**Galatians**

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| Galatians was probably written to churches in the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe) that Paul had founded on his first missionary journey. Some believe that Galatians was written from Syrian Antioch in 48–49 after Paul’s first journey and before the Jerusalem council meeting (Ac 15). Others say that Galatians was written in Syrian Antioch or Corinth between 51 and 53 |
| 1) Compare Gal 1:1-9 with intros of other Pauline letters. What is added? What is missing? 2) Why does Paul tell this long story of his commissioning as an apostle? 3) What words and phrases are out of place or prominent enough to indicate that they have something to do with why Paul wrote this? (up through 2:19) |
| Striking dissimilarities between this introduction and those of Paul's other epistles: 1) he addresses readers as "churches" but leaves out "of God" or "in Christ"; no named mention about his partners writing with him; 3) Paul offers no thanksgiving or praise of God on behalf of those to whom he writes; 4) mentions his apostleship but distinguishes it as not being commissioned by men but specifically by Jesus Christ and God the Father. |
| 1:1: Paul is going to great lengths to demonstrate his authority in this letter: the Galatians seems to call Paul's authority and gospel into question. |
| 1:2: "churches of Galatia": not "church of God" (1 & 2 Cor, 1 & 2 Thess) or the "saints in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians) or even "God's beloved" (Romans) |
| 1:4: The issue is the Gospel: Paul doesn't waste any time before he tells us what he thinks is central to the Gospel. |
| 1:5: Since Christ did the saving work according to the will of God, all glory is reserved for him and none goes to those who want to brag about their distinctives such as circumcision... |
| **1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the **church** of the Thessalonians **in God** the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. 2We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers...**2 Thessalonians 1:1-3:** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the **church** of the Thessalonians **in God** our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3We must always give thanks to God for you... |

Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2and all the members of God’s family who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Romans 1:1-8:** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7To **all God’s beloved in Rome**, who are called to be **saints**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 8First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.

**1 Corinthians 1:1-4:** Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2To the **church of God** that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus...

**2 Corinthians 1:1-3:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the **church of God** that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia: 2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation,

**Ephesians 1:1-3:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To **the saints** who are in Ephesus and are **faithful in Christ Jesus**: 2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

**Philippians 1: 1-6:** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all **the saints in Christ Jesus** who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3I thank my God every time I remember you, 4constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you...

**Colossians 1:1-3**: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2To the **saints** **and** **faithful brothers and sisters** **in Christ** in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3In our prayers for you we always thank God,

1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! 9As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!

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| 1:6-8: astonished, deserting, pervert, accursed: strong language: Paul is riled up in rare form. We never see him this worked up in a letter so quickly. No prayer, no thanksgiving, just dismay and challenge! |
| 1:6: one thing that is so astonishing is that they are turning from God and turning to a message. Category change. And this message lacks the grace of Christ! It is not the gospel of Christ. The most attractive thing about this gospel was its message about the God whose will was to save men out of this evil world by grace (1:3-4). All they are getting in exchange is a mere message, unattested by God but merely by troublesome people who were perverting the gospel into something completely opposite. Paul is amazed they would make such an obviously bad exchange! |
| 1:8: "if Paul or an angel should proclaim" *subjunctive*: counterfactual hypothetical: unlikely. 1:9: "if anyone proclaims": *indicative*: this could and in fact is happening! |
| 1:8-9: Paul argues from the particular (Paul or other apostles, angels, beings with particular spiritual authority) to the general (anyone): the message is that even if Paul or angels, let alone those Judaizers there, should preach this message, they (Paul, angels, or even those Judaizers) would be cursed to hell. |
| 1:10: "still seeking human approval"? Paul, as the Pharisee Saul, used to be a fierce people-pleaser. But he isn't any more. The perverted "gospel" is a people-pleasing message, but it is not the gospel. (A message that you can work for your own salvation is very popular.) |
| 1:11-12: Paul's second issue: the source and character of his authority. The first issue: the nature of the gospel of grace vs. that of the Judaizers. |
| 1:12: "revelation of Jesus Christ": see 2:2. Paul has a direct line to the source, he isn't getting his message from other apostles (and who he could perhaps be misquoting). |
|  Topics or phrases that seem to relate to Paul's purpose in writing the letter to the Galatian churches:* Freedom from present evil age (1:4)
* Human vs divine approval (1:1, 10-12, 16-17)
* Paul's authority as an apostle (same as above)
* Grace (1:3-4,6,15)
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10 Am I now seeking human approval, or God’s approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; 12for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

