

FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

GALATIANS

gospel of grace

leaders notes

CHRIST HAS SET US FREE



SERIES INTRODUCTION

As we continue our year focused on God's grace, Galatians shows us that grace is both the foundation and the message of the gospel.

Paul's letter to the Galatians proclaims an incredibly important gospel truth: salvation is by faith alone. Salvation is not gained by following laws, living out a moral code, or doing good. Christianity is not a set of religious observances. It is not a faith based on human achievement. Christianity is about what Christ has done for us by grace, not about what we have done or could do for Him. We cannot "improve" upon what God has done in Christ. Galatians calls us to trust in Christ's work on the cross and His resurrection as the only basis for our salvation.

Abraham was declared righteous because he trusted God's promises long before the Law was given. God's saving promises have always been received by faith, not earned through obedience to the Law. Those promises find their fulfilment in Christ, who redeemed us by becoming a curse for us (3:13).

In this book, the theme of freedom is also important, as it is contrasted with slavery to the Law and sin. The freedom we have in Christ is freedom from the slavery of sin and the Law, and freedom to live by the Spirit. The Christian life is not slavery to a religious system, but life in the freedom Christ has won through his death and resurrection.

The gospel of grace creates one new people. Rescued from slavery through Christ's sacrificial death, we are united in the freedom found in Christ Jesus.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28

A NOTE TO LEADERS

We are deeply thankful for you and the vital ministry you lead. Small Groups are central to who we are as a church and how we live out God's calling for each of our lives.

In Small Groups we have the opportunity to open and explore God's word together, to serve and care for each other in prayer and practice, and to live out gospel-shaped community.

As you do this, you come to know your group deeply and personally. Please treat these studies as a starting point, not a finished product. Feel encouraged to edit the questions, tailor them to your group and approach each week in the way that best serves your members. Each group may take a slightly different path to the same key teaching point.

The leaders notes after each question are not there to provide answers that end the group's discussion, but to support you as you guide the conversation.

Leaders' notes become detrimental to group engagement and growth if they are read out as answers.

If at any point you would like support or prayer, please feel free to contact your Small Group Coach. If you need support from the staff team, contact Pat Jones for pastoral care or Emma Wynn-Jones for Small Group coordination and administration. We will be happy to serve however we can.

PRAYER

Prayer is one of the ways we express our dependence on God and participate in the life of a small group. At St Paul's we want all small groups to be praying for each other, their adopted mission partner(s), for the church and for all the ministries happening each week. To support this, we've included a "what's on this week" at the end of each study. This helps keep everyone informed and shapes what we pray for together.

SMALL GROUPS SUNDAY - AUGUST 2ND

Each year we set aside a Sunday to celebrate Small Groups, thank our leaders, invite people to join a group, and bring our leaders and groups before God in prayer.

It is also an opportunity to prayerfully ask as a group, "What is our next step?"

- Welcome new people into the group.
- Multiply by splitting into two new groups.
- Continue meeting together for another year.
- Send one or more people from the group to start a new group.
- Finish meeting together as a group.

Small Groups Sunday is also a great opportunity to establish or re-establish the goals and expectations of your group, ensuring everyone shares a clear vision of what you are seeking to achieve together and how you want to achieve it.

HIGHLIGHT EVENTS

ST PAUL'S CONFERENCE - SEPTEMBER 12TH

This day will be for our whole church community, from kids through to Seniors. We'll be starting our morning all together before heading into breakout sessions, enjoying lunch together, and finishing up around 2:30pm.

We're looking forward to having guest speakers, a fun kids program, worship, great food, and a chance for us to gather as members of all congregations under one roof.

Mark the date in your diaries, more info to come!

WHOLE CHURCH TEACHING NIGHT WITH DR DARRELL L. BOCK – JULY 28TH

Dr Darrell L. Bock is a Senior Research Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary and Executive Director of Cultural Engagement at the Hendricks Center. He has authored or edited more than 45 books and has written for major outlets including the Los Angeles Times. Darrell will also be presenting at the Small Group Leaders Recharge breakfast (July 25th) and preaching all services on Sunday 26th July.

