

No Other Gospel: *an 8-Week Study of Galatians*

The Story Houston's Fall 2020 Discipleship Season

Session Six: The "Gospel" of Secularism

Introduction

Welcome to our Fall 2020 study of Paul's letter to the Galatians! For eight weeks, we're exploring the words written by the Apostle Paul 1,950 years ago in the year 50 AD. This letter, called *Galatians*, may be the earliest of Paul's thirteen letters that are included in the Bible, and if so, that would make Galatians the oldest book in the New Testament.

Our learning each week is broken down into three categories: First, we'll spend twenty minutes learning about the CONTEXT of Galatians. Second, we'll spend twenty minutes exploring the particular CONFLICT that Paul is addressing in that week's reading. And third, we'll discuss the CORRECTION Paul offers the Galatians to get back on track.

This course has three requirements:

1. Do the work. Read the assigned readings. Write your answers in the Study Guides.
2. Listen to *The Story at Home Podcast* for more in-depth teachings on Galatians.
3. Ask questions. Ask the teachers on Wednesday nights. Ask your Group leaders and fellow members. Ask God in prayer.

This Week's Text

Read Galatians 4:21-5:12 twice, once silently and once aloud, making notes of any words and phrases that you're not sure about, and writing down any questions that immediately come to mind.

Context

What is the backstory involving Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael?

Why did Paul equate Ishmael with slavery and Isaac with freedom?

You've probably noticed that we refer to the slavery/freedom metaphor a lot when studying the Bible and applying it to our lives today. How have you experienced spiritual slavery in the past (or the present) and how have you experienced the freedom of the gospel?

Conflict

What is the main concern Paul is raising in today's passage?

Why is circumcision something that symbolizes the beginning of bondage according to Paul, and why is he so adamantly opposed to people taking this first step?

How do Paul's stern warnings apply to us today?

Correction

In 5:4, Paul said that when we choose to prove our own righteousness by our works, we "fall away from grace." Have you ever tried so hard to rely on your own works that you felt as though you were living apart from God's grace?

If relying on your own works is "falling away from grace," then how would you describe the choice to rely completely on God?

In 5:2 and 5:6, Paul again makes it clear that circumcision holds no value to the ones who put their faith in Christ. This week's passage culminates in the second half of 5:6, where he writes, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Why is this "the only thing that counts"?

In 5:9, Paul wrote: "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." What did he mean by this?

And finally, in 5:7, Paul said, “You were running a good race. Who [cut you off]...?” And, in a hilarious turn of phrase, he wrote about his adversaries who were misleading the Galatians by insisting on circumcising Gentile believers: “I wish they would go the whole way and [cut themselves off].” How was this tongue-in-cheek insult also a meaningful critique of their reliance on the Law?

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again with the yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:1