if we obey our Lord daily. Obeying God is the only way to be ready for Christ's return.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Research: What the Bible teaches about hell, about heaven.

FAITH AND LAW IN GOD'S PLAN GALATIANS 3:1-29

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 3:1-14, 23-29

MEMORY VERSE: *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* Galatians 3:28

CENTRAL TRUTH: God relates himself to his people through their faith.

"I can get to heaven because I live a good life," said Naomi. "I am surely as good as many of your church members! I do what is right and I treat people fairly. So, why should I worry about getting into heaven?"

Pastor James answered Naomi very carefully. "Yes, you do live a good life. Everyone knows that you are a moral person."

"Then why do I need Jesus, the Bible and the church?" asked Naomi.

"I believe that you really want an honest answer to your question," answered Pastor James. "Other people with such sincere questions have been greatly helped by seeing exactly how God answers their questions. God's answers are right here in the Bible, his holy Word. Listen now as I read and explain the verses. We begin with Galatians 3:1."

Have you ever heard anyone ask the questions that Naomi asked? As you study this lesson, carefully look for a biblically based reply to these questions.

PUT RIGHT WITH GOD BY FAITH (Galatians 3:1-9)

The people of the Galatian churches began to try to get right with God by the works of the law, but Paul showed them clearly that faith is most important. In verses one to five, Paul asked six questions. Each question helped the Galatians to see their mistake of trying to follow the way of works. As Paul answered the questions he pointed again and again to the way of faith.

First, notice verses one to five. The action of the Galatians was so strange to Paul. It was as if they had been put under a spell. "Who has bewitched you?" he asked them. The Galatian Christians had

Four key words in today's lesson help us discover some deeper truths for our lives of the gospel of grace.

1. **GOSPEL.** See Galatians 2:14. The word, gospel, is used seven times in Galatians and more than one hundred times in the Bible. Jesus spoke of the good news of the coming of the Messiah and of the kingdom of God. The gospel is that special news of what God has done to save us by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. If we accept this good news by faith, it is "...the power of God for salvation..." (Romans 1:16).

2. **INSINCERITY.** This word, in Galatians 2:13, can also mean hypocrisy or falsehood. When Peter ate with the Gentile Christians and then separated himself from them, he was insincere. Hypocrisy means we pretend to be something which we are not. We live two different lives. For example, we live for God on Sundays but live for Satan and self on the other days.

3. **JUSTIFIED.** We find this word four times in our verses for today. It is central in the gospel. Justified is to be made right with God. How can we sinners have fellowship with a holy God? The Bible says we must be justified. We must be made right with God by trusting in Christ because we cannot save ourselves. God forgives us and makes us right with himself because of the death of Jesus for our sins. So, "...a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ..." (Galatians 2:16).

4. **FAITH.** See Galatians 2:16 and 20. The word, faith, is used 30 times in Galatians and is on almost every page of the New Testament. Faith means to have obedient trust and confidence in Jesus. Jesus Christ must be the object of our faith. We must believe that Christ is the only Son of God and that he reveals God.

In summary, Paul was saying in these verses: Put your trust, not in law or traditions or good works, but in Jesus as Lord. Surrender your all to Jesus and live by faith in the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Ask yourself these questions now: Do I really accept people of other tribes as my brothers in Christ? Do I ever behave as Peter did, in ways of hypocrisy? Have I made Galatians 2:20 personal in my life?

LIVING BY CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS 2 THESSALONIANS 2:13 - 3:18

VERSES TO STUDY: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:16

MEMORY VERSE: "...Stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."

2 Thessalonians 2:15

CENTRAL TRUTH: Following the Christian tradition of prayer, thankfulness and hard work produces peace and comfort.

"Why should Christians be thankful to God?" wondered Martha. "They get sick, suffer and die in the same way as non-Christians."

David thought for a moment then said, "Christians are special people, Martha. We are all brothers, loved of the Lord and accepted by God into his family. This relationship makes a Christian thankful no matter what happens."

"Well," said Martha, "is there any need to pray?"

David replied, "Satan tempts us all. We need strength. Praying for someone else is one way to help."

"When I go to church, I hear the preacher say that all of us must work hard. I don't like that! I want to enjoy life - sitting, eating and drinking," said Martha.

"God knows what is best for us," said David. "God works and he commanded Adam to work or starve! An idle person is heading for trouble!"

Paul explains more in 2 Thessalonians about gratitude, prayer and work.

THANKS TO GOD FOR SALVATION (2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)

"Brother" is a meaningful word in any language. Paul used this word often to describe his feelings about the Thessalonians. It showed his love. It also clearly meant that God loved them and chose them as his. Paul continued to thank the Lord for these faithful brothers and for salvation.

Salvation is God's work from the beginning to the end. Through Jesus, God made a way to accept all who believe in him. One must believe in the truth. Once a person believes, his heart is open to the teaching and work of God. Then the Holy Spirit does his work.

He sanctifies the believer by making him holy and ready to live a daily life to honour Jesus.

Paul's words often express gratitude. Paul felt thankful for Jesus and for salvation. He appreciated the work of the Holy Spirit. He appreciated Christians who remained faithful.

Gratitude should become a habit in each of our lives. Gratitude frees the soul of greed and selfishness. You can pray for others, as Paul did, when gratitude fills your life.

PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS (3:1-5)

Paul needed prayer. Satan and his evil forces worked against Paul and the spread of the gospel. The Thessalonians needed prayer. They suffered persecution from those who refused Christ. Paul and the Christians at Thessalonica supported each other in prayer and by example.

Who would win these battles of good and evil? Paul said, "*...the Lord is faithful...*" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). Christ would make them strong. He is the guard and the shield against evil.