M28 TRIVIA NIGHT - AUGUST 19TH

Come along to our M28 Trivia Night where the M28 crew are fundraising for Compassion to aid the churches we'll be visiting in Masbate, Philippines. Join us with your whole Small Group or come as an individual. Register at stpauls.church/comingup or on the Church Center app.

TERM 3, 2026 SCHEDULE

WEEK #1 JULY 27th - AUGUST 2nd

- July 28th Whole Church Teaching Night on Cultural engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock.
- July 29th Jesus Club returns for Term 3
- July 31st Crossfire returns for Term 3
- August 2nd Small Groups Sunday

WEEK #2 AUGUST 3rd - 9th

- August 5th Prayer Night
- August 8th Men's Breakfast with John North

WEEK #3 AUGUST 10th - 16th

- August 16th The Commons

WEEK #4 AUGUST 17th - 23rd

- August 18th Creative Team Night
- August 19th M28 Trivia Night – Fundraiser
- August 22nd Legacy Partners Breakfast

WEEK #5 AUGUST 24th - 30th

- August 24th Young Adults – Considering Ministry Info Night
- August 29th 45 In The Dark
- August 30th Newcomers Supper

WEEK #6 AUGUST 31st - SEPTEMBER 6th

- September 5th Hills Fair Trade Market
- September 6th Father's Day

STUDY #1

CALLED BY GRACE

NO SMALL GROUP STUDY THIS WEEK

Instead of meeting for your regular Small Group study, we would love to invite your group to attend our church-wide Teaching Night.

Teaching Night: Cultural Engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock
Tuesday 28 July, 7:30–9:30pm

We are delighted to welcome Dr Darrell L. Bock from Dallas Theological Seminary.

In an increasingly polarised world, how can we speak about Jesus in ways that build bridges rather than deepen divides? Dr Bock will help us think about engaging people with clarity, humility, and grace while remaining faithful as we share the gospel.

This is a free event, but please register your attendance.

WHOLE CHURCH EVENTS

As a church, we have a full calendar of ministries serving people of all ages and stages of life. Throughout the year, we also hold a number of whole church events that we would love our entire church family to enjoy together. To create space for these events, we occasionally take a break from our regular Small Group program.

These events are designed to encourage our church family, strengthen community beyond our individual groups, help newer members make meaningful connections, and celebrate what God is doing across the life of St Paul's. Each Small Group will need to decide which events to attend and which to miss. There is no expectation that every group or every individual will attend every event. However, where possible, we would love you to join us.

If your group is unable to attend the event, or you choose to meet as a Small Group instead, use the simplified study below.

READ GALATIANS 1:1-10

- What are the key ideas or teaching points in this passage?
- What stands out to you? What questions does it raise? What challenges or encourages you?
- What does this passage teach us about God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)?
- What does this passage teach us about humanity, both as individuals and as God's people?
- What does this passage teach you personally?
- What would a faithful response to this passage look like?

PRAYER

Spend time sharing with one another and praying together. As you pray, remember your group's link missionary and the ministries and events coming up in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- **July 28th** **Whole Church Teaching Night on Cultural engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock**
- **July 29th** Jesus Club returns for Term 3
- **July 31st** Crossfire returns for Term 3
- **August 2nd** **Small Groups Sunday**

STUDY #2

UNITED BY FAITH

GALATIANS 2:11-21

FOLLOW UP FROM SMALL GROUP SUNDAY

Before you begin this week's study, take a few moments to reflect together on the future of your group. The five options below are not intended to be restrictive, but to prompt prayerful conversation about how your group can best contribute to our mission of reaching every household, every community, and every generation with the gospel of grace.

- Welcome new people into the group.
- Multiply by splitting into two new groups.
- Continue meeting together for another year.
- Send one or more people from the group to start a new group.
- Finish meeting together as a group.

If your group plans to continue meeting, take this opportunity to revisit your goals and expectations. A shared understanding of why your group gathers and what is expected of each member provides a strong foundation for a healthy and effective group.

REFLECT TOGETHER

1. What do we want to achieve each week?

What is the purpose of our gatherings? Consider attendance, preparation, participation, caring for one another, welcoming new people, and starting and finishing times.

2. What do we hope to achieve over the next 12 months?

What would you love to see God do in and through your group before next Small Groups Sunday?