1:10-12: The sharp contrast that exists between what God wants and what people want is stressed. What is there about the Gospel which Paul and the other revelatory spokesmen had uttered throughout redemptive history (1:8-9) which is totally unpleasing to people and to which they must be won over by persuasion? In the true gospel, God alone receives the credit for all the work (1:5), and so people get nothing that pleases their vanity. The totally oppoite message, to which the Galatians were so quickly turning (1:6), asked people to produce certain distinctives which would obligate God to bless them. This was very pleasing to human vanity. But Paul's gospel did not stem from this very human way of thinking (1:11).

1:13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, 17nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

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| 1:13: "violently persecuting the church of God": Saul felt as strongly about Jesus' followers as a Jew as he feels about the Judaisers now.  |
| 1:14: Saul was advanced in the Jewish merit badge system, like a 12-year old Eagle Scout. As he tries to establish his apostleship, his admission to being a church persecutor might be considered to weaken his claim, and it would, if his behaviors gave rise to his claim of apostleship. But his apostolic claim is based on grace, on revelation, on being set apart by God before he was born, so his admission to his previous life as a persecutor of the church just enhances God's divine work in his having been called by grace to this ministry. |
| 1:15: Saul's zeal to uphold the traditions contrast with God's call and setting Paul apart before he was born. Since God's calling Paul was effortless on Paul's part--before he was born--it is God who is glorified, not Saul. |
| 1:16: "to reveal his son to me": 1:12, "a revelation of Jesus Christ" |
| 1:16: "any human being": see "human source" in 1:12 |
| 1:18: Paul's visits to Jerusalem in Acts:* Acts 9:26-30: first post-conversion visit (1:18-20)
* Acts 11:30: famine relief from Antioch (2:1-10)
* Acts 15:1-30: The Jerusalem Council (public, not a private meeting--doesn't seem to be described here)
* Acts 18:22: Quick visit
* Acts 21:15-17 Arrest visit
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| 1:18 compared to 2:1-2: the first visit seemed more casual, not in response to revelation. A low profile visit--he did not appear in the church and few people saw him other than Peter and James. The second visit was more formal, with a laying out of his message and an affirmation that it was the essential gospel. |
| 1:20: This issue is dead serious to Paul. |
| 1:23-24: God planned Saul/Paul's calling; God did it (no one else could have): therefore God was glorified. This might have been kind of a new experience for Saul/Paul. |
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18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; 19but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord’s brother. 20In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! 21Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, 22and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; 23they only heard it said, ‘The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.’ 24And they glorified God because of me.

1:14: Paul stresses how zealous he was for main-line Judaism and "the traditions of my ancestors" (Paul was no Sadducee). When Paul shifted away from this mainline tradition of Judaism to Christ, he counted himself as being on a par with the OT prophets (see the language of 1:15 which echoes God's call to Jeremiah, and God's call of the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 49:1). How could Paul be completely in line with the OT, and yet be completely at odds with "the tradition of the ancestors" and with Judaism, which prided itself as being supported by the OT? As we have abundant evidence for in Galatians, the Jewish way of interpreting the OT (the "tradition of the ancestors") was completely contrary to the intended meaning of the OT writings.

2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain. 3But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us— 5we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. 6And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me.

