

OPENING ILLUSTRATION

- Read Robert Frost's poem called "The Road Not Taken." Lead a discussion about what the poem is about. Explain how the author found himself at a fork in the road—he had to choose which path he would take. There was no middle ground. In Galatians 3:10-14, the apostle Paul told the Galatian Christians in so many words that they were at a fork in the road — either they could choose the road of the works of the law, which Paul described as a "curse," or they could choose the path of blessing, which is faith in Jesus Christ. There were no other choices and they couldn't choose them both, or go back and forth between the two. The "narrow road" of faith is narrow in the best sense of the word—it leads you down the right path and keeps you off every wrong path.

CONTEXT

- Having talked about how Abraham believed God and was credited with righteousness for having done so, Paul refers to three additional Old Testament texts to further his case for justification by faith, rather than by works of the law. Paul expertly builds his case, understanding what his audience understood, and then persuasively building upon it. Paul also mentions that the promised Spirit is received through faith. While he has mainly been focusing on arguing for justification by faith, the indwelling Spirit is also crucial to understanding the new covenant. He will talk a lot more about the Spirit in chapter 5.

EXPOSITORY OUTLINE

The following are suggested sermon points for each verse or section of verses for a large group setting.

- Galatians 3:10. *It's impossible to be right with God through obedience.* Paul says that if you rely on the works of the law, you are under a curse. No one can fulfill the law.
- Galatians 3:11-13. *The righteous will live by faith.* The righteous are righteous in God's eyes precisely because they're living by faith in Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. They are not relying on their own religious performance.
- Galatians 3:14. *God had always intended to save the world—both Jews and Gentiles—through the gospel.* He promised Abraham, the man of faith, that he would bless all the nations through him. This promise included the sending of the Spirit of God to indwell God's people, enabling them to live by faith and empowering them for ministry.

GROUP DISCUSSION

The following are suggested discussion questions on each verse or section of verses for leading a small group session. They are also useful in sermon deliveries that include discussion.

ASK A STUDENT TO READ GALATIANS 3:10.

- **Are you ever tempted to base your relationship with God on what you do? What is wrong with that approach?**
- **Why do you think Paul uses such strong language in talking about people who are relying on doing the right things to be right with God? He says they're "cursed." Does it seem fair that a person who's trying to do the right things should still be cursed?**

ASK A STUDENT TO READ GALATIANS 3:11-13.

- **What do you think it means to live by faith? What do you need to believe? How does it affect your actions?**
- **Paul says the law is not based on faith. What does he mean by that?**
- **How has Jesus redeemed us from the curse (or punishment) of the law? What is the punishment for breaking the law of God?**



ASK A STUDENT TO READ GALATIANS 3:14.

- › What is the blessing of Abraham that Paul refers to?
- › Why do you think Paul mentions the Holy Spirit in this section? Do you think about the Holy Spirit much? If so, how do you tend to think of Him?

SESSION CONNECTION

- › In Session 6, students took one last look at the Book of Joshua. Throughout the book, we've seen God give Joshua and the Israelites victory after victory over their enemies, and now Joshua gives one final charge to the people of Israel to avoid idolatry and dedicate themselves to the one true God (Josh. 24:14-25). There is no middle ground for the Israelites or for us. The challenge is to be "all in" for God. The truth is, anything worth doing requires commitment. We need to stay the course. We see this in Galatians, too. The challenge here is to remain absolutely committed to living by faith in the power of the Spirit rather than by self-effort. This is harder than it sounds because it goes against our pride and our natural instinct to perform for reward and acceptance.

OBJECT LESSON/APPLICATION

- › Ask students to make a list of the top five distractions that prevent them from getting their homework done. This world is full of distractions—things that prevent us from doing other, more important things. We have to fight to maintain focus. That doesn't mean that we can't have any fun, it just means that we need to think about what we're doing and why we're doing it. There's a time and a place for everything God wants us to do. Wisdom consists in doing what is best, when it is best to do it.

God requires undivided loyalty—you cannot serve both God and your idols.

- › <http://www.paultripp.com/wednesdays-word/posts/idol-worshippers> – Paul Tripp challenges us to recognize the idols in our hearts and cry out to God for grace necessary to overcome them
- › <https://bible.org/seriespage/23-christ-centered-life> – J. Hampton Keathley III discusses the Christ-centered life and what it means to be "in Christ."

* These websites are not affiliated with LifeWay. Consult with your church's leadership before including these in your session to be sure that your church's values allow their materials to be referenced in your session time.