3. What is our plan to get there?

What practical steps will help you move towards those goals? Who could you intentionally encourage, disciple, or train so your group is ready for whatever next step God may have by next Small Groups Sunday?

Finish by identifying one or two priorities for the coming year and commit them to God together in prayer.

Leader's Note

The key teaching point of this study is that every Christian is justified by grace through faith in Jesus. Because none of us earn our place in God's family, there is no place for divisions or superiority among believers.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from the teaching night and the first two weeks of teaching in Galatians.

BRIEF CONTEXT

During his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14), Paul preached the gospel and established churches throughout Galatia.

As the gospel spread beyond the Jewish community, many Gentiles came to faith in Jesus.

This raised a crucial question: Must Gentile believers obey the Jewish Law, including circumcision, Sabbath observance, and food laws, to belong to God's people? Some Jewish Christians said yes, leading to a major debate in the early church (Acts 15). After Paul left, teachers promoting this view influenced the Galatian churches. Peter (Cephas), who had previously welcomed Gentiles into God's family (Acts 10-11), later withdrew from eating with them out of fear. Paul recounts this incident because it perfectly illustrates the issue now facing the Galatian churches.

READ GALATIANS 2:11-21

REFLECT

2. What is happening in verses 11-14? Why does Paul believe Peter's actions are "not acting in line with the truth of the gospel"?

Paul recounts publicly rebuking Peter after he withdrew from eating with Gentile believers because of pressure from some Jewish Christians. Peter's actions implied that faith in Jesus was not enough for Gentile believers to fully belong to God's people unless they also adopted Jewish practices. Paul confronts him because his behaviour contradicted the truth of the gospel.

3. v15 seems harsh at first. How do verses 16-17 help us understand what Paul means? What is he trying to teach, and what misunderstanding is he correcting?

Paul begins with the assumptions of a first-century Jew before turning it on its head. Even those who possessed the Law are not justified by keeping it. Jews and Gentiles alike stand in need of God's grace and are justified in the same way: through faith in Jesus.

4. Paul repeats "works of the law" three times in verse 16. What does he mean by "works of the law" in the context of Galatians? Why is it so important to Paul that we are not justified by "works of the law"?

Paul is referring primarily to the Jewish covenant markers such as circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath observance, not good works in general.

5. What does v18 mean?

Paul is referring to returning to the Law as the basis for being right with God. Through the gospel, he had rejected that system. To return to it would be rebuilding what Christ had torn down and denying the very gospel he preached.

6. In verses 19–21, how does Paul connect what happened to Jesus with what is now true of those who trust in him?

*Throughout Galatians, Paul returns to the reality that those who trust in Christ are united with him. **What is true of Christ becomes true of his people.** Christ died, so we have died to the Law and our old way of life. Christ lives, so we now live by faith with Christ living in us. Paul is not simply describing a change in behaviour, but a completely new identity grounded in our union with Christ.*

7. How should these verses shape the way we see ourselves and our relationship with God?

Through faith we are united to Christ. We share in his death, his resurrection, and his inheritance. Our identity is no longer based on our own righteousness, but on Christ's. If every Christian shares equally in Christ by his grace, there is no basis for treating some believers as more accepted, mature, or valuable than others.

8. Peter's actions suggested that some Christians belonged more than others. How does justification by faith challenge that way of thinking?

Justification by faith means that every believer belongs to God's family in exactly the same way: by grace through faith in Christ. Our identity is no longer found in our ethnicity, religious performance, or achievements, but in Christ alone. There is therefore no place for treating some Christians as though they belong to God's family more than others. We are all sinners, all saved by grace, and all united in Christ.

RESPOND

9. Although very few of us would add circumcision to the gospel, what things are Christians tempted to treat as evidence that someone is "really" accepted by God?

Every culture and church tradition is tempted to add new "works of the law" to the gospel. If your group gets stuck, consider what our social and evangelical context might add. Examples might include political leanings, theological tribe, church attendance, Bible knowledge, ministry involvement, family background, work ethic, parenting, worship style, spiritual gifts, the sins we struggle with, what we drink, what we wear, our hobbies, or moral respectability. Paul's point is that none of these make us more accepted by God.

