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# The Church Is United in Faith

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## Summary and Goal

In this session, we will explore the relationship between the law and faith as it pertains to sin. The distinction between the two, their functions, and their overall purpose will be examined. Exploring the history of the law will result in a deeper understanding of it and aid in clarifying where justification for the sinner and freedom from sin are found. We will uncover how the work of Jesus on the cross informed the faith of the people of God before the crucifixion even took place and how that in turn informs the faith of Christians today.

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## Session Outline

1. Faith in Christ, not the law, is what justifies the sinner (Gal. 3:1-6).
2. Faith in Christ, not the law, is what removes the curse of sin (Gal. 3:10-14).
3. Faith in Christ, not the law, is what frees us from the bondage of sin (Gal. 3:21-26).

*Background Passage: Galatians 3:1-26*

## Session in a Sentence

God provides salvation from sin through faith in Christ alone.

## Christ Connection

Paul wrote to the church in Galatia to remind them that faith, not works, is the foundation of the gospel. Through the completed work of Jesus living a sinless life, dying to pay for sin, and rising again in new life, we can be saved solely by grace through faith.

## Missional Application

Because Jesus has provided salvation from our sin and given us His righteousness, we proclaim the message of salvation by grace through faith alone.

Date of My Bible Study: \_\_\_\_\_

# Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

## Introduction

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraphs on page 112 in the DDG to illustrate how unwise it is to try to ignore or cover up a problem rather than be honest about it and face it.

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Many television shows and movies portray a common theme in a variety of scenarios. One plot shows a wholesome teen skipping school to hang out with a bad influence and eventually engaging in an activity that threatens her good reputation. In another, an adoring husband continues to laugh off the “innocent” flirting of his coworker who eventually kisses him. In yet another, a humble man, full of integrity but with a failing business, unknowingly accepts a loan that implicates him in crimes he took no part in.

In spite of the variety, you still find yourself yelling at the screen for the same reason. The teen refuses to confide in her understanding parents and ask for help. The husband fails to explain the situation to his wife as soon as it happens. The business owner decides against consulting the board of his company and the authorities, even though he has clear proof of his innocence. Instead, these characters ignore the problem or try to cover it up, which ends up making the situation far worse than when it began.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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Why do people try to cover up their mistakes rather than admit them and seek help? (we are ashamed of our failings and poor choices; we are not trusting of others to understand, forgive, or help; we think we can take care of problems on our own and save ourselves the embarrassment)

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**SAY:** In each scenario, the truth is the only thing that has the power to set things right. In the same way but on a much greater scale, only faith in the finished work of Christ has the power to free us from our sin and reconcile us to our Creator. Ignoring our need for reconciliation by trying to conceal our wretched state with good works only makes our situation worse, propelling us deeper into our sin and dragging us further away from God.

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**SUMMARIZE:** In this session, we will explore the relationship between the law and faith as it pertains to sin. The distinction between the two, their functions, and their overall purpose will be examined. Exploring the history of the law will result in a deeper understanding of it and aid in clarifying where justification for the sinner and freedom from sin are found. We will uncover how the work of Jesus on the cross informed the faith of the people of God before the crucifixion even took place and how that in turn informs the faith of Christians today.

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## Point 1: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what justifies the sinner (Gal. 3:1-6).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Galatians 3:1-6 (DDG p. 113).

<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup> Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup> Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— <sup>6</sup> just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 113) to comment on how fickle and foolish human beings can be, as illustrated by the Galatian believers.

As sinful human beings, we are prone to be fickle and foolish. We can all be so wrong about something even though we are so convinced we are right. We may even think we know better than God at times. In this we are no different than the Galatians. Paul had preached Christ crucified, and they had believed and received the Holy Spirit by faith in Christ. But now they were operating as if their works of the law were the key for their justification and their sanctification. How foolish were they? How foolish are we to ignore God’s revealed truth?

- Paul wasted no time contending for the truth of the gospel in his Letter to the Galatians. He warned them that anyone trying to add to or subtract from it is accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). He then assured them that this gospel was not from man but came directly from God, arguing that if he were to make up a message, given his credible lineage and reputation as a devout Jew, it wouldn’t be one of a crucified Savior whose ransom justifies sinners apart from the law (Gal. 1:11-24). This is precisely why it is by grace through faith that God saves—so that no one, however wise, powerful, rich, or influential, can boast and all glory goes to God (Eph. 2:8-9). How, then, could the Galatian believers be so foolish as to ascribe the wonder of justification to a consequence of the law after believing their Savior suffered the greatest agony and torment ever known to humankind in order to pay for it?