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| 2:3: "in order to make sure that I was not running in vain": Paul submits his gospel message to the leaders in Jerusalem, which makes his contradiction of Peter all that more stark (2:11) when he opposes Peter to his face. Paul is willing to submit his gospel to inspection, but it had been approved. But Peter stood "self-condemned" by his own two-faced, hypocritical actions (as described 2:12ff). |
| 2:3: Titus is living proof that the gospel is also for the uncircumcised. Titus was with Paul, in Jerusalem, with the apostles. If the Judaizers were correct, this would be a deeply serious breach. Titus was like a precedent-setting case before the Supreme Court: if Titus was accepted, and not forced to be circumcised, then how can arguments of the Judaizers be true? |
| 2:4 "false believers": compare 1 Corinthians 8:13: "Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall." Paul yields to *weak* brethren but not to *false* ones.  |
| 2:4: "freedom" see 1:4: " set us free from the present evil age"Freedom: in the narrow sense, from circumcision. More broadly, from all Jewish distinctives (sabbath, kosher food) |
| 2:4: "the truth of the gospel": this is what is at stake, why Paul refuses to back down. |
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| 2:6: "from those who were supposed": Paul begins a sentence that would have ended: "from them I received nothing" but he changes the structure mid-sentence: "they added nothing to me". |
| Why did Paul circumcise Timothy but not Titus? But when accomodating to Jewish distinctinves would help further the gospel (as when the half-Jewish Timothy was circumcised), then Paul did the opposite of what he did in the case of the Gentile Titus at Jerusalem. Everything Paul did he did to further the truth of the gospel. |

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| 2:4: The false believers were insisting that Gentile believers in Christ must also be circumcised before they could be counted as Christians (see Acts 15, below). But if the adherence to this and other Jewish distincives became mandatory for one to be a Christian, then faith in Christ would no longer be the essence of Christianity, especially for Gentiles, for whom circumcision would present a difficult obstacle to overcome. Pride in Jewish distinctives could then continue among Christians as it had prevailed among the Jews for many centuries and had constituted their chief sin against God (compare Romans 2:23: "You who boast in the law dishonor God by your transgression of it [because the law wanted men to boast in God, not in themselves]." But pride and faith cannot co-exist (cf Eph 2:8-9). So, were pride allowed as part of the Christian message, then the truth of the gospel, which is confidence in what Another will do for one, vanishes.  |
| Acts 15:1-2, 5-9: Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders... 5But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.” 6The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. 7After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. ... |

2:7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised 8(for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), 9and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

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| 2:7: The Jerusalem apostles recognized Paul's authority; so should the Galatians. |
| 2:7-8: Paul:Uncircumcised::Peter:Circumcised. Paul makes an analogy and an equation: Paul's authority to preach to the Gentiles is parallel to Peter's (unquestioned) authority to preach to the Jews. |
| 2:9: "right hand of fellowship": this sounds better than the "opposed him to his face" of the following passage. It may be that the Judaizers are saying, "No, Peter and Paul had a falling out--they do not see things the same way! Did you hear what happened in Antioch?" So Paul's narration of the events (the blessing first, the challenge later) is crucial to make his case. |
| 2:10: "one thing" "actually what I was eager to do": in other words, no concessions or alterations were made. Paul was already moving in that direction. |
| 2:11: Paul is narrating the scene in Antioch as if the Galatians have already heard about this conflict and have drawn adverse conclusions about Paul's authority, which is the real nub of the issue of the letter so far. For the sake of the Galatians' own understanding of the gospel, he needs for them to see that it was Peter, not Paul, who was in the wrong on the issue that so profoundly affects their faith. |
| 2:7-10 vis-a-vis 2:11-14: Paul contrasts Peter's correct approval of Paul's message with Paul's own correct opposition to Peter's hypocrisy in Antioch. |
| 2:11: "self-condemned": Peter is self-condemned in two ways: 1) eating with Gentiles then drawing back, and 2) fearing the circumcision party after accepting Titus and not forcing him to be circumcised. |
| 2:11-14: Compare 2:5, "we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you": Paul did not submit to the false believers, but Peter did, and even Barnabas did. |
| 2:13: "even Barnabas": even Paul's partner (at one time a senior partner) was led astray by the false believers and by Peter's hypocrisy |
| 2:14: "live like a Gentile"= "are willing to eat with Gentiles. "compel the Gentiles to live like Jews" = "make Gentiles be circumcised like Jews.” Peter would be compelling by modeling -- we see the kind of influence his model has on other believers. |
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2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’