10. Peter's actions preached a different message from the gospel he believed. Where might fear, pride, or a desire for approval lead us to communicate something different from the gospel we profess?

Peter believed the right gospel, but fear led him to act otherwise. Help your group look beneath their actions to the heart. Fear, pride, or a desire for approval can cause us to communicate something different from the gospel we profess. Often, our desire to belong to one group leads us to distance ourselves from another.

11. Who might you need to intentionally welcome, honour or pursue this week because the gospel has already made you one family?

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 5th Prayer Night
- August 8th Men's Breakfast with John North

STUDY #3

PROMISE BEFORE LAW

GALATIANS 3:1-14

Leader's Note

The key teaching point of this study is that the Christian life begins and continues through God's gracious work, not our own efforts. As you lead your group, keep drawing attention to God's initiative. Throughout this passage, Paul consistently points away from human effort and towards God's gracious action.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 3:1-14

REFLECT

2. Remembering last week's study, what is the "bewitching" Paul is referring to in verse 1?

Paul is referring to the false teaching that faith in Jesus was not enough to belong to God's family. Some were insisting that Gentile Christians also needed to obey the Law, including practices such as circumcision and Sabbath observance.

3. Paul appeals to both Jesus (v1) and the Holy Spirit (v2-5). What argument does Paul make from the work of Christ, and what argument does he make from the work of the Spirit?

Paul points to both the work of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' death is completely sufficient to save all who trust in him. Likewise, the Galatians received the Holy Spirit through faith, not by keeping the Law. Both arguments show that God's saving work is sufficient and nothing needs to be added to it.

4. Why does Paul repeatedly appeal to the Galatians' experience of receiving the Holy Spirit? What does he want them to realise?

Paul reminds the Galatians of their own experience because it confirms the truth of the gospel. They received the Holy Spirit by hearing and believing the gospel, not by keeping the Law, proving that God had already accepted them by grace.

5. Paul cites Abraham as an example. What point is he making through Abraham's faith? (Genesis 15:6)

Abraham was counted righteous because of his faith, before the Law was ever given. Paul deliberately chooses Abraham because he is the father of the Jewish people. He is arguing from within Judaism itself to show that faith, not the Law, has always been the basis for belonging to God's family.

6. How do God's promises to Abraham help explain why Gentiles, including us, can belong to God's family through faith? (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18)

Encourage your group to notice that God's promise to Abraham always looked beyond Abraham himself. From the beginning, God intended to bless the nations through him. Paul's point is that Gentile believers are not a later addition to God's plan. They were always part of God's plan and receive that blessing in the same way as Abraham, by faith.

7. Putting these passages together, what do they teach us about God's role, our role, and the place of the Law in belonging to God's family?

God is the one who makes the promise, gives His Spirit, and declares people righteous by grace. Our role is not to earn God's acceptance but to receive His promises by faith. The Christian life begins and continues with God's gracious work, not our own efforts.

8. It can be difficult to read Paul describing the Law, which is part of our Bible, as a curse. What does he mean?

Encourage your group to ask why Paul uses such strong language. Paul is not saying the Law is bad. Rather, the Law demands perfect obedience, something no sinful person can achieve. Instead of making people righteous, it exposes our sin and leaves us under its judgment.

9. What does it mean for Jesus to become a curse for us?

Help your group connect this question to the previous one. If the Law leaves us under God's judgment because of our sin, Jesus takes that judgment upon himself. By becoming a curse for us, Christ bears what we deserved so that we might receive the blessing promised to Abraham and the gift of the Spirit.

RESPOND

Study Note

Throughout chapters 1-2, Paul has shown that we are made right with God through faith in Jesus, not by works of the Law. He now builds on that argument: if we begin by the Spirit, why would we try to continue by our own efforts?

10. Where are you tempted to maintain your relationship with God by your own efforts rather than depending on the grace of Christ?

Paul now applies the same gospel to the Christian life. We begin by grace through faith, and we continue in the same way.

11. If we are not made right with God or sustained by keeping the Law, what place does obedience have in the Christian life? Where are you following the Spirit's leading, and where are you resisting him?

Paul is not dismissing obedience. Rather, he rejects obedience as the means of earning or maintaining God's acceptance. The Spirit empowers believers to obey as the fruit of their relationship with God, not the basis of God's acceptance of them.

