

# Galatians

## A Five Week Devotional Study

ἸΝΑ ΔΥΤΟ ΠΑΡΗΘΙΣΩΜΑΙΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΣΧΑΛΗΘΑΙΝΑ  
ΔΕ ΕΙΔΗΤΕ ΤΑ ΚΑΤΕΜΕΤΙΠΡΑΣΩΤΑΝΤΑ ΤΗ  
ΡΙΣΕΙ ΨΕΜΝΤΥΧΙΚΟΡΟΔΑΠΗΤΟΣ ΔΔΕΦΟΣΘΑ  
ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ ΕΣΤΩ ΟΝΕΠΕΡΥΑΠΡΟΣΕΥΧ  
ΕΙΣ ΔΥΤΟ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΝΑ ΓΝΩΤΕΤΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΗΜΩΝ ΧΑΙΤΑ  
ΡΑ ΚΑΛΕΣΗ ΤΑ ΚΑΒΔΙΑΣΗΩΝ ΕΓΓΗΝΗΤ ΟΙΟΙΟ  
ΚΑΙ ΑΓΑΠΗ ΜΕΤΑ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΑΠΟΥ ΠΡΟΣ ΚΑΙΟΥ ΙΗΟΥ  
ΧΡΥ Η ΧΑΡΙΣ ΜΕΤΑ ΑΓΑΠΗ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΑΠΗ ΤΩΝ  
ΤΟΝ ΚΗ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΟΥ ΧΡΥ ΕΝ ΑΦΕΑΡΙΑ

### ΠΡΟΣ ΓΑΛΑΤΑΣ

ΠΛΟΥΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΟΥΚ ΑΠΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΟΥΔΕ  
ΔΙΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ ΑΛΛΑ ΔΙΑ ΙΗΟΥ ΧΡΥ ΚΑΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΣ  
ΤΟΥ ΕΙΡΑΝΤΟΣ ΔΥΤΟΝ ΕΚ ΝΕΥΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΟΙΟΝ  
ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΔΕ ΕΦΟΙΤΑΙ ΟΣΚΚΛΗΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ  
ΤΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΣ ΜΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΓΓΗΝΗ ΑΠΟΥ ΠΑΡΗ  
ΚΑΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΟΥ ΧΡΥ ΤΟΥ ΔΟΝΤΟΣ ΔΥΤΟΝ ΕΠΙ  
ΑΜΑΡΤΙΩΝ ΗΜΩΝ ΕΤΩΣ ΕΣΗΝΤΑΙ ΗΜΑΣ ΕΠΙ  
ΔΙΩΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΑΝΤΩ ΤΟΤΟΝ ΗΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΔΟΞΗ  
ΤΟΥ ΚΑΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΟΝ ΔΕ ΖΑΣΟΣ ΟΥΔΕ  
ΔΙΩΝΩΝ ΔΙΗΝΙ ΘΑΥΜΑΖΟΣΤΙ ΟΥΤΩ  
ΜΕΤΑ ΤΙ ΘΕΘΕΑ ΠΟΤΕΥΚΑΛΕΣΤΙ ΤΟΣΚΑ  
ΕΙΣ ΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΔ  
ΝΕΣ ΕΙΣΙΝ ΟΙΤΑΡΑ ΟΣΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΚΑ  
ΟΤΡΕΥΑΙ ΤΟ ΕΑΝΤΩ ΕΛΙΟΝ ΤΩ ΧΡΥ

# Introduction

On Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018 we will begin a five-week sermon series based on the apostle, Paul's letter to the Galatians. During the series, we will be diving deep into this epistle together. Our services of worship and sermons will be planned around the major themes of the letter, and together we will find out more about Paul: who he was, what motivated him to write this letter; and why it was necessary for him to write it to the church in Galatia.