Paul also had faith in the Thessalonian Christians. He believed they would continue to obey his commands and the Christian traditions for daily conduct. He knew that Christ can change people, even those who cause trouble.

Christians can endure all things when they pray for each other. We must stop criticizing one another and pray for one another instead. It is hard to hate or fault a brother or a leader when you pray for them.

WORK HARD AS CHRISTIANS (3:6-15)

An old Jewish proverb says, "He who does not teach his son to work teaches him to steal." Paul told the Thessalonians, "*...If any one will not work, let him not eat*" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). These words are very clear. From the first, Paul told the Christians that they must work hard to support themselves. Paul and other teachers worked hard as an example. The Thessalonians had no excuse. They knew the Christian tradition that each person earns his own living. Christian tradition does not allow idleness, laziness, disorderly conduct or meddling in other people's affairs. Work creates confidence, gratitude and a feeling of accomplishment. It helps people reach their full potential in Christ. It keeps a person's mind and body busy which helps them avoid temptation.

temptation and weakness. This is what God has done for us. Let us live in the power of these truths.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Why should we accept believers of other tribes as our Christian brothers?
2. Which is more important, to have God's approval or for everyone to like you? Why?
3. What does it mean to you to be "crucified with Christ"?
4. In what way does "Christ live in you"?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 3:1-5

Tuesday: Galatians 3:6-9

Wednesday: Galatians 3:10-14

Thursday: Galatians 3:15-18

Friday: Galatians 3:19-22

Saturday: Galatians 3:23-29

Christ wants all Christians to be one united family, without regard to one's race or tribe. Christ prayed, "...that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one..." (John 17:22-23). Are there Christians with whom you will not fellowship because they are different from you?

SAVED BY THE FAITH IN CHRIST (2:15-18)

If someone offers you a gift, you can either refuse the gift or accept it. If it is really a gift, you cannot work to earn it. God offers salvation to you as a gift. Faith is the hand that receives this special gift. Peace with God comes as a free gift. You can make your life right with God by faith alone.

The old laws and traditions do not really make us right with God. Salvation and eternal life come by giving yourself to God by faith in Christ. Paul had learned that no one was justified by keeping religious laws. To be justified means to be declared not guilty of any sin. The law only helped Paul know that he was a guilty sinner. You can only be declared "not guilty" by faith in Christ.

Are you trying to add some other way to salvation? You should know clearly that salvation is by faith in Christ alone.

LIVING IN CHRIST (2:19-21)

The Bible clearly tells us that salvation is by Christ, not by ourselves. Paul tells us the amazing fact that we live in Christ, and Christ lives in us.

No one expects a dead person to keep laws or traditions. Paul said that he had become like a dead person to the demands of the Jewish law. All those rules and traditions left Paul cold and dead like a corpse. Then Christ came. That made Paul really alive, alive in God. "...Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

"I am crucified with Christ," means that Paul had died with Christ. But in what sense had he died? He had died to sin, self and the law. These things could no longer control his life. It is the same with all Christians. We may be tempted and even fall into sin from time to time, but really we have been crucified with Christ. Thus sin, Satan and the law must no longer control us.

"Christ lives in me," means that our bodies are the temples of Christ; therefore, Christ lives in us now. We get all our strength from him. The bond between us and our Lord is a very close one. Because of our bond with Jesus, we can have victory over

Does your church have love feasts or meals together? Some who are students may think they have nothing to offer, but when everyone brings whatever they have, all of it together can truly make a feast. It is the same way with work. When each one does his part, much is accomplished.

Idle people spoiled the fellowship of the Thessalonian church. Therefore, Paul said, "...Have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thessalonians 3:14). Call him by name. Warn him about his wrong habits, but do it in love as to your brother. Be firm, but do so in the same way you would try to correct a member of your own family.

Paul placed great value on work, which earned food and lodging, work providing for one's own family and work to spread the gospel. One can accomplish very little without work. When people stop working and start gossiping, it ruins lives, churches and nations.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. For what did Paul give thanks?
2. Who was suffering persecution?
3. Name two ways Paul worked hard.
4. What did Paul say to do about idle people?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 1:1-2

Tuesday: Acts 9:1-9

Wednesday: Acts 9:10-19

Thursday: Galatians 1:3-5

Friday: Galatians 1:6-10

Saturday: Galatians 1:1-10

Traditions! To hear the word causes deep emotions and pride. Traditions are customs and practices passed from one generation to another. They rule the way we function each day. Most of us are unaware of our traditions until someone offends us when he "breaks our traditions."

Every country, tribe and clan has its traditions. Hindus do not like to shake hands when greeting someone. Africans do! It is the tradition of many Africans to receive a gift with both hands. It shows respect and gratitude. Some people eat with their fingers. Other people like to use a spoon. Traditions slowly change as people mix socially and marry.

Christian traditions based on the Bible are forever and unchanging. "...Stand firm and hold to the traditions..." (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The Thessalonian Christians were of mixed traditions. So Paul wrote often of the practices Christians must follow. Paul praised the Christians at Corinth. *"I commend you because you...maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you"* (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Many of these people of the first churches came from Jewish background. Their traditions covered every area of life, from birth to the grave. They were slaves to their traditions. Peter wrote, *"You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot"* (1 Peter 1:18). Paul warns in Colossians 2:8, *"See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ."*

When we allow our old traditions to rule us rather than Christ's way, we sin. Christian traditions taught in the Bible are ours to adopt. God requires us to act like Jesus and to follow his Word. When we are obedient, the Holy Spirit blesses our lives with joy and excitement about following the tradition. Human tradition brings slavery; following Christ brings joy and peace.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Read Colossians 3:12-25. List Christians traditions in these verses.