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 113).

**Special Revelation** refers to God’s revealing Himself to humanity through historical events, His **Word**, and through **Jesus Christ**. Through special revelation, human beings learn about God’s character, His will, His **purpose** for creation, and His **plan** of redemption.

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**Essential Doctrine “Special Revelation”:** Special revelation refers to God’s revealing Himself to humanity through historical events, His **Word**, and through **Jesus Christ**. Through special revelation, human beings learn about God’s character, His will, His **purpose** for creation, and His **plan** of redemption. Special revelation shows us the nature and character of God, and because God has revealed Himself in this way, we can know Him—through a saving relationship with Him in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 113) to explain how the Law of Moses was being used to undermine the gospel and how Paul pointed to Abraham as his remedy to this false teaching.

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The law was and still is an integral part of Jewish history and culture, a blessing from God to the people of Israel (Rom. 9:4), and subsequently to the world. To be counted among the people of God in the old covenant required observance of the law, including circumcision for males. Yet some Jews held this same expectation for those who would become Christians under the new covenant, and the Gentile Galatian believers were being tempted by this false teaching. To counter this, Paul pointed to Abraham, who preceded the law and was found righteous before God on the basis of his faith alone.

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- Aware of the purpose and function of the law, which he addresses later in his letter, Paul appealed to the history and tradition of the Jews to show how the works of the law do not accomplish our salvation, neither for Jews nor Gentiles. Going back beyond the giving of the law, Paul took his readers to the forefather of Israel himself, who came 430 years before the law (Gal. 3:17) and therefore could not have been justified by it. So how, then, did Abraham come to be the father of many nations? How did he come to be justified? He believed what God said and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gal. 3:6; see Gen. 15:1-6).
  - The believers in Galatia seem to have been confused about the nature of the gospel, as if one’s ethnicity or traditions made one superior to others. There seems to be a similar confusion today. But if God’s chosen people were not permitted to tack on extra qualifications for following Christ, then how much less any other group of people. There is no specific people group, culture, style of worship, fashion trend, diction, hairstyle, or preaching tone that identifies one as being closer to God than another. In fact, we reflect the glory of God through our rich cultural backgrounds and by embracing each other’s differences. Ultimately, we must submit all our traditions and differences under God’s authority and be unified in our belief that faith in the finished work of Christ alone can save.
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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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Why might people be tempted to base their salvation and relationship with God on their obedience to a set of laws? (we are prideful and trust ourselves to accomplish what needs to be done for our own salvation; we do not trust the grace of God to forgive our sins if we do not personally atone for them; they are not aware of the forgiveness and salvation freely available in Christ; obedience and meeting expectations is how almost every other human relationship works in this world)

## Point 2: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what removes the curse of sin (Gal. 3:10-14).

**READ** Galatians 3:10-14 (DDG p. 114).

<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 114) to emphasize that works of the law cannot save us because the righteousness of the law requires perfect obedience.

The “all or nothing” concept is often referenced in sports training as a mantra for working hard. Dieting fads have also promoted this approach as necessary for losing weight. But this concept has never been more true than when used to describe the relationship between sinners and the Mosaic Law. The law of God depicts holiness—perfect obedience—as its standard of righteousness. And to fall short puts us under the law’s curse for lawbreakers—death.

- Paul stressed to the Galatians that even the Jews, God’s chosen people, stood condemned by the law because they could not keep it perfectly (Gal. 3:10). Both Jew and Gentile alike are condemned under the weight of their sin, and no one is righteous or seeks after God (Rom. 3:9-18). Our sin levels the playing field. No one is better than anyone else. We are all equal in that we were created by God in His image to glorify Him (Gen. 1:26-27) and we have all rebelled against this purpose and become God’s enemies because of our sin (Eph. 2:1-3).
- Comparing ourselves to others might be reassuring. We can also find comfort in our own good works. The problem is that the standard isn’t another human being or our own performance. The standard is perfection, the righteousness of our holy Creator. When measured against Him, we fall short every time.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What are some ways people object to God’s standard of perfection and the curse of death for those who fall short? (surely God grades on a curve because I’m better than so and so; as long as my good deeds outweigh my evil deeds, I’m sure God will accept me; to hold someone to perfection is unfair because no one can be perfect; God must be using hyperbole when He says sin earns death because that’s just too harsh a punishment for my mistakes)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 114) to highlight how Jesus made salvation possible for us by becoming a curse in our place through His crucifixion on a wooden cross.