The Jewish-Christian emissaries arriving at Antioch from Jerusalem presented Paul with a situation in which it was not possible to "give no offense to Jews or Greeks" (1 Cor 10:32). They were bound to give offense to either Jews from Jerusalem or Greeks in Antioch depending on their choice of table fellowship. On the surface either way seems equally undesirable. Paul, however, maintained that his policy of continuing to eat with the Gentile believers was the right thing to do, calling Peter "self-condemned" and his choice "hypocrisy" and inconsistent "with the truth of the gospel". Why did Paul consider it this way? The ability to eat with another person, even at cost of a radical change of cultural habits, underscores that far more vital basis on which a person from one culture is able to have fellowship with one from another culture. In Antioch, that vital basis was "faith in Jesus Christ (2:16ff). Bearers of the glad tidings of the gospel who leave their own culture to transmit the news to people in another culture must accommodate to the non-hurtful mores of the receptor culture, for otherwise these bearers will be saying that features of their own culture are an essential part of their message. Up to the arrival of those from Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians at Antioch were adhering to proper missionary strategy. The actions of Peter and the Jerusalem crowd made the Jewish distinctives more important than faith in Christ, for in effect their conduct said, “If you Gentiles don’t become like us Jews, they your faith in Christ is useless, because on the basis of that alone no table fellowship is possible. Faith is dispensable; adherence to the Jewish distinctives in indispensable.” [Dan Fuller, notes 5/3/77]

2:15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. 19For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

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| 2:15: “Jews by birth” and “Gentile sinners”: these are terms of art, with scare quotes, used ironically.  |
| 2:16: “yet”: Paul makes it sound liek it was harder to be Jews by birth and believe that justification comes by faith in Jesus, not by “works of the law”. |
| 2:16: “works of the law”: legalistic misinterpretation of the law. Paul didn’t have a word for legalism, so he invents a term. Exact obedience to the revealed Mosaic Law has not been the issue in Galatians. What has been at issue is circumcision and eating regulations. These cultural distinctives are what Paul has in mind when he uses the phrase “works of the law”. |
| 2:17: by rejecting the *works of the law*, the merit badges, even to the point that we, like Jesus eating with tax collectors and “sinners”, eat with Gentiles and eat non-kosher foods. “found” and “sinners” are used ironically: We have been found to be “sinners” in that some people (the Judaizers) think of us as “sinners” though their opinion is based on false assumptions. This is exactly what Saul used to think, which was why he persecuted Christians before his conversion.  |
| 2:18: Paul tore down *the works of the law* in his own life when he rejected his Pharisee past and embraced faith in Christ (Philippians 3:1-8). If Paul were to build them up again, the way Peter did when he acted hypocritically before the circumcision party, then Paul would not simply be “found” a “sinner” but would actually “demonstrate” that he was a theological “transgressor”. These words are not used ironically here. |
| 2:18: If WOL = doing what the law requires, then Paul would not worry about being a transgressor, heck, he’s saved by faith anyway--forget the law! But if the law teaches and points to faith, being a transgressor of the law (imperiling justification and/or sanctification) is serious indeed! |
| 2:19: If I, through the Law (the good, holy, just Mosaic law, the revelation of God that teaches faith in Jesus), died to the law (the works of the lie, which Paul tore down by his “effort to be justified by faith in Christ”). Paul is showing how he is in fact NOT a transgressor fo the (good) Law but an upholder of it. |
| 2:19: “so that I might live to God”: Just as Galatians have turned from God to a message (1:6), so Paul turned from the law (= *works of the law*) to God himself. A much better trade! |
| 2:20: Paul speaks not just of the righteousness of forgiveness (justification, imputed righteousness) but also the ongoing righteousness of sanctification, the power to live by faith in God’s goodness and faithfulness to his promises. |
| 2:21: They are in danger of rejecting the grace (ie, the death) of Christ. |

How should we understand “the works of the law” which is contrasted with “faith in Jesus Christ”? Works of the law cannot be “doing what the law requires” because it is directly contrasted to “faith in Jesus Christ”, while Jesus himself taught that the law commanded faith. (Matthew 23:23: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.”*) “Doing what the law requires” is not an issue for the preceding verses, while “taking pride in Jewish distinctives” has very much been an issue. Pride and faith are purely antithetical ideas, because pride glories in how one is able to distinguish himself vis-a-vis others, whereas faith glories in the ability of another who is trusted in for the things required. What the Mosaic law commands, on the one hand, and what faith in Christ requires, on the other, are not antithetical, but coordinate.

