

Dear Bible Study Leader,

I thank our Lord and Savior for you because of your faith and faithfulness in studying and leading others to study God's Word. As I write this letter, I feel like the Apostle Paul when he knew he was nearing the end of his life and he wrote to his disciple in the faith, "As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return." (2 Timothy 4:6-8) And Paul challenged him and I challenge you, "My dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

In our day, society places much value on learning. As we study the Pauline Epistles, or the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote, we will see that Paul places equal emphasis not only on what you know, but what you do with what you know. Paul will unfold many deep theological mysteries and how to apply those spiritual truths to our lives. Paul is going to teach us about the life in Christ and living for Christ by faith through grace and what that looks like in our relationships at home with our family, at church with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and with the rest of the world. My prayer for you is that you will be able to say, like Paul, that you have run the race of your life to win and have finished well.

In the next 18 lessons Paul will challenge you, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth. Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Pray continually. Do not worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching." (2 Timothy 2:15, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Philippians 4:6, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:15, Galatians 6:9, 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Tim 4:13) I am so excited about all we will learn together.

This course is only a survey and my prayer is that these studies will encourage you to really go deep in God's Word, and that these studies will help God's Word go deep in you so that it impacts every aspect of your life. Remember when we study these Epistles of Paul to ask yourself and the group these three questions:

- What does it say? (Observation)
- What does it mean? (Interpretation)
- What does it mean to me and to those I am leading? Or, what are we going to do with what we learn? (Application)

I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow

in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called—His holy people who are His rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 1:16-20, 3:16-21)

Dick Woodward
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LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Mini Bible College has prepared this devotionally practical survey of the foundational books of the Bible. Your role as leader is to guide your group through the study sessions and exercises, helping them to understand the truth, to discover the eternal principles, and most importantly, to apply them to their lives. This is a survey study that will take about three months, and it is designed to be more than just a course. This study is part of a strategic plan to provide you with the tools to nurture and grow personally and to help your church grow both spiritually and numerically.

To help you, we have provided the following tools:

- This Leader's Guide
- Report forms
- Audio of the Pauline Epistles series (Audio Lessons NT 55 - 72)
- A study booklet on Pauline Epistles
- A set of workbooks for the students

Before Class

- Personally start inviting people to come to this spiritual banquet. "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find." So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests." (Matthew 22:9-10)
- Prepare yourself in prayer for those who will attend. It would be best if both the husband and wife can attend together but if only one can or will come, it is better for one to come than neither of them. If possible, pray for them by name. Only God can change the hearts of people, and prayer is the most powerful tool. "Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." (Luke 18:1) If there is interest from women, or men, whose spouses do not wish to attend, consider starting a group just for the women and another one just for the men.
- Ask for help. Do not try to do everything yourself. Invite one or two people to help with music, singing, greeting, and keeping records.
- Review the lesson and understand the lesson objective.
- Become familiar with the material; listen, read, and study each lesson and memorize the Bible passages before class time.
- Be sure all materials are ready for each class.
- Make sure the meeting area is adequate and comfortable for the class.

During Class

(Remember to try to keep the class time to one and one-half hours.)

- Greet everyone as they arrive. Do you remember how nice it is when you are welcomed? Extend God's welcome to all. Have someone to serve as the greeter and to introduce people to one another if they are not already acquainted.
- Open with a time of worship and prayer, asking God to help you and each one to understand and apply God's Word to your lives.
- Recite the memory verse.

- Listen to the audio lesson.
- Work through the workbook, inviting discussion with a focus on application. We trust that the questions will raise interesting discussion and understanding that will lead to application. If the group is large (more than 10), consider dividing it into smaller groups of three or four people to encourage discussion. Be sure to monitor the time and be careful that the conversation does not detract from the focus of the lesson and the study of God's Word.
- Thank all for coming and encourage attendance at the next class.
- Challenge the students to invite others to join the Bible study.
- Encourage the students to memorize the biblical passages of the lessons each week.

After Each Class

- Gather up all materials.
- Restore the meeting room to the proper order. Leave things more orderly than you found them.
- Fill out and file report forms.
- If you are meeting in someone's home, be sure to thank them for their hospitality.

Special Instructions for Teaching Auditory Learners – Non-Readers

It is important to remember that those who do not read and write learn and retain information differently than those of us who are literate. The auditory learners, even most of those who do know how to read, learn best from listening, discussing and telling what they have heard. Illiteracy was not an obstacle in Jesus' day. It is good to remember and even to tell those in your class that most of the disciples and the majority of the people who first shared and spread the Gospel could not read or write.

In many ways, auditory learners have a greater capacity to learn what they hear than we who must write something down in order to remember it. Take the time, therefore, to allow your students to hear the lessons, pausing the message and even going back to listen again to a portion if it was not understood, and then allow them to respond to questions. When auditory learners can "story back" — tell in their own words what they have heard and learned — it indicates that they have properly grasped the principle. Therefore, use the study questions to guide the discussion time as they will help in the learning process. Ask the questions out loud and encourage all to participate. This will lead them into a deeper understanding of God's principles and a stronger relationship with His Son, Jesus the Christ.

