

“Dear Paul, Thank You for Your Letter”

A study of 5 of the Letters written By Paul

Lesson 1	Galatians
Lesson 2	Ephesians
Lesson 3	Philippians
Lesson 4	Colossians
Lesson 5	I Thessalonians

On Your Own :

II Thessalonians

I & II Corinthians

I & II Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Romans

Hebrews - (author not sure)

These study guides have been designed to assist you in the “Three R’s of your own Bible study – reading, receiving, and responding. You are welcome to print out the whole series. If you wish to print out only one lesson at a time, choose that option from your printer.

Please feel free to use these materials for your own personal use or with a small group, remembering to give credit where credit is due.

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Lesson 1

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GALATIANS

" . . . know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

There were false teachers then and there are false teachers now. Paul was concerned that all believers would understand clearly that salvation comes through faith alone. Jesus Christ's death was and is sufficient to satisfy all of God's demands against sin. In this letter Paul clarifies the function of the law, and the balance between freedom and responsibility. He also explains how the Holy Spirit enables to those who have put their faith in Christ to "live by the Spirit" from day to day.

READ Galatians from beginning to end. Take a look at the big picture rather than its parts.
What impressed you as you read this letter?

CONSIDER - II Timothy 3:16 tells us that all Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. What can you learn from this letter? As you re-read it, spend your study time pondering the sections that the Holy Spirit draws to your attention. Be sure to write down some of your thoughts, insights, questions, and concerns.

Truths for me to Believe (doctrine, teaching)

Errors for me to Avoid (rebuke, reproof)

Reasons for me to Repent (correction)

Instructions for me to Follow (training in righteousness)

CHALLENGE - Write a letter to Paul expressing your response to his letter to you.
What did you appreciate about his letter? What are you thinking and feeling?

COMMITMENT - If God asked you to take one concept and one command in Galatians and integrate them into your way of thinking or living, what would they be? Talk to Him about your willingness and your heart's desires. He will show you specific ways to do this because of Christ who lives in you!

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Lesson 2

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Ephesians

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing
IN CHRIST.**

Ephesians 1:3

Paul had spent more than two years in Ephesus and now he is writing to this church and others in the region while he is imprisoned in Rome. In this letter Paul clearly presents not only our position in Jesus Christ as chosen and loved, forgiven and saved, but he explains God's purposes for those who are "in Christ." Reading this manual for living as God's "dearly loved children" would be a great idea for anyone who wants to follow Jesus.

READ Ephesians from beginning to end. Take a look at the big picture rather than its parts. What impressed you as you read this letter? Is it similar to Galatians or quite different?

CONSIDER - What do you think that God would like you to focus on as you study this letter? Simply start re-reading the letter and note the paragraphs that catch your interest or curiosity. Spend your study time pondering the sections that the Holy Spirit draws to your attention. Be sure to write down some of your thoughts, insights, questions, and concerns.

Truths for me to Believe (doctrine, teaching)

Errors for me to Avoid (rebuke, reproof)

Reasons for me to Repent (correction)

Instructions for me to Follow (training in righteousness)

CHALLENGE - Write a letter to Paul expressing your response to his letter to you. What did you appreciate about his letter? What are you thinking and feeling?

COMMITMENT - If God asked you to take one concept and one command in Galatians and integrate them into your way of thinking and/or living, what would they be? Talk to Him about your willingness and your heart's desires. He will show you specific ways to do this "in Christ"!

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Philippians

". . . Being confident of this, that He Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:6

Although Paul was facing an uncertain future, he was able to write to the Philippians a great letter of encouragement. His words, his life experiences and his grateful heart must have been so helpful to them. Paul wanted them to know the joy that he knew and to understand that to live, to really live, is all about "Christ." If Paul were writing to "all the saints in Christ Jesus" in your home town, he would be emphasizing some of these very same truths. Which ones do you think would be of greatest importance to write today?

READ PHILIPPIANS from beginning to end. Take a look at the big picture rather than its parts. What impressed you as you read this letter?

CONSIDER - II Timothy 3:16 tells us that ALL Scripture is "God-breathed" and useful for us so that we may be equipped for every good work. What would help you be more effectively "equipped"?

Truths for me to Believe

Errors for me to Avoid -

Reasons for me to Repent -

Instructions for me to Follow -

CHALLENGE - Write a letter of encouragement to Paul in response to his letter to you. What was helpful to you from his words, his life, or his concern for you?

COMMITMENT - If God asked you to take one concept and one command in Philippians and integrate them into your way of thinking or living, what would they be? Talk to Him about your willingness and your heart's desires. He will show you specific ways that He will continue His good work in you!

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Lesson 4

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Colossians

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

Colossians 2:8

The believers in Colossae were being influenced by false teachers who wanted to convince them that there was more information that they needed to gain salvation. The attacks, which were coming from more than one direction, were subtle and alluring. "If you just believe this"; "if you just behave this way"; "if you were just more inclusive" - and so Paul writes to them to assure them of their complete salvation which is in Christ alone. And that all the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him." The need to be watchful and to stand firm is no less crucial today, is it? What are some of the subtle and alluring ways of thinking that infect believers today?

READ COLOSSIANS from beginning to end. Take a look at the big picture rather than its parts. What impressed you as you read this letter? Did it remind you of any of the other letters?

CONSIDER - When you think about knowing what you believe so that you can be confident, "doctrine" s what you need, isn't it? When you think of loving God, knowing what pleases Him is what you need, isn't it? As you re-read this letter, ask God to direct you to doctrine and life-changing instructions that you need.

Truths for me to Believe

Errors for me to Avoid

Reasons for me to Repent

Instructions for me to Follow

CHALLENGE - Write a letter to Paul telling him what you have come to understand in new ways about your faith and the supremacy of Christ and then tell him about some behavior or attitude that you want to begin to change purposefully.

COMMITMENT - It is only in the mystery of "Christ in you" Col. 1: 27 and 2: 6- that you will be able to translate your desires into reality. Trying harder on your own strength will only bring failure and discouragement, so why not talk this over with the Lord and let His resurrection power enable you to follow through on the desires of your heart?

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Lesson 5

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First Thessalonians

**"May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy
in the presence of our God and Father
when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones."**

I Thessalonians 3: 13

There was serious opposition when Paul took the message of Jesus to Thessalonica - Acts 17. He was concerned about the young believers there and so he sent Timothy to visit, to teach them and to encourage them. Upon receiving Timothy's report, Paul wrote two letters to the church. Paul explains a variety of doctrinal subjects in this letter and challenges them to lead a holy life while waiting for Jesus' return. He also repeatedly expresses his love for them and gratefulness for their continuing faith and love. There are many specific instructions included in this letter. Which ones do we most need to hear today?

READ I THESSALONIANS from beginning to end. Take a look at the big picture rather than its parts. What impressed you as you read this letter? What are some of the main topics?

CONSIDER - As you re-read this letter, pausing to reflect on the paragraphs that catch your attention, jot down under the subjects listed some of the ideas that capture your interest. What does God have in mind for you this week?

Truths for me to Believe (doctrine, teaching)

Errors for me to Avoid (rebuke, reproof)

Reasons for me to Repent (correction)

Instructions for me to Follow (training in righteousness)

CHALLENGE - Write a letter to Paul expressing your appreciation for the insights you got from his letter to you. Tell him what you are going to do about some of the instructions and information he has given to you. How will you use this information to encourage a friend?
I Thess. 4: 18?

COMMITMENT - It is time to look at I Thessalonians 5: 23 and 24 - As you talk these things over with the Lord, remember that He is the faithful one, He is the enabler, HE WILL DO IT FOR YOU!