

Galatians 3:1–5 — Leader / Learner Guide

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Big Idea and Context

Big idea: Grace brought the Galatians into Christ and grace keeps them in Christ. Paul's five questions show how foolish it is to turn from grace to law at any stage of the Christian life.

Chapter 3 opens the doctrinal section (ch. 3–4). Paul moves from his own story to the Galatians' own experience.

- **2:16–21:** justified by faith, and living by faith.
- **3:1–5:** the Galatians' own experience proves it.
- **3:6–14:** Abraham and the Scriptures prove it.

Spirit, Not Flesh — Three Anchor Verses

Verse	What it says	Teaching point
3:2	Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?	One question settles it. Salvation and receiving the Spirit happen at the same moment (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13).
3:3	Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?	Our standing is perfected forever by one sacrifice (Heb 10:14). Practice should rise to meet position, not replace it.
3:5	Does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?	The miracles at Lystra came by grace, not commandments (Acts 14:8–10).

Law and grace: the law says "Do," grace says "Done"; the law says "Try," grace says "Trust"; the law says "Behave," grace says "Believe."

Cheese and crackers: like the boy who didn't know his passage included meals, many believers live on the law while the full table of grace is already paid for.

Teaching Flow

1. **The Precedence of Christianity (1).** "O foolish Galatians" — who put a spell on you? Christ had been placarded before them in preaching (Acts 13:39), baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Grace came first.
2. **The Procedure of Christianity (2).** They received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, not by works of the law.
3. **The Perfection of Christianity (3).** Having begun in the Spirit, they cannot finish by the flesh — like telling the master pianist to step aside mid-piece.
4. **The Persecution of Christianity (4).** If they return to law, their suffering was in vain (Acts 14:21–22) — "if indeed it was in vain."
5. **The Promotion of Christianity (5).** God supplies the Spirit and works miracles by faith, not law: "Stand up straight on your feet!"

Clarify While Teaching

- **"Who" is singular:** Sellers suggests this may point to Satan behind the deception. That is a possibility, not a certainty.
- **"Suffered" (3:4):** the Greek word can also mean "experienced." Some translations read it that way, pointing to the Spirit's work they had experienced.
- **Thirty-three things at salvation:** this is Chafer's list. Your Vault 5 study "33 Truths at Salvation" walks through it.
- **Baptism:** Romans 6:3 is Spirit baptism. Water baptism pictures it, but does not produce it.

Discussion and Close

1. Where are you living on "cheese and crackers" when the full provision of grace is already yours?
2. What outward observances are you tempted to treat as the way to "finish" your spiritual life?
3. "Do this and live, the law demands ... the gospel bids me fly and gives me wings." Which voice have you been listening to this week?

Close: Point ahead to 3:6–14: Paul turns from their experience to Scripture — Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Full study: [Under a Spell — Galatians 3:1–5](#) · Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers, SellersBibleInstitute.com