



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

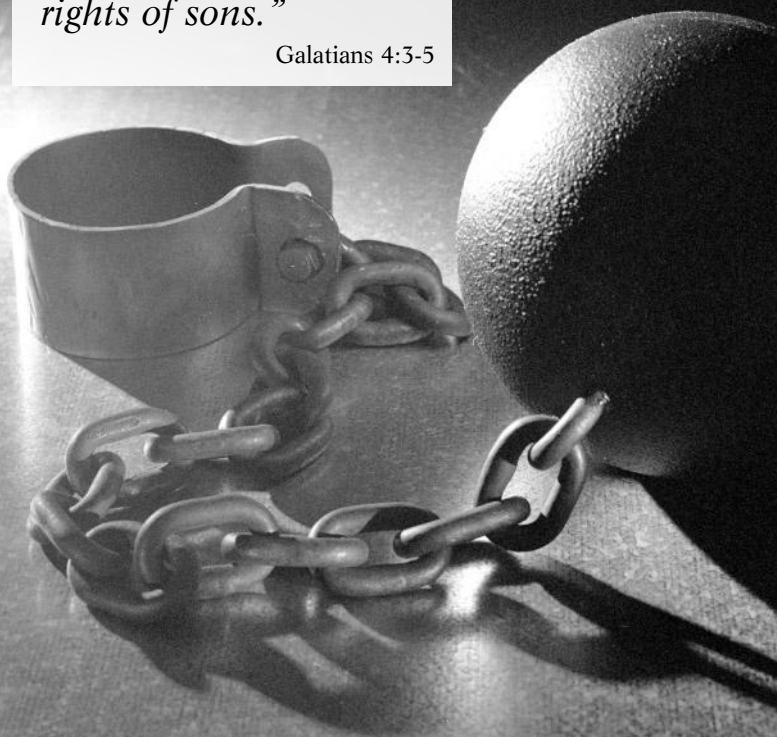
THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**GALATIAN &  
EPHESIANS**

Week 2

*“So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”*

Galatians 4:3-5



# From Slavery to Adoption

DAY 8

Galatians 4:1-7

Are there any elements of Christ-less religion from which you have been freed by Jesus? From the idea that relationship with God depends on human performance?

1. How is a child like a servant (vs. 1-2)? Is Paul talking about ability, human worth or legal rights?
2. How had these Christians been enslaved by “elemental spiritual forces” (v. 3)?
3. Since Jesus came to “redeem those under the law” (v. 5) doesn’t it seem that those whose message is based on the law might be preaching another gospel?
4. How are we elevated from the status of slaves to become “sons” and “heirs” (vs. 6-7)? What does spiritual adoption mean to you?

1. Make a list of the terms and phrases used in the New Testament to describe the way in which God transforms the life of those enslaved to elemental forces.

*Paul speaks of Christians as receiving **full rights of sons** (v. 5). In those days an inheritance could be passed on to sons only by birth or adoption. If one wanted to give an inheritance to someone who was not related by blood, one would legally adopt that person. Paul was showing here the difference between Jesus, who was uncreated, by nature the Son of God, and Christians, who are created, human by nature but who are adopted into God’s family. God fully loves every adopted son and daughter.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## DAY 9

# From Sabbaths to Savior

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Galatians 4:8-20

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

When you last disagreed with someone, what tone did you take? (a) apologetic, (b) cordial, (c) gentle but firm, (d) upset, (e) angry, (f) out of control.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**1.** Why does Paul remind all of these readers—and all of us—of our preconversion lives, which he labels as idolatry (vs. 8-9)? Given the focus of false teachers who were “bewitching” (3:1) the Galatians, what specific “special days and months and seasons and years” do you feel Paul has reference to (vs. 8-10)?

**2.** Were the false teachers teaching that God required the observance of these days in *addition* to accepting Jesus (vs. 9-12)? Were they teaching that faith in Jesus was not *enough* or *sufficient* for salvation?