SAVED BY FAITH GALATIANS 2:11-21

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 2:11-21

MEMORY VERSE: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* Galatians 2:20

CENTRAL TRUTH: We are made right with God only by faith, not by obeying the law.

At one time, Michael belonged to a sect of Christians who do not allow their members to relate to anyone who does not follow their rules of dress and hair style. They believed that anyone who does not agree with them is not really saved. As a university student, Michael joined a Baptist fellowship on campus and found acceptance by Christians who did not follow that code. He began to experience more joy in his faith as he gave up the rigid law of salvation and depended more on his personal faith.

In today's lesson we will read about some people who separated themselves from other Christians because of differences. We will also learn some important truths about what must bind us together -- salvation by faith.

PAUL CORRECTS PETER (Galatians 2:11-14)

Peter was one of the twelve apostles and a leader among the first Christians. These first Christians were Jews. Then some non-Jews were converted and became members of the Christian churches. The Christian faith was spreading from tribe to tribe.

Peter and the Gentile Christians had fellowship together and often ate meals together, but suddenly all this fellowship stopped. Peter withdrew himself. He cut himself off from fellowship with the Gentile Christians, even refusing to eat with them.

Paul was also an apostle, and he was a leader of the Gentile Christians. So Paul said to Peter, "This is a serious mistake, Peter. It is wrong for you to refuse to have Christian fellowship with Gentiles. Other Jews have influenced you. Now you are leading Barnabas and other Christians to be insincere. You say that you love everyone, but you refuse to eat with Gentile Christians."

Sick, tiny, two year old Kuta weighed less than 6 kilograms. Her legs and arms were like small sticks. Kuta's mother held the sick child before a special altar. Then she sacrificed a black chicken hoping to overcome the evil so Kuta would live.

In today's lesson there are several great truths for people like Kuta's mother. Let us now look very carefully at some of these important truths.

First, to worship God is mankind's most noble activity. We in Africa know this, for it is obvious from our many religious traditions. Prayer and sacrifice have been a part of religions in Africa for many centuries. Paul also had many rich religious traditions. He was extremely zealous to follow carefully the traditions of his fathers.

But, second, we notice that something amazing happened to Paul. God, the true and living God of his fathers, revealed his Son to Paul. Nothing was ever the same after that. Light had shattered Paul's darkness. Power from God himself had changed Paul for all time.

Third, Paul discovered that Christ transformed the whole system of worship which was passed down by his ancestors. Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross completely changed his own people's way of worship. *"But when Christ appeared,...he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption"* (Hebrews 9:11-12). So Christ, by his own perfect sacrifice, changed the tradition of his fathers. Will he do the same for Africa's ways of worship? He can!

Fourth, the wonderful gospel is not from mere man, but *"...it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Galatians 1:12). Revelation means to uncover or to unveil. God has shown us things previously hidden. God reveals himself. The gospel of revelation is that we might know the Lord in personal loving fellowship.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

Ask yourself these questions now: In what ways am I growing in personal fellowship with God? How does my life show that knowing and loving God is the best thing in life? In what ways will I get to know God better today?

THE ONLY GOSPEL GALATIANS 1:1-10

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 1:1-10

MEMORY VERSE: *"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins...."*
Galatians 1:3-4

CENTRAL TRUTH: The only true gospel proclaims Jesus as the only way of salvation.

"I wonder why I am not happy," Mark said to his friend. "I have money in the bank and a large farm with more than 30 cows. I have a beautiful wife and four children, but even with all of this I am not happy! Within my heart I have no peace."

All people want peace and happiness. In our study of Galatians we will find the answer to this question: How can we have peace, freedom and happiness?

Today we begin our study of Paul's letter to the Christians who lived in Galatia. Galatia is a district in the central part of Turkey, about 300 miles north of Jerusalem.

Paul preached the good news in Galatia, people became Christians and churches were started, but soon some teachers of religion came there and caused trouble.

SPECIAL GREETINGS (Galatians 1:1-5)

Paul said he was an apostle, a person sent out with a message. Earlier in his life Paul had seen Christ in a vision after Christ rose from the dead. Christ gave Paul a great message: There is salvation through Jesus Christ. He commanded Paul to tell other people this good news.

Paul wanted the Christians in Galatia to have grace and peace. These gifts come from God the Father and Jesus his Son. Grace is God's gift of his kindness and goodness to us. His grace is free. Peace also is a gift, for Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you..."* (John 14:27).

Our sins make us slaves of sin, but Christ gives us freedom from the slavery of sin. Christ's death on the cross gives all people who accept him power over sin. Now God treats us, not as slaves, but

as sons and daughters. We have a new father, God himself. As his children our holy living brings glory to God.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST (1:6-7)

In these verses Paul wrote about the trouble in the churches of Galatia. Some of the new believers were forsaking Paul's message. They were changing their beliefs about the gospel. Paul had taught these Christians the only true gospel. This gospel is: Faith in Jesus alone brings salvation.

The teachers of religion who were confusing the Christians in Galatia are called "Judaizers." They taught that people must obey Jewish law to be saved. They said, "*...Unless you are circumcised...you cannot be saved*" (Acts 15:1). The Judaizers changed the gospel and thus confused the believers.

This lesson is very important for us today. Some people teach, "Be baptized in order to be saved." Others say, "Do good works and be saved." No! None of these is the true gospel! We need only faith in Christ to be saved. Salvation is by the grace of God, his free gift to us.

THE ONLY GOSPEL (1:8-10)

The good news of Jesus is that salvation is an unearned gift from God. No one has a right to change this message. Neither Paul, nor his fellow workers, nor even an angel should try to change this good news. The false teachers, the Judaizers, were preaching a very dangerous message. They taught that obedience to the Jewish law was needed for salvation. This was false and, therefore, a great danger to the Christians. To believe this teaching would have ended the Christian faith.

