

STUDY GUIDE

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[start with prayer]

Missions Prayer Focus this week:
Pearl Island Team #1 (June 12-22)

[set up]

Share about a time in your life when you were gullible. What did it cost you?

[digging deeper]

Read Galatians 1:1-10. Based on what you read (and what you remember from the message on Sunday), how were the Galatians being gullible?

What was the specific issue that was distorting the gospel for the Christians in the Galatian churches? (hint if you are stuck... “Judaizers”)

What is so strong about Verse 8?

Write down (in your own words) a summary of the gospel. Share your answers in your LifeGroup after. Then compare with the definition below. What are some non-negotiables to understanding the true gospel of Christ?

The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia summarizes the gospel message this way: *The central truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for men through the gift of His son to the world. He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, overcame death, and now offers a share in His triumph to all who will accept it. The gospel is good news because it is a gift of God, not something that must be earned by penance or by self-improvement.*

Paul is confronting the Galatians for quickly deserting the true gospel of Christ for a “different” gospel, which was really no gospel. On Sunday, 13 examples of false gospels were given, adapted from lists by Trevin Wax (author of *Counterfeit Gospels*) and a message on the gospel from Pastor Shawn Thorton. Re-read them on the next page. Take a minute and **circle** the ones you have personally encountered (taught or believed by someone you know), **put a square around** the one you could be most vulnerable to being led astray by, and **put an X through** the one you are least likely to be led astray by. Then share your answers in your LifeGroup.

1. **Therapeutic Gospel:** Sin robs us of our sense of fullness. Christ's death proves our worth as humans and gives us power to reach our potential. The church is here to help us feel happy and feel good about ourselves.
2. **Moralist Gospel:** Our big problem is sins (plural) and not sin (nature). The purpose for Christ's death is to give us a second chance and make us better people. Redemption comes through God's helping us have spiritual willpower to be more moral. The church's job is then to help promote and legislate morality for everyone else, whether or not they ever come to know Jesus as Savior.
3. **Mystic Gospel:** Salvation comes through an emotional experience with God. The church exists to provide me with powerful experiences to help me feel close to God and pursue a mystical union with Him.
4. **Works Gospel** – We have to pursue more good deeds than bad deeds in this life to be made right with God. Jesus showed us the way. Now, it's up to us to do enough good works to be let into heaven.
5. **Legalistic Gospel** – Sin is failing to keep Christian rules and behavior. Once we become a follower of Christ we will live up to certain spiritual standards and the church helps us know what those standards are by giving us the religious rituals to keep, and divine expectations to fulfill.
6. **Universal Gospel** – We don't have any personal responsibility in regards to our sin nor in responding to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone will be saved because of Jesus, so just do the best you can in life to be kind to others and leave this planet a better place than when you arrived. God will reward all and judge no one – except maybe the extremely evil people from human history.
7. **Spiritually neutral Gospel** – As long as we have a sincere faith in something and follow a spiritual path of some kind, God will accept us. All spiritual paths lead to God and heaven. It's just better if we make Jesus a part of the path since He is such a good example and heroic martyr.
8. **Fire Insurance Gospel** – As long as we prayed a "sinner's prayer" at some point in our life then we are saved. No life transformation needs to be evidenced, we are covered by this prayer and can go on living life as we choose free from the worry of hell.
9. **Prosperity Gospel** – Jesus wants us to live a life of health and wealth. If we really have faith in Jesus, then we will be untouched by the brokenness of this world and live out God's desire for us to be successful, rich, powerful, and daily a recipient of His special favor only reserved for those who truly believe in Jesus.
10. **Poverty Gospel** – As followers of Christ, we can never possess or enjoy anything in this world. A true faith relationship with Jesus results in choosing to be materially poor and spiritually rich. You cannot be a Christian and enjoy material possessions or earthly experiences.
11. **Social Activist Gospel** – Jesus died and rose so that we can be social and political activists in our culture. Individuals hearing about the person and work of Jesus Christ is not as important as our efforts to bring social justice and peace to all areas of society.
12. **Self-Help Gospel** – We are our own worst problem and our negativity about ourselves hinders us from fully achieving all that we are and can be. Jesus wants us to see how great we really are and then pursue letting that greatness out. The solution to our problems is already within us and He is there to cheer us on.
13. **Labelism Gospel** – Dedication to our own subcultural expression of Christianity, clearly convincing ourselves that those who understand Christ the most, think the way we do. You can only trust those who gravitate toward your particular subculture (a conservative, liberal, political, denominational, racial, or gender association). Only those who align with your label and language understand the Bible and Jesus accurately.

How do the following verses help strengthen our understanding of and living for the gospel (being gospel wise)?

Galatians 2:16a (first memory verse of series) _____

1 Corinthians 11:1-4; 13-15 _____

Matthew 24:24 _____

2 Timothy 4:4 _____

Romans 10:9-13 _____

Ephesians 2:8-9 _____

[living it out]

(These may be more effective to share in smaller groups within your LifeGroup)

Know the gospel. What helps you know the gospel better today? Read and reflect on the “23 Verses to Help You Be Gospel Wise” this week to help you know more about the true gospel of Christ. www.cvcblog.org

Defend the gospel. What was one argument from today’s lesson that you can use in future conversations with people believing a false gospel?

Share the gospel. Who is one person this week that you can share something you learned today? A neighbor, co-worker, family member, community contact?

[end with prayer]

Close your time in prayer praying for each other that you will be gospel wise as a follower of Christ, and also pray for those who you need to share Christ with.