**3.** What was the focal point of Paul’s gospel (vs. 13-20)?

**4.** What do you suppose was Paul’s “tone” (v. 20)? What did he wish to change it to?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**1.** Are there any religious traditions that have taken on so much importance for you that they equal, or perhaps even outweigh, the cross of Christ—and the new covenant it makes available for us?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The **Sabbath and other days** had been given by God to Israel as a tutor to remind them about God and to keep them as a people until Christ came. Maturity for Christians is found in the reality of Jesus Christ, not in the days themselves. See Colossians 2:16-17. Christians worship God every day in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).*

### “Weak and Miserable Principles”

In Galatians 4:3 and 4:9, “principles” (NIV) or “elements” (KJV) is translated from the Greek word *stoicheia*, meaning “element” or “elementary principle.” This word could be used to refer to a letter of the alphabet, a part of speech, or a basic mathematical unit. The Greeks used it to refer to what they thought were the basic elements of the universe: earth, air, fire and water. *Stoicheia* came to refer to the elemental gods or spirits which were thought to govern these natural forces. The word is also used in Hebrews 5:12 to refer to basic Christian teachings.

Paul uses *stoicheia* in Galatians, however, to refer to rudimentary religious observances and ordinances of both the Hebrew law and paganism. In 4:9 Paul adds the uncomplimentary words “weak and miserable” (literally, “powerless and bankrupt”). Paul insists that such observances are powerless to set humans free from sin and death; they are bankrupt because they can provide no inheritance. Neither the elements of Hebrew law nor those of paganism have the power to save.

The Galatian Judaizers, who viewed Jewish law as a protection against paganism, would have been shocked to hear Paul place Jewish law in the same category as paganism. Yet both Jewish law and paganism have been superseded by the relationship of being “in Christ.” Paul uses a similar line of reasoning in the first two chapters of Romans—where he shows that both pagans and Jews are sinners in need of the cross of Christ.

For a Christian to surrender his or her freedom in Christ, and to return to observance of these “elements,” thinking that such elements are necessary for salvation or more pleasing to God, is the same as rejecting Christ and returning to paganism. Pagans believed that the elements of paganism had to be observed to appease the gods.

### “Days and Months and Seasons and Years”

Paul gives an example in Galatians 4:9-10 of the *stoicheia* or “weak and miserable principles” or observances to which the Galatians were turning. It is clear from the context that these are related to the Jewish calendar. The word “observing” or “noting scrupulously” (*paratereo*) is used nowhere else in the New Testament in a religious sense, however the Jewish historian Josephus uses it in connection with observance of Jewish law.

“Days” would refer to the required observance of seventh-day sabbath days as well as holy days on specific calendar dates.

“Months” refers to monthly events, such as the new moon observances.

“Seasons” refers to the great feasts of the Hebrew calendar lasting more than one day—Passover (the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and the Feast of Tabernacles.

“Years” could either mean sabbatical years and the year of jubilee, or the observance of a day marking a new year, such as Rosh Hashana (the Feast of Trumpets).

The most significant thing about this list of observances is not that Paul merely opposed them, but that he categorizes them along with pagan festivals.

*“But what does the  
Scripture say? ‘Get rid  
of the slave woman  
and her son, for the  
slave woman’s son will  
never share in the  
inheritance with the  
free woman’s son.’”*

Galatians 4:30



# Contrasting the Covenants

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DAY 10

Galatians 4:21-31

What is your greatest physical blessing? (a) health, (b) wealth, (c) children, (d) a good job, (e) a loving spouse. Are spiritual blessings more important?

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1. Who wanted to be “under the law” (v. 21)? Why would that be attractive?
  2. Consider the contrasts Paul makes between the two covenants—one that descended from Mount Sinai through Moses to Israel, and the other that came from “Jerusalem that is above” through Jesus to the church (vs. 22-28).
  3. Who persecuted whom back in Isaac’s day (vs. 28-30)? And who was the guilty party in Paul’s day?
  4. As far as salvation goes, what were gentile Galatians to do with the requirements of the old covenant (vs. 30-31)? What or who were they to “get rid of”?
  5. Christians are the “children” of whom (v. 31)?
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1. Would you rather be under the law—or under grace? Which one actually seems more secure to our human minds?
  2. How do the blessings of Abraham effect you? Thank God that those blessings are given to all who receive Jesus by God’s grace!
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*Paul uses the **story of Abraham and his two sons**—one born by his handmaid Hagar and the other by his wife Sarah—to illustrate the old and new covenants. This allegory illustrated how the old covenant and Old Testament history anticipated a greater Truth to come.*

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

**LIVING**  
out the Word

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

## DAY 11

# The Life of Liberty in Christ

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Galatians 5:1-12

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Have you ever visited the Statue of Liberty in New York City? Ever climb into the statue itself? What does liberty mean to you?