In one district many people gathered for a celebration. Everyone was drinking tea. An evil man added poison to one cup of tea, and the person who drank that tea died. Just a small amount of poison added to the tea caused the tea to be very dangerous.

Therefore, Paul gave a strong warning. He said such false teachers should be accursed. To change the good news is a serious sin. False teachers were trying to destroy the very foundation of the Christian religion. Paul condemned these teachers and warned Christians of the dangers of their teaching. The Bible warns teachers to teach the truth carefully. Be sure what you say to others about the Christian faith is the true gospel, not something that will poison their faith. The Scriptures teach us only words which support the true gospel. That is why we must know the

not bring salvation. Salvation comes only by the grace of a holy God who moved in love to save the world.

Thus Paul gained courage for his great mission to the lost world. He would continue his work for God among the Gentiles, while James, Peter and John would witness among the Jews. They joined hands in bringing Christ to all the nations.

Paul could preach the message with conviction because Christ had changed his life. He also went out with the encouragement and support of others from the Jerusalem church. Is your church leading people to preach from personal conviction, supporting and encouraging those who are called?

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What helps enemies of the church to be converted?
2. Why did Paul believe that God called him by his grace?
3. How can we know the gospel is for everyone?
4. What special work do you think God wants you to do?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 2:11-13

Tuesday: Galatians 2:14-16

Wednesday: Galatians 2:17-19

Thursday: Galatians 2:20-21

Friday: Galatians 2:11-21

Saturday: Meditate on Galatians 2:20

not base his teaching upon the wisdom and authority of man. All Paul taught and wrote came directly from Christ.

TAUGHT BY GOD (1:15-24)

God had a special plan for Paul's life. God wanted to use Paul's life for the highest possible purpose. God wants that for every person. It is sad, however, to see that millions of people do not accept and follow God's will for their lives.

God called Paul by his grace. What is grace? We learned in our last lesson that grace means a gift given without work. Paul says here that he could never earn God's favour. Grace was the new centre of Paul's life. We can never earn salvation. We can only accept by faith what God has done for us by his loving grace.

God's special purpose for Paul was for Paul to preach. This was God's eternal plan. Paul knew that God chose him for a task. God selected him not for honour but for service. He called Paul not for rest but for work and not for ease but for ministry. God called Paul as a witness, teacher and preacher. He chose Paul as a special messenger of God to the Gentiles or non-Jewish people. Paul began to preach the faith he once tried to destroy.

After God called Paul for his work, he did not go to confer with church leaders. Instead of going to the busy city of Jerusalem, Paul went to the desert of Arabia. He went there for prayer and meditation. Paul wanted God, not men, to teach him. He needed to speak with God before he spoke with men.

Finally, after three years, Paul did go to Jerusalem, staying two weeks with Peter. Paul then went to Syria and Cilicia. Perhaps he preached there to former school-mates and friends. After he made certain of his message from God, Paul began to preach the gospel in the most difficult place of all, his home area.

THE GOSPEL APPROVED (2:1-19)

Fourteen years later, Paul returned to Jerusalem. There he conferred with the church leaders about the message he preached. The true leaders of the church agreed completely with Paul: One only needs faith in Christ for salvation.

Some people, however, who perhaps were not true Christians tried to cause trouble. They believed that God saved only Jews. They wanted Christians to be circumcised and obey all the law of Moses, but the church leaders together with Paul said the law did

Scriptures well, even as we share the good news of salvation with others.

In verse 10, Paul said he was not trying to be popular with people. Paul knew that it was most important to please God. He put God first in his life and work.

We, too, must take care of the gospel of grace. We must guard the gospel. Grace is far superior to law. Grace saves sinners. Grace brings forgiveness, peace and freedom. This is the only gospel, the good news of the grace of God, our loving Father.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What does the word, apostle, mean?
2. Why did Paul call God our "Father"?
3. Who is harming the churches with false teaching today?
4. Why is changing the gospel a serious sin?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Read:

Monday: Galatians 1:11-14

Tuesday: Galatians 1:15-17

Wednesday: Galatians 1:18-24

Thursday: Galatians 2:1-5

Friday: Galatians 2:6-10

Saturday: Galatians 2:1-10

The book of Galatians is like a large shield held firmly in the hand of an African warrior. Paul was under attack; the gospel was under attack. Therefore Paul used Galatians to defend both himself and the gospel. If the attack had succeeded, Christianity might have been kept "for Jews only." We might never have known of the grace of God.

Galatians 1:1-10 contains several vital words, so let us do a word study. Bible words are rich in meaning. Word studies bring the joy of discovering these meanings. You can use all you learn in word studies to enrich your spiritual life. Word studies lead you to a greater knowledge of the living word, Christ himself.

1. **JESUS CHRIST.** The name Jesus means "to help" or "to save." In Jesus our faith is directed to the historic person who is the one who begins and completes our salvation. When the name, Jesus, is used, it should remind us that he is the servant of God, doing only what God wills. Jesus is the Son of David, the king, holding his authority from God alone.

The name Christ is used 569 times in the New Testament. Christ means "the Messiah," the anointed one. He is the Son of the Living God, set apart for the special work of bringing salvation to earth.

2. **GOD THE FATHER.** What did these words mean to the Galatians? Paul wanted the Galatians to know God as the source of life, the loving one, who is no stranger to his people. The title, Father, refers to God's love and kindness, his care and interest in the life we live every day.

3. **GRACE.** This word means a gift given without work or merit. We cannot work for nor pay for this gift. Paul knew that by the grace of God he had been changed from a sinner to an apostle. Seven times in Galatia Paul spoke of God's grace as an undeserved gift.