12. What would it look like for dependence on the Spirit, rather than confidence in yourself, to shape the way you live as a Christian? Which of these would you like God to grow in you?

This is an opportunity to ask whether anyone feels their place in God's family depends on how well they are living as a Christian. Encourage your group to be honest and reflective. You may even like to leave a few moments of silence for people to prayerfully ask God to reveal areas where they are relying on themselves rather than living by his Spirit.

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 16th The Commons

STUDY #4

SONS AND HEIRS BY GRACE

GALATIANS 4:1-7, 21-26

Leader's Note

The key teaching point of this study is that through Christ, God has redeemed us from slavery, adopted us as His children, and made us heirs of His promises. As you lead your group, keep bringing the discussion back to identity. Paul's goal is not simply that believers understand these truths, but that they live with the confidence and security of those who belong to God's family.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 4:1-7

REFLECT

2. In verses 1-2 Paul uses the imagery of an underage heir who must wait until the time set by his father. How does this illustration help explain God's people before Christ, and why does that matter for Christians today?

Help your group work carefully through the illustration before jumping to the application. Notice that the heir already belongs to the family and already possesses the inheritance yet still lives under guardians, until the time set by his father. Encourage your group to compare the illustration with Paul's explanation in verse 3. Paul is describing God's people living under the Law before the coming of Christ.

3. What do God's actions in verses 4-5 reveal about His character?

Throughout Galatians, Paul consistently draws attention away from human effort and towards God's gracious initiative. As your group discusses God's actions in these verses, encourage them to consider what those actions reveal about His character.

4. Paul describes what God has done for us using two legal pictures: redemption and adoption. What does each picture help us understand about God's saving work? Why is it significant that God does both?

Redemption and adoption are closely connected but distinct ideas. Redemption describes the costly act of setting someone free. Adoption goes even further. God does not simply free His people; He welcomes them into His family as sons and heirs. Help your group appreciate the extravagant generosity of God's grace in moving from slavery to full membership in God's family.

5. Paul says God sent "the Spirit of his Son" into our hearts. What difference does the gift of the Spirit make to the relationship between God and His children?

Help your group compare verses 4 and 6. Paul deliberately repeats the phrase "God sent". First, God sends His Son to redeem and adopt His people. Then, God sends His Spirit into their hearts. Together these verses show that God not only brings people into His family, but also enables them to relate to Him as their Father.

6. Paul says believers become "sons," highlighting an incredible change in status. Why doesn't he say "sons and daughters"? How should women understand this language?

Don't rush to soften Paul's language. Instead, help your group ask why he intentionally uses the word "sons." Some people, particularly women, may find this language surprising at first. In the first-century world, sons were the legal heirs who received the family inheritance. Paul's point is not to exclude women, but to declare that every believer, male and female, receives the full status, privileges, and inheritance of an heir in God's family. This fits with Paul's earlier declaration that, in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female" (Galatians 3:28). His concern here is not who belongs in God's family, but the extraordinary inheritance that belongs equally to every believer.

7. **Optional:** Looking back through verses 1-7, identify the actions in the passage. Which actions belong to God, which belong to the Spirit, and which describe believers? What does this reveal?

God: sent, redeemed, adopted, sent the Spirit, and made heirs.

Spirit: cries.

Us: are redeemed, are adopted, are heirs

READ GALATIANS 4:21-26

8. Who do Hagar and Sarah each represent, and what contrast is Paul building between them?

This is one of the more challenging passages in Galatians, so don't worry if your group finds it unfamiliar. Encourage your group to begin by identifying the main contrast Paul is making rather than trying to understand every detail. Hagar, the slave woman, bore Ishmael according to ordinary human expectations. Sarah, the free woman, miraculously bore Isaac in her old age according to God's promise. Paul uses these two mothers to contrast slavery under the Law with the freedom and inheritance that come through God's promise.

9. How does this illustration reinforce everything Paul has been saying about slavery, sonship, and God's promises? Why is this so important for the Galatians?

Encourage your group to connect this illustration back to Paul's argument rather than treating it as a new topic. Hagar and Sarah become another way of contrasting slavery under the Law with the freedom, inheritance, and belonging that come through God's promise.