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The only reason salvation is a free gift, much less possible, for those who believe is because it cost Christ everything. The law that condemns us because we have failed to uphold it perfectly, He fulfilled (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, only He could remove the curse of sin from us, and He did so by becoming the curse for us as our substitute when He was crucified on a wooden cross (Gal. 3:13).



### Voices from Church History

“Through the work of Christ in atonement, justice is not violated but satisfied when God spares a sinner ... The just penalty for sin was exacted when Christ our Substitute died for us on the cross. However unpleasant this may sound to the ear of the natural man, it has ever been sweet to the ear of faith.”<sup>1</sup>

—A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

- The agony and torment that Christ endured on the cross is beyond human comprehension or comparison. In our place, Jesus bore the full weight of God’s wrath for sin. In exchange, believers get the righteousness of His perfect, sinless life and His right standing with God. He died our death and rose again, defeating death forever and granting us eternal life if we repent and believe in Him.

*Application:* The constant pressure in society to base our happiness on how many things we can acquire causes us to miss the things in life that actually matter. In the thick of everyday life, workplace drama, housework, playdates, deadlines, meal prep, finances, etc., it’s frightening how our identity as children of the Almighty God of the universe can become just another entry on that list. We would do well to labor to remember the cost of our saving grace, for we were ransomed not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 114).

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**Imputation:** When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s **righteousness** was imputed to us. When God the Father looks at those who have **trusted** in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them.

**Essential Doctrine “Imputation”:** When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed or transferred to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s **righteousness** was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have **trusted** in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

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### Point 3: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what frees us from the bondage of sin (Gal. 3:21-26).

**READ** Galatians 3:21-26 (DDG p. 115).

<sup>21</sup> Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

<sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 115) to show that the law was always meant to point to Christ.

Since the law cannot save and in fact curses sinners, the natural human response would be to forsake it altogether as outdated and restrictive. But the law itself is not contrary to God's promises—it works in conjunction with them (Gal. 3:21). Jesus solidified this when He stated that He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). Therefore, we shouldn't look to the law for salvation, but neither should we cast it off. Rather, we should use the law according to its ultimate purpose—to point us to our need for Christ to save us.

- Although it may seem cruel at first glance, we can't ignore the fact that a fundamental objective of the law was to confine us, to imprison us under sin's power (Gal. 3:22-23). The vast majority of people don't view themselves as being in bondage to sin. Such a concept seems extreme. But we're filled up with impatience, selfishness, lust, contempt, jealousy, and ungratefulness, and that's all before lunchtime. We tend to overlook our sin, laughing it off because "we're all human," but we forget that God is holy and divine and He is not pleased with sin. The law makes clear our condition: we are sinners through and through and we have no hope of atonement or salvation on our own.
- The indictment of the law curses us as sinners, but it also primes us. By imprisoning us under the power of sin, the law guides us to the end of ourselves, teaching us that only Christ can justify and save us.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What are some ways the law points us to Jesus? (it reveals the depth of our sin because we cannot keep the law even if we wanted to, which we don't; the Old Testament sacrifices pointed forward to the once-for-all sacrifice Jesus made of Himself; the high priests of the old covenant foreshadowed Jesus, our great high priest; the tabernacle foreshadowed the day when God would dwell with us physically in His incarnate Son)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 115) to emphasize that with freedom from the bondage of sin comes a great responsibility: pursuing holiness through living by faith.

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Only in Christ can people truly find themselves because sin has marred our humanity. Whether we have the law or not, we are already imprisoned under sin (Rom. 1–3). The commands of the law make this plain to us because we rebel against them again and again. Only through faith in Christ can we regain wholeness as image bearers of God and freedom from the bondage of sin. When we come to faith in Christ, we are free from sin and bound to Jesus (“in Christ”), we are no longer enemies of God but His adopted sons and daughters, and we are directed by the Holy Spirit to resist sin and pursue the righteousness that comes by faith.