Should we understand the enigmatic saying “I through the law died to the law” (2:19) 1) in the Reformation manner, “trying to adhere to the law, I saw increasingly my total inability to live by it perfectly, and so I gave up trying to merit my salvation by living according to the law”, or 2) in parallel with 2:18’s allusion to Paul’s destroying his dependence on Jewish distinctives, in which case the “law” to which he died would be the Jewish pride, the legalistic frame of mind which thought God became indebted to a Jew to bless him for having these distinctives, and the law through which he died would be the revelatory law of Moses, not distorted to encourage “works of the law”? Though it involves a shift in the meaning of *nomos* right in the same verse, it is parallel 2:18, which contains both the idea of destroying something and the idea of violating something. Paul died to his legalistic perverted understanding of the Mosaic Law through the revelatory law of Moses which he properly understood after regeneration (cf Romans 7:9).

2:17: “is Christ then a servant of sin?” If your heritage told you that not eating kosher was sin, and that faith in Christ meant not eating kosher, then this might be concluded. Paul is answering the objections of the Judaizers. The Pharisee Saul used to think this way.

3:1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! 2The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? 3Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? 4Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. 5Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

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| 3:1-5: Five rhetorical questions. Restate the questions as statements: “You received the Spirit by believing the word, not by doing “the works of the law”! etc. |
| 3:1: The one who has bewitched them has taken their attention off of Christ and has focused them on their own legalistic works. Paul refocuses them on Christ. |
| 3:3: Having started with the Spirit (justification by faith), are you now ending with the flesh (sanctification by works)? This is not uncommon. “Jesus died for me. The least I can do is to live for him.”  |
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| In this section Paul is using terms (works of the Law, children of Abraham, even "reckoned as righteousness") that would be familiar to Jews and Judaizers, but invested with different meanings. Being a child of Abraham is pretty central for the Jews, but they wouldn't think that Gentiles could ever be included in that group... |
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| 3:7: The first rhetorical question answered, see 3:2: "by works of the law or believing what you heard?" All who believe are descendants of Abraham. |
| 3:8: Paul is saying that at the heart of the gospel is the inclusivity of the promises. Paul doesn't say this is a small point--rather it is central to the message itself. |
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6 Just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’, 7so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. 8And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.’ 9For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

3:6: Genesis 15:6: "And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness."

3:8: Genesis 12:1-3: Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

3:10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.’ 11Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’ 12But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, ‘Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.’ 13Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’— 14in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

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| 3:10: Works of the law are essentially contradictory to the gospel, which is inclusive. WOL are exclusive and bring glory to self, teach faith in self. Therefore, those who rely on WOL are under the Law's Curse, because they are living antithetically to the Law. |
| 3:10ff: Judaizers draw two circles: Jews are blessed; Gentiles are cursed. Paul says Christ was cursed to enable any who have faith to be blessed. |
| 3:10: The curse of the law is God's wrath incurred on us because we use the law to make ourselves feel superior to others and to judge people for the same things we ourselves do |
| 3:10: the book of the law: which teaches faith, humbly trusting God's promises: Deut 6:5, Lev 26:41 |
| 3:10-11: Theologians insert a "missing" proposition in this argument: "No one can live by the law perfectly," but Judaism didn't require it and this would be entirely unconvincing to Judaizers. No, Paul is not saying that "all who rely on doing what the law requires are under a curse," but rather "all who rely on WOL are under a curse because WOL is antithetical to the revealed OT law." |
| 3:12: "The [law=WOL] does not rest on faith"--then he quotes the Judaizers misquoting Leviticus 18:5. He's citing the legalists, not Moses. Paul comments on this misunderstanding in Romans 9:30-33: What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; 31but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. 32Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33as it is written, “See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”  |
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Deut 27:25-27: “Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by observing them.” All the people shall say, “Amen!"// This passage absolutely assumes that the law can be and is faithfully observed, including proper allowance for sin, repentance, sacrifice and forgiveness.

Habakkuk 2:1-4: I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. 2Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. 3For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. 4Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

Leviticus 18:4-5: My ordinances you shall observe and my statutes you shall keep, following them: I am the Lord your God. 5You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord.

Exodus 34:5-7: The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, “The Lord.” 6The Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

3:14: the blessing of Abraham: Genesis 12:1-3: uncountable descendants, great name, land. Genesis 15:6: forgiveness; Genesis 17:8: God was HIS God: at that God is as God he is for Abraham's benefit. In other words: it would be very foolish to leave these blessings and return to the flesh.