The Absolute Gospel

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: New Testament #55



Objective: To conclude thoughts from 2 Corinthians, introduce Paul's letter to the Galatians, and understand the major problem Paul is addressing in Galatians.



Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you...?

– 2 Corinthians 13:5

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

– Galatians 1:6-9

In 2 Corinthians, Paul answered the accusations that the church of Corinth made against him and his ministry. They could not attack the logic of Paul's counsel to them in 1 Corinthians, so they attacked Paul and his ministry. He answered them by writing about the ministry and the credentials of the minister.

Also in 2 Corinthians, Paul spoke of his ministry and the hardships he had endured as an example to the Corinthian church. The Philippians supported him financially so he could minister to people like the Corinthians without having to make tents to earn a living. He praised the Philippians' openness and honesty in giving and the quality of their giving. Then he exhorted the Corinthians to take part in a love offering he was collecting for the suffering saints in Jerusalem. He instructed them to have men from their church take this gift to Jerusalem and make sure the money was given to those who were suffering. Paul emphasized honesty and accountability in stewardship and finance.

At the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul strongly urged them to examine themselves to make sure they were Christians.

Paul's letter to the Galatians focused on a more serious problem. Paul had heard that some Jewish leaders were teaching the people a different gospel, an apostate gospel. They were teaching that people had to follow the Jewish laws in addition to following Christ. Paul opened his letter to the Galatians by stating firmly that no other gospel exists but the one he preached when he was with them: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Gospel, the true gospel, says that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, plus nothing.

The church at Galatia was listening to and following false teachers. Paul reminded them that he had been called by God to preach. Paul also wrote that the Gospel he received had come to him directly from Jesus Himself and not from any man. An important truth we learn in Galatians is that we need to know the absolute Gospel so that we do not follow false teachers.



1. **True** or False? At the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul told the church to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith.
2. True or **False**? Paul commended the Corinthians for their selfless giving to support him.
3. True or **False**? The problem confronting the church at Galatia was less serious than the problems of the church at Corinth.
4. **True** or False? Paul was chosen to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians to send some men to take the offering to Jerusalem? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. He wanted to make sure the money made it to the suffering saints.
 - b. Sending several men with the money would make them accountable to deliver it.**
 - c. He wanted his own integrity to be an example to the Corinthians.**
 - d. He did not want to be bothered with delivering it.
6. How was Paul's letter to the Galatians different from other letters? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. It was filled with warmth and affection (kind and gentle words).
 - b. It was filled with emotion (forceful words).**
 - c. It was filled with righteous indignation (warnings of false teachers).**
 - d. It was filled with jokes (funny stories).

7. Why was Paul astonished?
- The church had sent him a large sum of money for his ministry.
 - The church was allowing sexual immorality in its midst.
 - The church had been blessed with a tremendous outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit.
 - The church was turning away from the Gospel of Christ to a perverted gospel.**
8. What does the Gospel of Jesus Christ say about salvation? (Choose all that apply)
- It is not necessary.
 - It is by the grace of God.**
 - It is earned by many works.
 - It is available to all.**
9. The “perverted” Gospel that others preached to the Galatians is considered apostasy. What does the word *apostasy* mean?
- “To stand away from”**
 - “To stand with”
 - “To join with”
 - “To believe wholeheartedly”
10. Who did Paul receive the absolute Gospel from?
- His rabbi, Gamaliel
 - The other apostles
 - The Old Testament prophets
 - Jesus Christ Himself**
11. After Paul’s time in Damascus and Arabia, who did Paul meet with? (Choose all that apply)
- Matthew
 - James**
 - Timothy
 - Peter**
12. Why do you think that Paul was so upset with the Galatians? (Choose all that apply)
- The message of grace that he had preached was being added to.**
 - The Gospel was being confused.**
 - The Jewish leaders were teaching that Jesus’ death and resurrection were not enough to be saved.**
 - He was jealous that the Jewish leaders who were preaching the apostate gospel were becoming popular.



How do people try “perverting” the absolute Gospel today? What are some ways that you can be on guard against false teachers? What can you do to share the absolute Gospel with others?



Praise God for Jesus' sacrifice, which makes salvation by grace through faith possible. Praise God that His gift of salvation is free and that you can do nothing to earn it or to lose it. Thank God that the Bible teaches us about Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation. Ask God to help you recognize false teachers so you will not be confused and led away from the Truth. Ask God to help you teach others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Going Deeper

1. Why was Paul so angry and emotional when he wrote this letter to the Galatians? _____

2. What is Paul claiming about the gospel he preached when he was with the Galatians?
(Consider 1:1, 11) _____

3. Why is Paul so emphatic in verses eight and nine of chapter 1? _____

4. Precisely what is Paul claiming about his experience in Arabia? _____

5. How do you think Paul persuaded the apostles in Jerusalem that he was as much an apostle as they were? _____

6. Why do you think God sent the former Rabbi and scholar, Paul, to the barbarian Gentiles, and He sent the illiterate fisherman, Peter, to the Jewish Rabbis? _____

7. How and why does Paul, who wrote half the New Testament, force us to come to a verdict about these claims he is making in verse 20 of the first chapter of this letter? _____