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- The all-knowing, all-powerful God who created the universe cannot overlook wrongdoing. He is holy and He must judge and punish wickedness. Yet God proved His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8), and having been justified by Jesus’ blood, we are welcomed into God’s family and called to be holy as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:13-16). This is not referring to a legalistic “holiness” based on obedience to the Mosaic Law, which Paul argued against in his Letter to the Galatians. This holiness is a Spirit-filled life of ongoing repentance and abiding in Jesus, living out of the righteousness we have received through faith in Christ.
  - Freedom from sin also needs to be understood as freedom from the darkness and shame it produces. While on this earth, we must still fight against our sinful desires, but we now have the Spirit-empowered freedom to fight. Ultimately, sin no longer has any power over us because we belong to Christ. In Him there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1), our consciences are purified (Heb. 9:14), and we are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17). Because of this, as believers, we can confess our sins to one another and pray for one another that we may be healed (Jas. 5:16). It is under this new identity as sons and daughters of God in Christ Jesus that we display our unified faith in the finished work of Christ, who alone can save (Gal. 3:26).
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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways believers demonstrate their freedom from sin through faith in Christ? (they strive to live with self-control in the power of the Holy Spirit; they regularly repent of the sins they do commit; they confess their sins to other believers for their loving support in the fight against sin; they make wise decisions about the things they watch, the people they entertain, and the places they go; they pray to be delivered from the evil one)



# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** As believers in Christ, our faith anchors us and binds us to God and to one another. Amidst disagreements and debates within the church, absolutely no wiggle room is allowed in the matter of faith in the finished work of Christ as the only means for salvation. This in no way eliminates other worthy discussions, but the truth of the gospel must inform them as their foundation. Our faith must permeate our everyday lives and interactions with others. And having been under the bondage of sin and now tasting of God's saving grace through faith in Christ, we should have an urgency to share this good news with those who are still perishing in their sin.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 116), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because Jesus has provided salvation from our sin and given us His righteousness, we proclaim the message of salvation by grace through faith alone.

- **How will you fight against sin because of the salvation available through faith in Christ?**
- **What are some ways your group can help one another live by faith rather than rely on works?**
- **How will you help unbelievers understand the good news that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?**



## Voices from Church History

"No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine; Bold I approach th'eternal throne And claim the crown, through Christ, my own. Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, should die for me!"<sup>2</sup>

—Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Gracious Father, thank You for your great kindness to save us through faith alone in Christ alone. Forgive us for the times we think we deserve your grace or when we think we grow through the exercise of our own strength. Remind us afresh each day that we are Your children because of Your grace, the work of Your Son, and the work of Your Spirit. And may we live out the righteousness that Christ has won for us as we live on mission for His name and His glory. Amen.

**PACK ITEM 13: HYMN HANDOUT:** Pass out copies of this hymn and sing it together.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 117-119), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 120) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God's Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 117-119) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 120) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 117-119) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 2** as a part of point 1 in the session: **While it's clear that God the Father has been a main character in the Bible's story, we should note that all three Persons of the Trinity have always existed and been integral to our creation and salvation from the beginning.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 3: "God is the epitome of truth—He is truth, and He is true to His Word, meaning that He remains unchanging and will keep His promises."**
- **Day 5: "In Christ, we have been given the power to walk by the Spirit and say no to sin. There was no choice before. Sin was our master."**



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 120) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share with one another how the gospel's message of grace alone continues to challenge them not to trust in their own works.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## **Point 1: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what justifies the sinner (Gal. 3:1-6).**

“The concern that Paul expresses in this verse [3:3] reaches to the rhetorical heart of Galatians. The Galatian Christians have started well; they have received the Spirit and have been justified by their faith in Christ, a gift of God’s grace. But the agitators have come on the scene, arguing that people can go free in the judgment only if they add to their faith the ‘works of the law.’ Paul seeks to persuade the Galatians not to buy into this scheme: as they began, with the Spirit and with faith, so they must continue (see 5:5) ... Just as, then, it was Abraham’s faith that led to his being considered ‘in the right’ before God, so it was the faith of the Galatians that led them to be ‘declared right’ (Gal. 2:16,21). The particular connection that Paul might have in mind with the previous paragraph is not clear. His implicit comparison between the Galatians’ experience of the Spirit and Abraham’s righteousness reveals that Paul views justification and the Spirit as closely related. Yet this does not mean that ‘righteousness’ includes the transforming work of God’s Spirit: the Spirit functions in verses 1-5 not as an agent of transformation but as the confirmation that the believers have indeed entered into relationship with God.”<sup>3</sup>