3:15 Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person’s will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. 16Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, ‘And to offsprings’, as of many; but it says, ‘And to your offspring’, that is, to one person, who is Christ. 17My point is this: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

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| 3:15ff: Paul is not saying that the revelatory law stands opposed to the Abrahamic covenant, but if it did, it still couldn't annul the promises to Abraham. But the contrast is between the "works of the law" and the promise received by faith. |
| 3:18:Abraham was reckoned righteous simply because he trusted God and acted on his promises.  |
| 3:19ff: Above, Paul tells us what the law *did not do.* Now Paul tells us what it does. |
| 3:19-20: The law seems to be inferior to the promises: 1) increases transgressions, 2) temporary, 3) ordained by angels/messengers by a mediator (Moses). Therefore it would be easy to conclude that (3:21) the law is opposed to the promises of God. |
| The law was not added so that people will feel guilty. This Paul never felt (Philippians 3:1-7) nor did Israel. |
| 3:21: The promises of God: mercy, righteousness, the Holy Spirit, life. The law doesn't, in itself, provide these things, but it is not opposed to these promises. |
| 3:22: God imprisoned all things to sin in order that his mercy might be more gloriously revealed.  |
| 3:22: "imprisoned all things under the power of sin": including the law. A good law was warped by humanity's sinful tendency. The very nature of sin, PRIDE, is shown up most clearly in the law, which is the very means for faith. The misinterpretation of the law invites the human ego to glory in what it has done. "Through the law, sin becomes sinful beyond measure" (Rom 7:12-13). The law itself is good but sin perverted it. |
| Two imprisonments: Sin has imprisoned all things, including the law, which itself has imprisoned the Jews. The law is good, but the law imprisoned by sin=Works of the Law=legalistic self-righteousness. This is why Paul says that those who rely on the WOL are under a curese. It is very difficult for those who rely on WOL to come to faith, for Sin has imprisoned the Law which has in turn imprisoned the Jews. Only through grace can Paul come to see that the revealed law teaches faith, not in our own works but in God alone. |
| 3:23: "Before faith came": cannot mean, "before Christ came when people were justified by works" because Abraham was justified by faith, as are all his true spiritual descendants (3:6-9).  |
| 3:23: "Before faith came" could mean "before the true object of our faith, Jesus Christ, was revealed..." |

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. 20Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one.

21 Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the law. 22But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

23 Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 24Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 25But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 26for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

3:24: "The law was our disciplinarian", literally "jailer", in a temporary holding cell until "we" [Jews] could be truly freed by Christ's coming and the ensuing justification by faith.

3:25: "now that faith has come", the object of faith, the revelation of the true nature of the purpose of the law, the sacrificial system (a type of Christ's death) and the prophets (who point to the messiah and his salvation). Freedom in Christ in Galatians 1:4, 2:4, 4:7, 4:31, 5:1

3:26: Paul argues, "We Jews are no longer under a custodian/jailer, because even you Gentiles are received as children of God, adopted into the family through faith.

3:28: The Pharisee's daily prayer, "I thank you God that I am not a gentile, a slave or a woman." These distinctions once mattered, but now matter no longer...

3:29: Again, Paul answers the argument of the judaisers, who are teaching that Gentile Christians need to become Jews in order to be true children of Abraham and heirs to the promises. 1 Cor 7:19: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything."