4. **PEACE.** The word is an important word in the New Testament, used almost a hundred times. It comes from a Greek word which means "to join" or "to be united." True peace comes when we are united with God.

In summary, Paul was saying to the Galatians: Knowing Jesus Christ as Saviour and God as Father brings grace and peace.

THE GOSPEL CHANGES PEOPLE GALATIANS 1:11 - 2:10

VERSES TO STUDY: Galatians 1:11-2:10

MEMORY VERSE: *"Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."*

2 Corinthians 5:17

CENTRAL TRUTH: God is at work changing people to become like his Son, Jesus.

Mulee had been a witch doctor for more than 20 years. He earned much money through witchcraft. People believed that Mulee had special power. Many people knew him and feared him, but one day Mulee accepted Christ as his Saviour. The change in his life amazed people. God called Mulee to preach the gospel. Today he is an evangelist, winning people to Christ and starting new churches.

Our lesson today is about a person somewhat like Mulee. His name was Paul. He, too, was greatly changed by Christ.

AN ENEMY OF THE CHURCH IS CONVERTED (Galatians 1:11-14)

What was Paul like before he became a Christian? He was an educated man and a leader of the Jewish people. Paul desired to destroy the Christian faith and the church of God. Therefore he captured many Christians and had them bound in chains and locked in prisons. Paul was so zealous to destroy the church that he agreed to the death of Stephen.

Then came the great change. Paul was converted by Christ. This happened at noon as he travelled to the city of Damascus. The risen Christ spoke to Paul asking, "...Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). Paul knew that Jesus was alive. The light from heaven and the voice of Jesus touched Paul's heart. From that moment on, Paul became an obedient follower of Jesus Christ.

Christ continued to reveal himself to Paul. The gospel came to him directly from Christ. Christ had completely changed Paul with the good news of love and grace. Christ himself, not some other person, gave Paul the great message of eternal life. Paul did

3. New and Different People: Galatians 6:11-18. Ask: "What did Paul mean when he taught that the important thing is being a new creation? How can one become a new creation?"

APPLY THE LESSON:

Use the song books. Divide the class into two or three small groups, giving each group some books. Request them to find songs dealing with the four key words: restore, bear, share, do good. Discuss these four words as given in For Further Study. Discuss the questions from Suggested Activity in For Further Study. Close in prayer.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. We can help him see his need for repentance, and forgiveness, and draw him back into the fellowship of the church. We can help him through the time of retribution, if necessary, for his sin. We can pray with him, visit him, teach him.
2. Various answers.
3. Individual answers.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

AIM: To lead members to understand the meaning of being a good Christian example and to commit themselves to being such an example.

TEACHING AID: Three cards, each with one of the words: gospel, imitators, example.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:2. Say: "Paul prayed for his brothers and sisters in the faith. He thanked God for them. Let us thank God and pray for each other." Pray together by asking each person to say one sentence of thanksgiving for the person on his right. Explain the background of 1 Thessalonians from For Further Study. Ask students to read Acts 17:5-10. Ask: "Why did Paul leave Thessalonica so quickly? How do you think he felt about leaving new Christians so soon?"

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Paul, an Example: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6. Ask question one. Hold up the three word cards. Ask: "What do each of these words mean?" Discuss how Paul used these words in his letter.
2. The Thessalonians, Examples to All Christians: 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10. Ask: "How were the Thessalonians examples?" Ask someone to read or share with the class the story in the introduction about Josiah and Anna.
3. Examples in Words and Life: 1 Thessalonians 2:3-14. Ask: "How was Paul an example?"
4. The Example of Love and Joy: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13. Ask question two.

APPLY THE LESSON: Ask question three. Ask question four. Lead students to decide how they can apply the lesson to their lives this week. Discuss the proverb: "Our lives are like a book which people read." Ask students to think about one person to whom they need to be an example. Ask them to share this information with another student and to pray for each other for strength to be an example.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians because he had to leave them suddenly when his life was in danger and while they were new believers who needed encouragement.
2. The Thessalonian Christians showed their faith, love and hope in action. They showed joy in persecution. They turned from idol worship to God.
3. Individual answers.
4. Individual answers.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 2

AIM: To lead members to apply Paul's teaching on holy living to their daily situations

TEACHING AID: Draw on the chalkboard or a piece of paper a picture of a tree. Draw the roots as well as the part of the tree above the ground. Label the roots "God's love." In the branches of the tree, put words like kindness, patience, joy, peace, kind speech, honesty, etc.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Tell the story of John and Martha. Discuss this story by getting opinions from the class. Ask: "What would have made a difference in the ending of this story?" Say: "Paul's teaching in this lesson can help Christians overcome their old way of life."

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Live a Holy Life: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8. Discuss the background of the Thessalonian Christians. Ask members to compare conditions then to life today. Ask question one.
2. Live in Love Toward All People: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10. Ask: "Why do you think these Christians of different cultures could love each other? What thoughts and feelings do you think they had to overcome? How can this happen in our church?"
3. Work With Your Hands: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12. Ask question three. Ask: "What were the non-working Christians doing while they were waiting?" Ask question two. Point to the picture of the

their lives and to encourage the growth of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Close in prayer in groups of three.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Satan and the flesh are opposed to the Spirit of God and desire destruction of individuals.
2. We sin when we give in to the temptation of the flesh.
3. We avoid the flesh by walking in the Spirit.
4. Individual answers.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 13

AIM: To lead members to demonstrate their faith in Christ by being new and different people.