10. How does this chapter build on Paul's picture of God's grace? What does it add to the picture he has been developing?

Help your group notice how Paul's picture of God's grace has expanded through the letter. Earlier he emphasised justification by faith and the gift of the Spirit. Here he adds the rich language of redemption, adoption, inheritance and belonging to God's family.

RESPOND

11. Paul describes believers as God's children who, by the Spirit, cry "Abba, Father." Does this describe the way you know and relate to God? Why or why not?

This question invites honest reflection rather than theological precision. Encourage your group to think about both how they see God and how they relate to Him. There is often a difference between believing God is our Father and living with the confidence and security of being His beloved children.

12. When you fail as a Christian, do you instinctively respond more like a slave or like a beloved child? What does each response look like?

Failure often reveals what we truly believe about God and ourselves. Encourage your group to compare the mindset of a slave trying to earn acceptance with the confidence of a beloved child who already belongs. This question is not about condemning ourselves, but about recognising where we still need to grow in trusting God's grace.

13. If you truly believed you were God's beloved child and heir, what difference does that make to the way you live? Consider how it might shape areas such as your sense of security, your prayers, your obedience, your relationships, or the way you face both success and suffering.

If your group focuses only on behaviour, encourage them to think more deeply about identity. Paul's point is not simply that Christians should behave differently, but that they now live from the security of belonging to God's family.

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 18th Creative Team Night
- August 19th M28 Trivia Night – Fundraiser
- **August 22nd Legacy Partners Breakfast**

STUDY #5

FREEDOM IN THE SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5:1-13

Leader's Note

The key teaching point of this study is that Christian freedom is not freedom from obedience, but freedom from trying to earn God's acceptance. Having been set free by Christ, we are now free to love and serve one another.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 5:1-13

REFLECT

2. Why does Paul say that if the Galatians accept circumcision, Christ will be of no value to them?

Encourage your group to see that Paul is not objecting to circumcision itself, but to accepting it as necessary for belonging to God's people. To seek righteousness through the Law is to rely on something other than Christ. Paul presents these as two fundamentally different ways of relating to God.

3. Paul says believers "eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope." If Christians are already justified, what is Paul talking about?

Help your group notice that Paul is not contradicting what he has already taught about justification by faith. Believers are already declared righteous in Christ, yet still await the day when God's saving work is brought to completion and they are made completely like Christ. Paul is pointing to the future fulfillment of what has already begun.

4. Paul uses the images of a race and yeast. What warning is he giving the Galatians?

Encourage your group to compare the two images. The race pictures believers being led away from the gospel they had begun to follow, while the yeast reminds them that even a small amount of false teaching can influence the whole church. Paul's concern is that this teaching, if left unchecked, will reshape their understanding of the gospel.

5. Paul begins and ends this section by speaking about freedom (vv1, 13). What kind of freedom is Paul describing, and what misunderstandings is he correcting?

Help your group notice that Paul defines Christian freedom both negatively and positively. We are free from trying to earn God's acceptance through the Law, but we are not free to live for ourselves. Christian freedom is the freedom to love and serve others because we already belong to Christ.

6. Paul places this statement at the centre of his argument: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (v6). How does this statement help explain what Christian freedom looks like?

Encourage your group to let this verse shape the way they read the whole passage. Christian freedom is not measured by performance or self-indulgence, but by a faith that expresses itself through love.

RESPOND

7. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." If someone looked at your priorities, what would they conclude counts most to you?

Give your group time to reflect before inviting anyone to answer. Encourage them to move beyond surface-level responses and honestly consider what their priorities reveal about what truly counts in their lives. Be prepared to gently ask follow-up questions that help people move from generalities to specific examples.

8. What is one relationship or situation where God is calling your faith to be expressed through loving service?

Help each member identify one specific and realistic way their faith can be expressed through loving service. Encourage them to think beyond general acts of kindness and consider where God may be calling them to sacrificially love, serve, and put another person's needs before their own.