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. How does one stand fast in the liberty of Jesus Christ (vs. 1-3)?
2. If anyone takes upon themselves the burden of keeping the whole law, what do they accomplish (vs. 3-4)?
3. In this new life of liberty, what is the essential requirement in order to be saved (vs. 4-6)?
4. Consider the pressure the Galatians had received from false teachers. Why were the Galatians tempted by these false teachers (vs. 7-10)?
5. How does Paul contrast the vital truth of the suffering of the cross with the physical, external act and ritual of circumcision (vs. 11-12)?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Are you standing fast in Christ's liberty? Are there any external pressures that hold you back?
2. Are you obligated to the law or to grace? What are your obligations? Who is your Savior?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The **yoke of bondage** was the law from Mount Sinai (vs. 1-3). It was being imposed in the form of circumcision (vs. 1-2), holy days (4:10) and dietary restrictions (2:11-14). Keeping all these laws was seen as a requirement under the old covenant for being accepted by God. However, under the new covenant, these requirements alienated them from Christ and grace (5:4). Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything spiritually (v. 6). It is only God's amazing grace, and the faith he provides, that redeems and reconciles.*



# The Life of Love for Neighbor

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DAY 12

Galatians 5:13-21

How much of the front page of today's newspaper (or your favorite news program) was given to reports of criminal and unethical behavior? Was there any *good* news?

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1. What is Christ's purpose in bringing us liberty (v. 13)?
  2. How is the entire law fulfilled (v. 14)?
  3. What way of life is contrary to the spirit (vs. 15-18)?
  4. Review the acts of the sinful nature (vs. 19-21, called the "works of the flesh" in the King James Bible). How do each of these actions and thoughts violate God's will for us?
  5. What is the result of turning oneself given over to the sinful nature (vs. 16, 21)?
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1. What "act of the flesh" (v. 19) is the greatest temptation for you? Ask God for help to strengthen you when you are faced with temptation.

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*Paul saw that the greater purpose of **the law** was its fulfillment in Christ—thus directing humankind's focus toward Jesus saving work on the cross, rather than human efforts to gain God's favor through our own works.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Galatians 5:22-23



# The Life by the Spirit

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DAY 13

Galatians 5:22-26

Look again at your newspaper. How much inspirational news do you see?

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1. Review the fruit of the Spirit (vs. 22-23). How does the Spirit work against the sinful nature (vs. 16-21)?
  2. Why is there no law against the fruit of the Spirit (v. 23)?
  3. Is the “sinful nature with its passions and desires” (v. 24) simply the evil deeds of verses 19 and 20 or human nature in general?
  4. Fruit is often referred to as “produce.” What fruit does Christ produce in the lives of those who belong to him?
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1. Ponder the significance of the fruit that God produces, in and through the life of our risen Lord, contrasted with the “plastic” fruit of Christ-less religion.
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**The Holy Spirit**, one of the three distinct but not separable Persons of the one God, descended on the church just days after the ascension of Jesus (Ac 1 and 2). Paul knew that the Galatians had received the Spirit on his previous trip. Now he reminds them that the evidence of the Spirit lay in the fruit Christ has produced in them, not by any achievement, merit or virtue gained by law-keeping.

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## Fulfill the Law of Christ

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Galatians 6:1-10

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

What is most difficult for you? (a) saying “thank you,” (b) acknowledging you were wrong, (c) confronting others, (d) correcting your own mistakes, (e) forgiving enemies.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. When you need to correct someone, why is it important to do so with gentleness (vs. 1)?
2. How does a Christian fulfill the law of Christ (v. 2 with 5:14)?
3. When do Christians carry the burdens of others? Does this require that we care for others while we carry our own burdens (vs. 2-5)?
4. Why were students held responsible to share material blessings with their teachers (v. 6)? See 1 Corinthians 9:14.
5. Paul used an agricultural analogy. How does this help explain the consequences of one’s choices in life (vs. 7-10)?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Consider helping someone in need, either physically or emotionally.
2. Examine yourself: in what areas has God blessed you with broad enough shoulders to carry your own load as well as helping others?
3. Acknowledge someone who has helped you.

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Now that Paul has established that salvation lies in faith in Jesus Christ, and not in the Law of Moses, he calls for **those who are spiritually strong in Christ to help others.** When Christians fall into sin, other Christians, in humility, should remind them of the way of Christ.*