TEACHING AID: Several song books

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Begin the lesson by reading together Galatians 6:7. Pray that God will guide the class in the study of this important lesson. Explain the situation with Mary but not what the church decided. Briefly discuss: How would our church handle the matter about Mary? Discuss together, then share the comments made in her church. Say: "Our lesson today will give us some help in this kind of situation."

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Share Each Other's Troubles: Galatians 6:1-5. Discuss the difference between bearing your own burdens and another's burdens. Ask for examples of burdens that people may need help with. Perhaps members may share how others have helped them. Ask question one.
2. Sowing and Reaping: Galatians 6:6-10. Ask: "In light of verse 6, should we support our pastor more?" Ask question two. Consider also what God's forgiveness has to do with this matter. Discuss situations in which a person may gain God's forgiveness but still reap the results of the sin. For example, a person may have forgiveness but still die of Aids.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 12

AIM: To lead members to understand and avoid the works of the flesh and to know and produce the fruit of the Spirit

TEACHING AID: Be ready to write on the chalkboard or large paper the words, flesh and Spirit. Prayerfully look at your own life as you re-read verses 22- 23.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Begin by asking members to read, each one aloud, a few verses at a time, Galatians 5:16-26. Ask one member to pray about today's lesson, considering the needs of your class. Tell the story about Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and their preparation of their new field. Say: "We are going to look at what God sees as possible for the field of our lives to become if we allow his Spirit to work in us."

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Be Led by the Spirit: Galatians 5:16-18. Write the words, flesh and Spirit. Discuss the meaning of these two words. Ask question one.
2. The Works of the Flesh: Galatians 5:19-21. Explain the meanings of any difficult words (For Further Study). Request three members to read the following verses which help us know more about the "works of the flesh": Ephesians 5:3-6; Colossians 3:5-8; and Ephesians 4:17-21. Discuss these Scriptures. Ask question three.
3. The Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23. Explain each of the nine words which describe the fruit of the Spirit, using ideas given under For Further Study. Study and begin to memorize these verses.
4. Living By the Spirit's Power: Galatians 5:24-26. Explain from the lesson the meaning of these verses.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Ask question two. Discuss how we sometimes fail when we are attracted to worldly views and temptations and give in to the desires of the flesh. Emphasize the need for repentance and restoration at times like these. God is always ready to forgive and help us grow. Ask question four. Encourage members to examine

tree. Describe the tree, emphasizing God's love being rooted in our hearts. This is the basis for spiritual growth.

4. Be Ready for The Second Coming of Christ: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Ask question four.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Request members to share times when they were a bad or good example. Ask members to explain how the Christian teachings on sex vary from their old traditions and from current society. Encourage members to memorize the Memory Verse. Close in prayer.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Paul did not say sex was wrong, but it can be wrongly used. God created sex and intended it to be good.
2. A Christian should work hard, quietly looking after his own affairs, living peacefully with others and following God's guidelines for holiness.
3. Some Thessalonians stopped working to wait for the return of Christ.
4. Christ will return suddenly with a great shout and in victory.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 3

AIM: To help each member understand that working and living for Jesus is preparation for his return

TEACHING AID: Write on the chalkboard or a piece of paper: "Are you ready?" Search your own heart to see if you are ready for Jesus to come again.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Tell the introductory story. Ask: "What did these people do wrong?" Ask if they know anyone who believes the same way as the people in this story.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Day of Christ's Return Unknown: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3. Ask: "What are two facts which this Scripture teaches us?" (Christ will return, and we do not know the day or hour.)

2. Live Right While Waiting for Christ's Return: 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11. Ask: "What are Christians to be like while they wait for Jesus?" Ask members if they have considered themselves "sons of light." Ask what this phrase means to them.

3. Respect and Help Church Leaders: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. Ask question two. Ask: "What is the church to be like while it waits for Jesus to return?" Discuss three ways to measure a church. (See For Further Study.) Ask: "How does our church measure up to the teachings of Paul?"

4. Duties of Christians: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22. Explain each part of this section, being sure the members understand what Paul is saying. Ask: "How does your life compare to the behaviour Paul requires in these verses?"

APPLY THE LESSON:

Point to the question, Are you ready? Ask: "How are we failing to prepare for Jesus' return?" Challenge members to live lives as sons of light. Ask them to prayerfully examine their lives according to this lesson and silently answer question three. Encourage them to commit themselves to doing whatever is necessary in question three. Pray together a prayer of commitment.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. You can be ready for Christ's return by giving your life totally to Christ, and daily walking with him, obeying his commands.
2. We need to respect and support our Christian leaders.
3. Answers may vary.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 4

AIM: To help each member know more about Jesus' return

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Share the story in the introduction. Ask members to name evidences of the evil in the world today. Ask: "Do you ever get discouraged by all the evil around us?" Say: "This lesson brings us hope in the midst of evil."

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Ask a member to pray, thanking God for our freedom in Christ. Tell the story given in the beginning of this lesson about the gazelle. Compare this story with the lives of Christians.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Remain Free: Galatians 5:1-9. Ask one member to read verse one. Then ask members to discuss the meaning of this verse. Encourage members to memorize this verse during the week. Ask another to read 2-9. Explain the meaning of verses 2 and 4, giving the Christian view of circumcision. Share the meanings given in For Further Study of "Holy Spirit," "love" and "truth." Ask questions one and two.

2. Faith in Christ Alone: Galatians 5:10-12. Ask: "Is faith alone enough for salvation?" Be sure the clear answer is, "Yes, we are saved by faith." Give the meaning of "cross" in For Further Study.

3. Guard Your Freedom: Galatians 5:13-15. Point to the words on the paper, asking "How does love fulfil the law?" Discuss their answers and yours to this question.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Ask question three in the lesson and the questions in Suggested Activity in the For Further Study section. Members will probably know and have struggled with laws made by Christians. Close with prayer that each member will live a life of Christian love and freedom in Christ.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Freedom comes to us only when God's grace allows forgiveness of our sins and frees us from the bondage of sin.
2. When our faith is expressed through a life filled with love we experience a total freedom because our lives are guarded by the presence of love and faith.
3. Various individual answers.