4:1 My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; 2but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. 3So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. 4But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. 6And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ 7So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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| 4:1-12: "we" = Jews, "you"= Gentiles. |
| 4:3: "We Jews were enslaved to demonic oppression through legalism. When a demon gets hold of a law it is really perverted." Legalism is slavery; it is demonic oppression, not just an over-eager way to do Christianity. |
| 4:4-5: Paul argues that the Gentiles have been brought into the family--this is evidence that the guardianship of the law is over. "so that we might receive adoption" we = Jews who also needed adoption as children. |
| But when a child is treated like a slave, and boxed in and guarded by sin, it is no wonder that a sense of fear would keep him or her from crying out "Daddy!" |
| 4:8ff: "formerly, when you did not know God": the Gentiles were formerly pagans. Now, they have come to know God, but they are submitting to the demonic legalism that is most akin to paganism: "What can I do to please God and merit his favor?" Paul feels that his work on behalf of spreading the gospel among them is at risk of having been wasted. |
| 4: 9-10: It is possible for Christians to turn themselves over to demonic legalisms, things which cause us to take pride in our relationships with God. |
| 4:12: "Become as I am": ie, think about the gospel the way I do, for three reasons: 1) (4:12b) For I have become like you--leaving behind my Jewish distinctives and the pride I took in them to preach to you Gentiles. 2) (4:13-20) Paul has a genuine love for them, and at one time they felt deeply for him in his vision affliction. In contrast to the counterfeit love of the Judaisers. 3) Theological arguments once again, taken up in 4:21ff. |
| 4:15: Paul reminds them of their great affection for Paul, that they keenly felt his distress. They couldn't blind themselves for Paul's sake then, but they have become blinded to the gospel now. Paul writes to open their eyes. |
| 4:16: He is the true servant leader, serving by speaking the truth. |
| 4:17, "They" "them": The Judaisers: flattery, seeking human approval. They are making much of the Gentiles, but their purpose is to enhance the exclusionary nature of their legalistic approach, whereby Gentiles must enter through the Jewish kosher keeping. |

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. 9Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? 10You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. 11I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

12 Friends, I beg you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong. 13You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them. 18It is good to be made much of for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you. 19My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

4:13: The physical infirmity: his partial eyesight as a result of his Damascus road call and the blindness that came with it--not being completely healed. This made him weak but the Galatians welcomed him anyway.

4:14: "welcomed me as an angel of God":  = messenger

4:17: "so that you may make much of them" by giving the Judaisers the authority due to Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ and the one who first brought them the gospel. The glory goes to them, and as it is a human-pleasing gospel, to the Galatians, not to God

4:19: Paul's affection for the Galatians is real, though he is sincerely worried about their faith. A loving but angry parent: discipline and tough words are needed, but ideally he'd be there with them.

4:19: It is an odd image, that Paul compares himself to being in the pain of childbirth again. As if their first attempt at being born into the kingdom were a stillbirth or premature.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? 22For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. 23One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. 24Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. 25Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. 27For it is written,
‘Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children,
   burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs;
for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous
   than the children of the one who is married.’
28Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. 29But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. 30But what does the scripture say? ‘Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.’ 31So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.

5:1For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

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| 4:21: "listen to the law": ie, listen to OT scripture, which provides an analogy. He continues to try to make his point, the third support to his request to become like he is (4:12). |
| 4:22-31: Paul turns this familiar story on its head. Hagar is the mother of Ishmael, not a Jew in the line of the Patriarchs, not of the 12 tribes, literally a Gentile. But Paul makes Hagar and Ishmael's line a representative of present Jerusalem, in slavery (politically to Rome, Spiritually to legalism). What Abraham did with Hagar, trying to bring new life into the world without faith, the Jews--Judaisers--do with the law: they try to usher in new believers without faith, but with adherence to the law. So Paul says that it is we who understand that sonship comes with faith (Jewish Christian believers and Gentiles who all are saved by faith, not by adherence to legalism) who are the true children of God and descendants of the promise. |
| So Hagar represents an attempt to work for blessings, not a covenant of God but a misunderstanding. |
| 4:25: "present Jerusalem in slavery with her children": the law in the grip of sin, and those who are slaves to this misunderstanding of the law. Jews boxed in by the law boxed in by sin. Still in jail. |
| 4:28: "like Isaac": ie, in the same way the covenant of promise is not a new thing today, but goes all the way back to the Patriarchs, to Abraham and Isaac. |
| 4:30: "Drive out the slave and her child": Paul is telling them to reject the teaching of the circumcision party, and to drive them out, refusing to listen to their perversion of the gospel. |
| 5:1: "yoke of slavery": circumcision, legalism, the kind that is familiar in any religion, which teaches works not grace |
| 5:2:6: Taking on circumcision will anger God as they begin to do things which they understand obligate God to bless them, thus bringing glory to themselves, as the Pharisees did. The Pharisees generated Jesus' anger, and these guys get Paul riled up: both are jealous for God's glory, which he will not share with another (Isaiah 48:11). |
| 5:4: "justified by the law": works of the law, which is actually the opposite of the actual revealed mosaic law (see 3:10: "all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse") |
| 5:4: In Paul's understanding of the proper view of the law, it involves grace, but WOL cuts you off from Christ. The law teaches faith (5:6), love (5:14), and is summed up in Christ (6:2). But WOL produces pride and robs God of his glory. It is the opposite of grace to trust in your own ability to obligate God to bless you. |

2 Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. 4You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. 6For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.