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“Paul says that this attempt to get holy by works of the law, which the Galatian false teachers were offering to the Galatian Christians, is not just a *supplement* to grace, but it actually *supplants* grace ... The gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul says, is not only for the start of the Christian life; it is for the whole of the Christian life. We are not to think of Christianity as step 1, becoming a Christian by grace through faith alone; and step 2, living as a Christian by the works of the law. Instead, we are to think of living as Christians also by grace through faith alone, what Paul will later call ‘walking in the Spirit.’ This attempt to *supplement* grace actually *supplants* grace.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Point 2: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what removes the curse of sin (Gal. 3:10-14).**

“Paul cites several Old Testament passages to show that believing Gentiles receive the blessing of Abraham in Christ. Deuteronomy 27:26 shows the universality of the curse for disobedience to the law. As people fail to live by the works of the law, they do not find life in the law but curse. Paul then cites Habakkuk 2:4 to show that the righteous will live by faith, and this faith is now directed toward the One who took the curse of the law through crucifixion. Paul had previously persecuted the church because he could not conceive of a cursed Messiah (Deut. 21:23); the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23). Through this curse of crucifixion Christ took on himself—even though he did not deserve it—the curse for disobedience (Gal. 3:13). He substituted his life for ours, ensuring that life, righteousness, and the Spirit would be received by all who believe in him.”<sup>5</sup>

“The word translated ‘redeemed’ was used for commercial transactions in which one bought something back. It would be used for paying a ransom for a hostage, or for a slave or indentured servant buying their freedom. By using this word, Paul implies that we are all slaves to sin, under the curse of the law, and need to be ransomed. As slaves or hostages, we cannot buy our own freedom. Our only route to freedom required Christ to pay the price of freedom for us by dying a criminal’s death on the cross. This was a cursed death, as Paul proves by quoting Deuteronomy 21:23 (3:13b). In this sense, Christ can be said to have been cursed by the law. By taking the curse on himself, he paid the ransom for us to be set free ... Now both Jews and Gentiles can *receive the promise of the Spirit* (3:14). Paul thus regards the experience of the Spirit as the fulfillment of God’s promise that through Abraham all nations would be blessed.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Point 3: Faith in Christ, not the law, is what frees us from the bondage of sin (Gal. 3:21-26).**

“Paul has argued in the previous verses [vv. 17-18] that the law is subordinate to the promise since the law was instituted 430 years after the covenant with Abraham was established. Furthermore, the promise and the law operated on different principles. Under the promise the inheritance is obtained as a gift of God’s grace, whereas under the law the promise is secured through human obedience. Indeed, the law was given to increase transgressions, and it was never intended to be in force forever. Now that Christ has come, the day of its jurisdiction has ended. The inferiority of the law is signaled by its being given through a mediator instead of being given directly by God ... In the OT Israel was God’s son (cf. Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 1:6). The law was in force for a certain period in salvation history and functioned like a babysitter. Now that the time of babysitting has concluded, believers are sons who have obtained the promise. Believers are not only sons but they ‘all’ belong to the people of God. Now that the Christ has come, the door of promise has swung wide open to include Gentiles who believe ... It seems that Paul teaches here that believers are God’s sons because they are united with Christ Jesus, who is the one and only true offspring of Abraham (3:16). They are not God’s sons through observing the law but by virtue of being incorporated into Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

## References

1. A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy* (Zeeland, MI: Reformed Church Publications, 2015), 79.
2. Charles Wesley, “And Can It Be,” in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 250.
3. Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 185, 188.
4. Josh Moody, *No Other Gospel: 31 Reasons from Galatians Why Justification by Faith Alone Is the Only Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 132-33.
5. Ian Smith, “Galatians,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1577, n. 3:10-14.
6. Finny Philip, “Galatians,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1623.
7. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, in *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 243, 256.