Explain that Christians are God's full-grown sons and that God is truly our Father. Tell the story of Gideon given at the beginning of this lesson. Tell also the Roman custom of a son becoming a man.

2. Turning Back from Truth: Galatians 4:8-11. Ask one member to read verse 8 and another to read 9-11. Ask questions two and three. Explain what Paul wrote about the three different times in the lives of the Galatians. Ask: "In what ways do Christians fail to live in the freedom of Christ?"

3. An Example of Slavery and Freedom: Galatians 4:21-26, 30-31. Explain the concepts about Ishmael and Isaac taught in this section.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Ask members to explain what freedom as a child of God means to them. Allow much time for each individual to share from his life personally. Be prepared ahead of time to share from your own life. Inform members that more time will be given to the discussion of freedom in the next lessons. Ask each member to pray silently for the person on his left, that he will live this week in the freedom of being a child of God.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Individual answers.
2. Idol worship leads us away from God and allows us to place our hope in something false and useless and temporary.
3. When we try to please God by law, we become critical and judgemental. We fail, and we do not experience God's love and grace through Jesus Christ.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 11

AIM: To lead members to be able to explain clearly how Christian love fulfils the law.

TEACHING AID: Write on a large paper, "How does love fulfil the law?" Prepare your answers to that question, including such thoughts as: When we love God and our neighbours, we will practise the intent of the law.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Growing in Faith: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4. Ask question one. Ask: "What did Paul do to encourage the Thessalonian Christians?"

2. Results of Evil and Good: 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12. Point out that Jesus will judge evil and destroy evil when he returns. Remind the group that the Thessalonians faced evil but remained faithful to Jesus.

3. Problems about the Second Coming of Christ: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Ask: "What will happen before Jesus comes again?" Request the class to read the passage silently as they answer this question. Allow members to name the events they find. Ask question two. Ask members to share what they imagine or know about heaven and hell. Describe heaven and hell from For Further Study. Say: "Jesus will return to earth when the time is right. He will judge you and me."

APPLY THE LESSON:

Request members to bow their heads. Ask: "Have you decided to follow Jesus? Will your reward be heaven or hell?" Wait in silence. Pray aloud that each one will decide to give his/her life to Jesus.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Some false teachers had told the Thessalonians that Jesus had already come back.
2. Those who follow evil will be judged and will be separated eternally from God. They will spend eternity in hell.
3. Before Jesus returns, evil will abound, and one man will come proclaiming to be God.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 5

AIM: To lead members to compare cultural traditions with Christian traditions and to discover which traditions conflict with Christianity

TEACHING AID: Write TRADITIONS on a chalkboard or paper. Have three small papers and a pencil for each member.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Point to the paper and ask: "What are traditions?" Allow time for several answers. Ask: "How are traditions important to a society?" Allow for discussion. Say: "In this lesson Paul teaches us the importance of following Christian traditions." Ask someone to read 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Thanks to God for Salvation: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17. Write the word, gratitude, under the word, TRADITIONS. Ask members to describe what happens to someone who has an attitude of gratitude. Ask if they know anyone like this? Ask: "What do Christians have to be thankful for?" Ask each student to write on the small papers words of thankfulness to three other class members to give to them at the end of the lesson.

2. Pray for Christian Workers: 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5. Write the words "prayer for others" on the "TRADITIONS" paper. Ask: "Who needs prayer?" Discuss the attitude of prayer for others. Ask students to share requests and to name leaders who need prayer. Pray, asking God to hear and answer these needs.

3. Work Hard as Christians: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. Add the word, work, to the list. Discuss Paul's attitude toward work. Ask question three. Discuss the conversation of David and Martha. Ask question four. Ask: "What problems arise through idleness?"

APPLY THE LESSON:

Divide into two separate groups. Ask one group to discuss and list: "Old traditions which conflict with Christian tradition." Ask the other group to discuss and list: "Old traditions which do not conflict with Christian tradition." Let each group present their lists. Review the three traditions Paul lists in this lesson. Challenge each member to memorise the Memory Verse and apply these traditions to their daily lives. Close in prayer.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Paul was thankful for salvation and the faithful Christians.
2. The Thessalonian Christians suffered persecution.
3. Paul worked for his living and worked to spread the gospel.
4. We must warn the idle.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

2. Free From the Curse of the Jewish Law: Galatians 3:10-14. Request two members to read Deuteronomy 27:26 and Habbakuk 2:4. Discuss these verses. Ask question three. Explain how we are free from the curse of the law.

3. Freedom in Union with Christ: Galatians 3:23-29. Explain the meaning of freedom in Christ. Ask question four. Memorize together Galatians 3:28.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Write on the large paper the four points of being a true Christian found in For Further Study. Ask members what keeps people from experiencing true Christianity and freedom in Christ. Close in prayer for those members who have not yet accepted Christ.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. One receives the Holy Spirit only by faith in Christ.
2. Abraham became fit for heaven by his faith.
3. The law is a curse to us because we cannot keep the law. We constantly fail.
4. In the last section of this lesson six blessings are given, numbered 1 - 6.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 10

AIM: To lead members to know and be able to explain what it means to have freedom as a child of God

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Begin with prayer for your church, your class and for people who do not have freedom in Christ. Ask members to explain ways parents influence children. Lead the class to see that parents' attitudes, work, behaviour, etc. have great effects on their children. Ask question one. Explain that being a child of God must also influence us in an even greater way.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Becoming a Full Grown Child of God: Galatians 4:1-7. Ask: "What are indications that a person is mature, and truly an adult?"

