

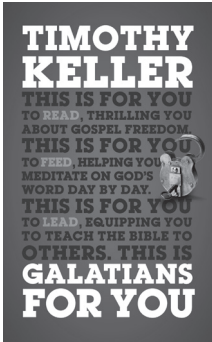
Timothy Keller

# Galatians

*Gospel Matters*



📖 **7-Session Bible Study**



## Galatians For You

These studies are adapted from *Galatians For You*. If you are reading *Galatians For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Galatians For You*:

Study One > Ch 1

Study Two > Ch 2-3

Study Three > Ch 4

Study Four > Ch 5-6

Study Five > Ch 7-9

Study Six > Ch 10-11

Study Seven > Ch 12-13

Find out more about *Galatians For You* at:

[www.thegoodbook.com/for-you](http://www.thegoodbook.com/for-you)

Galatians: Gospel Matters

A Good Book Guide

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# Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God's word as "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we've discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They're perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let's take a look at what is included in each session.

**Talkabout:** Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

**Investigate:** These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

**Apply:** These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

**Explore More:** These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

**Getting Personal:** These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

**Pray:** Here, you're invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you've seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven't got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you'll find a **Leader's Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God's light-giving word.

# Why Study Galatians?

Which gospel are you relying on?

In Galatia in AD 50, the church faced a choice between two “gospels”—two ways of living, of thinking, of viewing how to be right with God.

On the one side were the teachers who told these young Christians that their performance mattered. Of course they needed to trust Christ and his death; and then, if they wanted truly to be acceptable to God, they needed to get circumcised and get on with keeping God’s laws. Their efforts were what counted.

On the other side was Paul, the church-planting missionary who had founded the Galatian church a few years before. He said they were “foolish” and “bewitched” (3:1). He claimed the gospel they were turning to was actually “no gospel at all” (1:7).

And he told them that the only performance that mattered was Christ’s: his life, death, and resurrection. Faith in him, Paul argued, was all that anyone needed to be truly acceptable to God. Their efforts counted for nothing—and relying on them would bring them under God’s “curse” (3:10). Which “gospel” they followed mattered.

The choice between the gospel of Christ-alone and the false gospel of Christ-plus is still one which Christians face today. Christ-plus may not look the same in our cultures as it did in Galatia. But it’s still an attractive message, a flattering view, and a subtle reversal of the true gospel... and so it’s still deadly.

As Paul wrote to the Galatian church, he knew that to lose your grip on the true gospel is to desert and lose Christ himself, and to lose the salvation and blessing and freedom he gives. The gospel matters. Paul knew that everything was at stake.

It still is. In these seven studies taking you through the book of Galatians, Paul will present us with a gospel that is wonderful, liberating, and true. He’ll show us that our problems in the Christian life come when we lose or forget or fail to live by this gospel.

And he will ask us repeatedly: which gospel are you relying on?



## Galatians 50 AD

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Paul's first missionary journey takes him through southern Galatia

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Paul writes his letter to the Galatians, possibly from Syria or Corinth (Greece)



# 1

## Gospel Reversed

Galatians 1:1-9

### Talkabout

1. What makes you surprised or disappointed?

### Investigate

 Read Galatians 1:1-9

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#### DICTIONARY

**Grace** (v 3): unmerited favor.

**Pervert** (v 7): reverse, twist.

**Gospel** (v 6): announcement (often of good news).

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2. As Paul begins this letter, what does his mood seem to be?

- What reasons do these verses give for his frame of mind?

3. How does Paul describe himself in verse 1? What does verse 1 tell us about what he means by this word?

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## Explore More | OPTIONAL

 **Read Romans 1:8-10; 1 Corinthians 1:4-7; Ephesians 1:15-17; Philippians 1:3-8; Colossians 1:3-6**

- What do all these have in common that the beginning of Galatians is lacking?
- How do you think Paul would have wanted the Galatian Christians to respond to this omission?
- How does this change how we read the letter to the Galatians?

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4. Galatians 1:1-5 contains the core of Paul's "gospel," or announcement. So from these verses, what is "the gospel"?

- Why does this gospel bring people "grace and peace ... from God" (v 3), do you think?



- Who gets the glory and praise for the gospel? Why is this fair?

## Apply

5. Verse 5 is the motivation for everything Paul does. How is this a challenge to us?

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## Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

If someone asked you what the gospel is, what would you say? Why not write down your explanation of the gospel sometime today, and use verses 1-5 to help you shape and sharpen it.

Who will you ask God to give you an opportunity to share the gospel with this week?

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## Investigate

We've seen that Paul is "astonished" that the Galatian church is "turning to a different gospel" (v 6).

6. Read Galatians 3:1-5. How do some teachers in Galatia seem to have been changing the gospel message?
7. What does Paul say about any change to the gospel message (1:6-7)?

- Why is this the case, do you think?

8. What is Paul's attitude to those who "pervert" the gospel (v 8-9)?

- Think about what we've seen the real gospel is; gives us; and results in for God. Do you think Paul's language here is justified? Why / why not?

9. When did the Galatians hear the real "gospel of Christ" (v 8)? How does verse 1 give us confidence that this gospel is the true gospel?

## **Apply**

10. How do people today add to the gospel message?

11. Why do we sometimes not react to false gospels in the same way as Paul did?

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## Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

The gospel message cannot be changed without being lost. It's like a vacuum—as soon as you let air into a vacuum, it is no vacuum at all.

In what ways are you tempted to add to the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, our rescuer and ruler?

How much do you care when you hear someone changing the gospel message? Is your attitude like Paul's? Why / why not?

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12. Why is the real gospel wonderful?!

## Pray

Thank God for...

- *appointing apostles to preach and defend the gospel.*
- *Paul's commitment to and passion for gospel truth.*
- *the gospel. Thank God for rescuing his people from their sins through the death of his Son, and raising him from the dead to prove forgiveness is available.*

Ask God...

- *to deepen your love and passion for the gospel.*
- *to help you to recognize false, reversed gospels; and to have the wisdom to know how to respond.*
- *for opportunities to share the true gospel with others this week.*