5:4: It is not that there are two ways to be justified, by law and by grace. But rather, Paul speaks to those who fancifully imagine themselves to be justified by their legalistic misinterpretation of the law. Romans 9:30-33: What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; 31but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. 32Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33as it is written, “See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” (see note at 3:12)

5:6: Faith working through love, the opposite of legalistic kosher law following, circumcision, and exclusive cultural practices that empower a dismissal of people not considered worthy of God's love.

7 You were running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth? 8Such persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. 10I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty. 11But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision? In that case the offence of the cross has been removed. 12I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!

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| 5:7: "You were running well": this is about sanctification, not justification, about their continuing in faith, not their coming to it. |
| 5:8: "the one who calls you": God calls them (not Paul or the judaisers) |
| 5:11: "the offence of the cross has been removed": Paul says the offense of the cross has something to do with mercy, with a grace-oriented gospel that is not human-pleasing |
| 5:12: "would castrate themselves" ironic because they are the ones who mutilate the flesh in their misguided attempt to make jews out of Gentiles in order to bring them to Jesus. |
| 5:13: New section: He has been addressing two problems with the freedom we have in Christ: 1) WOL: legalism, 2) Works of the Flesh (WOF): license. Now he turns to the second issue. |
| The question here is how to live the fine line between legalism and license? IE, without grace, people get their just desserts, so they have an incentive to stay on the straight and narrow--they work for their salvation. With grace, perhaps there is now no motive to live a worthy life, because we could just claim forgiveness through Jesus. So Paul talks about the role of love and that a life of love is the best way to live--it carries its own reward, intrinsic, not extrinsic, the way legalism is. |
| 5:14: Paul picks up the theme highlighted by Jesus, that the law is all about love, of God and others, not about rules and being superior to others. |
| 5:15: "Live by the sword, die by the sword." You'll be consumed by consuming one another. This behavior will bite you in the end, so to speak. He speaks to warn them of the cost of license. |
| 5:16-17: the war between the Spirit and the flesh: they are opposed to each other, but... |
| 5:18: because the HS is in you, you are no longer boxed in by the law. You have been freed from the jailership of the law, but you still live subject to (ie, under the Lordship of)Christ and his law (6:2).  |
| 5:19-21: works of the flesh are obvious, and include a lot of sex, drugs, and anger and dissension. Those who "do such things" = present continuative = "those who are characterized by doing such things".  |

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. 14For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ 15If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. 19Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

5:19-21: First generation legalists don't often look like this, but second generation kids, children of the uptight legalists, often do. This is the multi-generational tragedy of legalism--it ruins lives first by legalism, then by license. It doesn't point the way to love for either generation.

22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 24And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

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| 5:22, "the fruit of the Spirit" contrasted to "the works of the flesh". Fruit is organic, it is produced by a healthy tree and blesses all around. (The tree itself doesn't eat the fruit.) |
| 5:23: "There is no law against such things" unlike the former things, which are against God's law, to which we are still subject (under the authority of).  |
| 5:25-26: being led by the Spirit involves not being conceited, not comparing ourselves to others, to boasting in our distinctives (like the Pharisee in Luke 8:9-14, or the older brother in Luke 15:25ff). |
| 5:25: "If we live by the Spirit led us be guided by the Spirit": if we have spiritually awakened by the work of God's Spirit, let us turn over the control of our lives to the inner guidance of God's Spirit. Let us become more aware of our need for and dependence on God for guidance, wisdom. |
| 6:1: The goal is not a put-down of others but to build them up and to restore them to spiritual health and reacceptance in the community. |
| 6:2-5: Don't look around, leading to judgment, competition, envy, pride. Don't just relax, leading to license. Rather, look to yourself, plainly, without self-deception, and carry your own load (v5). Yet bear one another's burdens (v2). |
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6:1 My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. 2Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. 3For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor’s work, will become a cause for pride. 5For all must carry their own loads.

6 Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. 8If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. 10So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

11 See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! 12It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. 14May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! 16As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.

18 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.