APPLY THE LESSON:

Ask question two. Discuss why it is hard to have courage to follow Christ against others' opinions. Ask members to name ways others put pressure on them to conform, both within the church and without. Ask them to bow their heads and contemplate if there are others with whom they refuse to fellowship. Urge them to confess this to God silently and to commit themselves to seek out these people during the week. Pray together for these things. Challenge members again to look for opportunities to share their faith with another person during the week.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Christ has made us all one and brothers in him.
2. Individual responses.
3. & 4. It means our old way of life and our sinful nature die on the cross with Christ, and now Christ rules in our lives.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 9

AIM: To lead members to understand and explain why good deeds cannot make man right with God

TEACHING AID: Prepare a large paper with the words: "A True Christian" across the top. List 1, 2, 3, 4, under these words.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Ask any members you wish, to share about times of telling others about faith in Jesus Christ during the past week. Then begin the lesson by telling the story of Naomi and Pastor James. Perhaps as members have been sharing with others, they have found those who believe like Naomi. Pray that God will help each one present to understand this lesson.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Put Right With God by Faith: Galatians 3:1-9. Ask members to find and read the six questions Paul asked. Explain how Abraham had faith and how we too must have faith as our way of salvation. Ask members to answer question one silently. Ask question two.

CHAPTER 6

AIM: To lead members to understand the good news and to commit themselves to share it with another person this week

TEACHING AID: Prepare a large paper with the words, **THE TRUE GOSPEL**, on one half of the paper, and the words, **A FALSE GOSPEL**, on the other half.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Pray, asking God to help each one understand this important lesson. Tell the story of Mark and his friend. Ask: "How do you think a person can find happiness?" Say: "Today we are learning about the only true gospel. You will also discover how you can tell a friend about the gospel." Tell about Galatia and why Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Special Greetings: Galatians 1:1-5. Explain the meaning of: apostle, grace, peace. Discuss the meaning of: raised him from the dead, God the Father, Lord Jesus Christ and gave himself for our sins.
2. The Grace of Christ: Galatians 1:6-7. Say: "Paul taught the true gospel to the Galatians." Read and explain the true gospel as given in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Then read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9. Write on a large piece of paper, under the words, **THE TRUE GOSPEL**, the main points as members say them. Use material also given in this lesson.
3. The Only Gospel: Galatians 1:8-10. Explain who the Judaizers were. Explain these verses, showing how serious it is to try to change the true gospel. Tell the story of poison being added to the tea. Write under the words, **A FALSE GOSPEL**, such things as: Keeping the law to be saved. Write other things members will name. Ask questions three and four.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Read together the Memory Verse. Suggest that each member tell another person the true gospel this week. Ask for those who will openly commit themselves to do so to raise their hands. Ask two members to act out a short drama of one friend telling another the facts of the gospel. Close in prayer of commitment to sharing the gospel.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. An apostle is one who is sent forth with a message.
2. God is our Father when we become his children through Jesus Christ.
3. Various answers.
4. Changing the gospel is a serious sin because it leads others away from Christ.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 7

AIM: To lead members to discover how God changes people and how they can help others know God better

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Ask if there are any members who wish to tell of their experiences during the past week of sharing the gospel with another person. (See Teacher's Guide, Chapter 6.) Have a prayer of thanksgiving for these members' faithfulness to the gospel. Tell the story of Mulee. Ask if others know of someone who has changed drastically through faith in Jesus Christ.

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. An Enemy of the Church is Converted: Galatians 1:11-14. Tell about Paul's life before his conversion and how God changed him. Explain the meaning of "revelation." Ask question one.
2. Taught by God: Galatians 1:15-24. Describe in your own words what Paul did after he was converted as told in these verses. Ask question two.
3. The Gospel Approved: Galatians 2:1-19. Tell how the church leaders agreed with Paul and how they encouraged him to continue his work. Memorize together the Memory Verse.

APPLY THE LESSON:

Tell the story of Kuta from For Further Study. Discuss the four important truths in this lesson from For Further Study. Ask question three. Ask any members who will to share how God changed their lives. Ask question four. Close with prayer that each member will be thankful for the way God has changed his life and that they help others know God better.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

1. Our faithful witness, God's power, the testimony of the Scriptures all help enemies of the church to find Christ.
2. Paul had done so much wrong that he could never hope to come to God, except by grace.
3. God's Word faithfully and repeatedly tells us that salvation is for all.
4. Various answers.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CHAPTER 8

AIM: To lead members to understand what faith in Christ does for them and how to live in fellowship with all Christians

TEACHING AID: Write on a large paper these four words: gospel, insincerity, justified, faith. Select a song which emphasizes faith.

BEGIN THE LESSON:

Sing together or read the words of the song. Pray that God will help all members to have faith in Christ and to live in fellowship with all believers. Show the large paper. Say: "Listen for these words as we study the Scripture together today."

STUDY THE BIBLE:

1. Paul Corrects Peter: Galatians 2:11-14. Ask members to describe the mistake Peter made in separating himself from Gentile Christians. Ask "What do you think led him to do this?" Ask if anyone has had a similar experience. Ask: "How do you think the Gentile believers felt?" Explain the meanings of the words, gospel and insincerity, as given in For Further Study. Ask question one.
2. Saved by Faith in Christ: Galatians 2:15-18. Ask: "How can a person get right with God?" Help with the answer if necessary.
3. Living in Christ: Galatians 2:19-21. Explain the meaning of the phrase, "crucified with Christ" then ask question three. Explain the meaning of the phrase, "Christ lives in me." Learn the Memory Verse together.