Our hope is that you will dive into this study experience with us by reading and reflecting on the text chapter by chapter, week by week in September. By moving through a section of the letter each week, you will come to church primed and ready to engage with the sermon themes of that day. To help you do that, we have prepared this reading guide to go alongside the series. The challenge is simple: read a portion of the letter each weekday in the month of September, reflect on it prayerfully, and take a note of anything you have heard the Spirit say to you, or of any questions that have been raised for you in the reading of a passage.

The writers of Scripture were inspired by God to write the words we read in the Bible, and their inspired words continue to inspire us in our discipleship journeys today. As we read and reflect on this letter together, don't be surprised if you find your own heart being inspired or your own life moved by what you read.

One more thing: reading Scripture ought not to be a solo exercise. It was never meant to be. So, as you read this amazing letter; as you reflect on what it has to say to you today, almost 2,000 years after it was originally written, don't keep that to yourself. In your small groups, or in your Sunday School classes, or with your friends over coffee or lunch, talk about what you are learning and ask the questions that are coming up for you.

We are all on this discipleship journey together, and I am very excited for the next step we will take: a study of Paul's letter to the Galatians. I hope you are too!

Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Charlie". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Pastor" and "Charlie" being capitalized and prominent.

## **A Note on Reading Scripture**

The Bible is a complicated book. Written by many different authors over hundreds of years and then translated into a different language with a different culture and experiences, it is not surprising that so many people find reading the Bible to be a challenge. As you embark on this study, it is our prayer that you will discover the joy and the power that is diving deep into the study of Scripture. When reading Scripture, there are two things that help me to hear God's voice in the present through these ancient words. The first is posture, how we approach the text. Second is context, what is around, behind, and underneath that particular passage that can help bring it to life. There are many practices and suggestions to help us to read the Bible with more ease. I will cover a few of those at the end, but posture and context have been the most helpful for me in my own spiritual life.

### **Posture**

Everyday we read a lot of different things. There are news stories, Facebook posts, text messages, e-mails, novels, and websites. Each one of these pieces of writing have a different purpose and function. You may skim an article on a website while you savor an e-mail from a close friend. Text messages document life in real time whereas a biography gives you history in light of its historical context. When we put down the morning paper, turn off our cell phones, and pick up our Bible to read, it can be difficult to switch our minds away from all the other reading we do. This is an important hurdle to overcome because the Bible is no ordinary book. The second letter to Timothy reminds us that "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). This passage describes well the posture that we are to take to the Bible. The United Methodist Church does not believe that the Bible contains the literal words of God. Instead, Scripture is the Word of God as recorded through the writers, poets, and disciples who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of God's saving love for the next generation. This means that we are called to take these sacred words seriously.

When we read Scripture, we do so through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we engage with these ancient words, it is important to remember that the same Spirit that inspired the writing of Scripture generations ago is the same One that inspires our reading and understanding of it today. Taking the time to pray for the Spirit's inspiration, guidance, and wisdom before you read helps put us in a frame of mind that will allow us to hear what God is saying.

That passage from 2 Timothy also reminds us that when we read we should do so with a sense of expectation. The Bible is not a neutral history book or collection of literature to be read for pleasure. Its authors had a passion to help others to come to know the God they had experienced. When we read the Bible, we should do so expecting that it will draw us closer to God. Studying the Bible is not about merely gaining head knowledge—it is about shaping our hearts.

### **Context**

I had a Sunday School teacher when I was growing up who had a mantra that he repeated every time we started our lessons: "Every text without context is a pretext." What he meant by this is that when we fail to look at the context around a passage then we risk reading our own meaning into the text instead of bringing out what the authors originally intended. So often we see verses of Scripture quoted all by themselves. The Bible was not intended to be reduced to the size of a tweet or a bumper sticker. Jesus certainly was the master of the one-liner, however, all his well-known sayings fit within a larger story.