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 24th Young Adults -Considering Ministry Info Night
- **August 29th** **45 In The Dark**
- August 30th Newcomers Supper

STUDY #6

BEAR AND BLESS ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 6:1-10

Leader's Note

The key teaching point of this study is that the gospel creates a community that gently restores those who stumble, bears one another's burdens, and perseveres in doing good. As you lead your group, keep drawing the discussion back to the kind of community God's grace creates.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 6:1-10

REFLECT

2. Paul calls those who live by the Spirit to restore those caught in sin "gently," while watching themselves. What does this teach us about restoring others?

Help your group notice that Paul's focus is restoration. The goal is not to win an argument or make someone feel guilty, but to lovingly help them return to Christ. At the same time, Paul reminds those doing the restoring to watch themselves. We approach others with gentleness because we know we too are weak and completely dependent on God's grace.

3. Paul says carrying one another's burdens "fulfils the law of Christ." Why? How does this connect with what Paul has just taught about freedom and faith expressing itself through love?

Optional: Read Matthew 22:34–40 and John 13:34–35. How do these passages help explain what Paul means by "the law of Christ"?

Help your group connect this verse with what Paul has just taught. Christian freedom is expressed through love, and one of the clearest ways we love one another is by carrying each other's burdens. If your group reads the optional passages, encourage them to notice that the "law of Christ" is not a new set of rules, but a life shaped by Jesus' command to love God and one another.

4. Paul warns against thinking too highly of ourselves, yet says we may "take pride" in our own work (v4). How should we understand what Paul means by "take pride"?

Help your group notice that Paul is contrasting two different kinds of boasting. He rejects pride that comes from comparing ourselves with others. Instead, he encourages believers to honestly examine their own lives before God. Paul's concern is not self-congratulation, but integrity and humility.

5. Paul briefly tells those who receive instruction to share all good things with their teacher (v6). Why do you think Paul includes this instruction here? What does it reveal about life in a gospel-shaped community?

Help your group notice that this verse is not a random interruption to Paul's argument. It is another example of faith expressing itself through love within the church. A gospel-shaped community values and generously supports those who teach God's Word, recognising that both giving and receiving are part of life together in Christ.

6. Paul uses the image of sowing and reaping. What does this teach us about the direction of our lives? How does this illustration encourage believers not to grow weary in doing good?

Encourage your group to think about the direction of a person's life rather than isolated decisions. Paul reminds believers that a life shaped by the Spirit produces a harvest that reflects God's work in us. This hope encourages Christians to persevere, even when doing good feels slow or costly.

7. Paul says to do good to everyone, "especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Why do you think Paul includes that priority rather than simply saying "everyone"?

Encourage your group to notice that Paul doesn't replace "everyone" with "the family of believers." He says both. Christians are called to do good to everyone, while recognising a special responsibility to care for those who belong to God's family. The church should be a place where the love of Christ is seen and experienced in a unique way.

RESPOND

8. Is there someone in your life whom God may be calling you to gently restore? What might restoring them gently look like?

Many Christians find this difficult because they don't want to appear judgmental or step into someone else's struggles. Encourage your group to think about what gentle, loving restoration looks like, while avoiding gossip or speaking about situations they are not personally involved in.

9. Whose burdens are you carrying in a way that has genuinely cost you time, energy, or resources? If no one comes to mind, why might that be? Where might God be inviting you to begin?

Paul is calling believers to more than occasional acts of kindness or simply checking in. Bearing one another's burdens means stepping into another person's struggles and carrying some of the weight with them. Don't let your group settle for the minimum. Encourage them to think about what this could look like in a way that genuinely costs them something.

10. Where are you becoming weary in doing good? How does this passage encourage you to keep going?

Doing good can become exhausting, especially when we don't immediately see the fruit of our labour. Help your group notice that Paul's encouragement isn't simply to try harder, but to keep trusting that God will bring a harvest in His timing. Our perseverance rests on His faithfulness, not our own strength.

11. Imagine a church where people gently restore one another, carry each other's burdens, persevere in doing good, and generously serve one another. What would that kind of community look like? What is one step our group could take towards becoming more like that?

Finish by lifting your group's eyes beyond individual application to the kind of community the gospel creates. Encourage them to identify one realistic step your group could take to become a place where people are gently restored, burdens are shared, and God's grace is seen in everyday relationships.

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- September 5th Hills Fair Trade Market
- **September 6th Father's Day**



small
groups
LIFE TOGETHER