

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

Jesus + _____ = Salvation?

April 2012

Lesson #1 - Galatians - PAUL WHO?

INTRODUCTION

Who trusts you as a spiritual authority in their life? Why?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Acts 14:1-7

Note: Paul was probably writing this book around 48 A.D., after his first missionary journey described in Acts 13 & 14, when he visited the region of Galatia. He was concerned about the potential doctrinal changes caused by Judaizers, the Jewish converts. Even though Christianity began almost exclusively among Jews, by this time, gentile urban centers had replaced Israel as the focal point of the Church. Blending the two cultures was difficult.

1. To whom did Paul first present the gospel when he entered a community? Why?
2. Why are the people divided?
3. What was Paul's reaction to the opposition?
4. How did Satan influence Paul's reception? God?
5. When you face difficulty, how do you decide if you should quit, change or "tough it out?"

Read Gal 1:1-5

Note: Although an apostle means "one who is sent," the term is often used to identify someone that has physically seen Jesus. "Paul did not preach a secondhand message that he learned from Peter or any of the apostles. Rather, God took every measure necessary to keep Paul's ministry separate from that of the Twelve, lest anyone think Paul's ministry was given to him by the apostles." ¹

6. How does Paul assert his authority to the Galatians? Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1
7. Why does Paul think that God sent him? Why is this important? 1 Cor 15:8
8. How did Paul's spiritual journey give him special sensitivity to religious control?
9. Even though this is a greeting, rather than starting as he normally would with praise, Paul immediately brings up two vital concerns. What are they? (vs. 1,4)

APPLICATION

- What difficulties are you facing that make you want to quit or tough it out?
- What potential contaminants of the Gospel are you more aware of now?

When men and women get their hands on religion, one of the first things they often do is turn it into an instrument for controlling others, either putting or keeping them "in their place." The history of such religious manipulation and coercion is long and tedious. It is little wonder that people who have only known religion on such terms experience release or escape from it as freedom. The problem is that the freedom turns out to be short-lived.

Paul of Tarsus was doing his diligent best to add yet another chapter to this dreary history when he was converted by Jesus to something radically and entirely different—a free life in God. Through Jesus, Paul learned that God was not an impersonal force to be used to make people behave in certain prescribed ways, but a personal Savior who set us free to live a free life. God did not coerce us from without, but sets us free from within.

The Message Commentary

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (516). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.