The importance of context is even more important for reading Paul's letters. Paul was an educated man, trained as a Pharisee and trained on the philosophy of his time. Therefore, when he writes he does so in the typical style of educated people. This means that his arguments follow a complicated logical pattern which is not always immediately apparent. Sometimes, he will start a theme earlier in the letter and then come back to it later. Additionally, he will interrupt his argument with a tangent and then go back to his original idea. These patterns are just some examples of the way in which Paul writes. Therefore, if a certain passage does not make sense, read a few verses on either side and see if that helps. Additionally, it is always helpful to have a good

study Bible nearby so that you can look at the footnotes to see if they answer your questions.

### **Devotional Practices**

As you study the Scriptures, there are many tools that people have used to grow in their faith as they read the Bible.

#### **SOAPY**

Jim Harnish in his study, *A Disciple's Path* shares these questions to use when reading Scripture.

**Scripture**-What does the text say on the surface.

**Observation**- What jumps out to you in the reading?

**Application**-How can I apply what I saw to my life?

**Prayer**-Take a few moments to pray for that application.

**Yield**-What do I need to change to take seriously what God is saying to me through this?

#### **Lectio Divina**

This is a practice of reading the same passage repeatedly with spaces of silence to listen and meditate on what the passage says. Pay attention to what words and phrases stand out to you.

#### **Journaling and Artistic Practices**

Some people like to keep a journal to record what God is saying to them through their study. Others keep colored pencils and draw or doodle the passage to engage a different part of their brain. Feel free to be creative as you are led by the Spirit.

#### **Conversation**

Finally, Scripture was never meant to be read by itself. Every book in the Bible was written and then passed around to other churches and communities so that they too could benefit from its content. This means that those words were debated and discussed as people determined what they meant for their discipleship. Find some other people to share what your reading has brought to your mind. See what their opinions may be. Consider discussing the passage using these questions from *Disciple Bible Study*:

- What does this text say about God?
- What does this text say about humanity?
- What does this text say about the relationship between God and humanity?

## **Week 1: Paul and Galatia**

Monday: Gal 1:1-5

Tuesday: Gal 1:6-10

Wednesday: Gal 1:11-17

Thursday: Gal 1:18-24

Friday: Gal 2: 1-10

Saturday: Reflect on this week's lessons. What are the key takeaways for you?

## **Week 2: Paul and the Gospel for all people**

Monday: Gal 2:11-14

Tuesday: Gal 2:15-21

Wednesday: Gal 3:1-9

Thursday: Gal 3:10-14

Friday: Gal 3:15-18

Saturday: Reflect on this week's lessons. What are the key takeaways for you?

## **Week 3: Law and Gospel**

Monday: Gal 3:19-22

Tuesday: Gal 3:23-29

Wednesday: Gal 4:1-7

Thursday: Gal 4:8-20

Friday: Gal 4:21-5:1

Saturday: Reflect on this week's lessons. What are the key takeaways for you?

## **Week 4: Freedom and Fruit**

Monday: Gal 5:2-6

Tuesday: Gal 5:7-12

Wednesday: Gal 5:13-15

Thursday: Gal 5:16-21

Friday: Gal 5:22-26

Saturday: Reflect on this week's lessons. What are the key takeaways for you?

## **Week 5: Bearing One**

Monday: Gal 6:1-5

Tuesday: Gal 6:6-10

Wednesday: Gal 6:11-18

Thursday: Romans 7:1-12

Friday: Romans 7:13-25

Saturday: Reflect on this week's lessons. What are the key takeaways for you?

# Memorial United Methodist Church

601 Centre Street, Fernandina Beach, FL  
904-261-5769 [mumconline.com](http://mumconline.com)

The image on the cover is from one of the oldest manuscripts that have survived of the New Testament. Known as “P<sup>46</sup>,” it was written on papyrus (an early form of paper) and dates between 175-225. The Letter to the Galatians begins under the line with the title: ΠΡΟΣ ΓΑΛΑΤΑΣ (translated: To the Galatians).

Image from: <http://earlybible.com/manuscripts/p46.html>