



## WEEK 3 DEVOTIONAL

June 4, 2023

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### RECEIVE

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Slowly. Prayerfully, read and/or listen to Galatians 3:1–29 twice. Before and after each reading, pray asking the Spirit of Christ to guide you into knowing and living what you are receiving from the Scriptures. Consider, what does God want you to reflect on and learn from?

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### REFLECT

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1. How did you “receive the Spirit” that is, come to believe in Jesus by the Gospel? What did you hear? What did you do? What was most important part of that experience?
2. Why did Paul scold the Galatians in this passage?
3. Based on Paul's second question to the Christians, how did he think the Galatians felt the Law could help them?
4. Based on verses 6–8, how does Paul's use of Abraham as an example of faith strike a blow to the champions of the Law?
5. How does a person become justified before God (verse 11)? How would you explain to a friend what justified before God means?

6. In verse 28, Paul reminds the Galatians that Believers are united in Christ. Share or journal about a time you have been with other Believers in a cross-cultural context. What was it like for you? What was challenging about the interaction? What was inspiring?

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## RESPOND

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1. A guardian's role is to protect, direct or instruct our behavior. How do you see God's Scriptures as your guardian?
2. Dive deeper into the Scriptures during our weekly Sunday Discipleship class at 10:30 a.m. at our Oak Brook Campus.

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## RESOURCES

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### The Bible Project | [Introduction to Galatians](#)

The following insightful nuggets are taken from [The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians](#):

1. The Gift of Grace | Verses 1–9 | By Faith or by Works of the Law

Paul pointed the Galatians to a man who embodied faith, Abraham. He was the man to whom God had made the great promise that in him all families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). He was the man whom God had specially chosen as the man who pleased him. How did Abraham specially please God? It was not by doing the works of the law, because at that time the law did not exist; it was by taking God at his word in a great act of faith.

2. The Curse of the Law | Verses 10–14 | Righteous Shall Live by Faith

Scripture has another saying, "It is the man who is right with God by faith who will really live" (Habakkuk 2:4). The only way to get into a right relationship with God, and therefore the only way to peace, is the way of faith.

### 3. The Covenant That Cannot Be Altered | Verses 15–18 The Law and the Promise

The Law, which came into being four hundred and thirty years after God's promise to Abraham, cannot annul the covenant already ratified by God and thus render the promise inoperative.

Paul's argument is that *seed* is used in the *singular* and not in the *plural*; and that, therefore, God's promise points not to a great crowd of people but to *one single individual*; and the one person in whom the covenant finds its consummation is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the way to peace with God is the way of faith which Abraham took; and we must repeat that way by looking to Jesus Christ in faith.

### 4. Shut Up Under Sin | Verses 19–22

Why introduce the law at all? It was introduced, as Paul puts it, *for the sake of transgressions*. What he means is that where there is no law there is no sin.

An agreement founded on law always involves two people, the person who gives it and the person who accepts it; and it depends on both sides keeping it. That was the position of those who put their trust in the law. Break the law and the whole agreement was undone. But a promise depends on only *one* person. Because no one ever has, or ever will, perfectly keep the law. What, then, is the consequence of the law? It is to drive everyone to seek grace, because it proves man's helplessness.

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## SCRIPTURE

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### Galatians 3:1–29 | New International Version

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? So, again I ask, does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? So, also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to Him as righteousness.”

Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it

no longer depends on the promise; but God in His grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.