



from

LAW

to

LOGOS

reading st. paul's epistle to the galatians

by JON R. JORDAN

the Group Study Guide

From Law to Logos is available wherever books are sold | ISBN: 9781498289702 | visit jonjordan.com for more information
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Thank you for studying Galatians with *From Law to Logos!*

If you are studying Galatians with your Sunday School class or Small Group, I hope that you find *From Law to Logos* a helpful guide along the way.

Below you will find a proposed plan for using *From Law to Logos* in your Small Group or Sunday School class. You will likely need to adapt the schedule and contents to meet your own needs, but I hope you find this guide helpful. Especially if you are in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, I would love to come visit your group to introduce the study, lead a chapter, or talk on any number of other topics that your group may find interesting.

A 10 Week Group Study of *From Law to Logos*

It takes roughly 10-20 minutes to read Galatians in a single setting, though your results may vary. This is important to note on the front-end of studying Galatians with *From Law to Logos* because a major premise of the book is asking each member of your group to re-read Galatians in its entirety after each session. The following pace, then, assumes that your group will read one chapter of *From Law to Logos* and all of Galatians between each session.

I have tried to keep my chapters as short as possible, but there will be some weeks that are longer than others. The study works best when everyone has read the same chapter of *From Law to Logos* and has committed to reading all of Galatians between each session. This will usually require anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour spent in study outside of your normal meeting time.

Please contact me if you have any questions!

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Group Study Outline

Session 1: Series Introduction – Preface

Session 2: How to Read this Book

Session 3: How to Read an Epistle

Session 4: Introduction to Galatians

Session 5: Galatians and the Old Testament

Session 6: Why You Can Trust Paul: Galatians 1:1-2:14

Session 7: Paul's Theological Argument Part 1: Galatians 2:15-3:29

Session 8: Paul's Theological Argument Part 2: Galatians 4

Session 9: The Implications of the One True Gospel: Galatians 5-6

Session 10: From Law to Logos

Session 1: Series Introduction – Preface

LESSON

- Introduce the book and schedule. Stress the importance of reading all of Galatians each week alongside each chapter of *From Law to Logos*.
- Read the Preface together aloud, if time allows.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions. I have provided a quote and page number from the book for your convenience, but always make sure to refer to the wider context of the quote in your discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“It turns out that most of us know how to read, can retain large amounts of information, and are able to research the mess out of things we truly enjoy. But when we sit down to read the Bible, something changes. we suddenly feel out of our element. sentences stop making sense, and we quickly lose confidence in our ability to understand the meaning of what we are reading.” pg. xi

Does this ring true in your life? Has it always been so?

“The Bible is also difficult to read because of the unfair expectations we often impose on it.” pg. xii

Are these expectations actually unfair? If so, what unfair expectations have you placed on the Bible?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 1 and Galatians

Session 2: How to Read this Book

LESSON

- Check in on the group's reading progress. For those who read: how did you make time to read? For those who did not read: what can you do this week to make time to read?
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions. I have provided a quote and page number from the book for your convenience, but always make sure to refer to the wider context of the quote in your discussion.
- Session 2 is a great time to read through Galatians aloud as a group. (You may find this a helpful practice each week, but it is especially appropriate for Session 2.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“Simply put: any collection of ancient texts is difficult for modern readers to translate and understand. The Bible is no exception to this rule.” pg. 2

What do you think makes the Bible so confusing? What parts of the Bible do you find most confusing?

“Galatians was written for people who sometimes find themselves swinging back and forth between trying to be good enough for God and trying not to be as bad as we know we are capable of being. Galatians was written for people who feel superior to others when their life is going as planned, and for people who are close to giving up on the faith because of how they are treated by fellow Christians who seem to hold others to impossibly high standards, while refusing to apply those same standards to their own life. Yes, Galatians was written to a specific group of regional churches in the middle of the first century, but Galatians was also written for people like you and me.” pg. 3

Do any of these descriptions resonate with you? How so?

“I had never really considered that I should read Galatians all at once, the way I would read any other letter.”

Have you ever read a book of the Bible all in one sitting?

How do you plan to annotate your copy of Galatians throughout the study? Are you using your own Bible?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 2 and Galatians

Session 3: How to Read an Epistle

LESSON

- Check in on the group's reading progress. For those who read: how did you make time to read? For those who did not read: what can you do this week to make time to read? (I find this check-in very helpful in the opening weeks of a group study.)
- It may be helpful to look at each other's annotations from the previous reading of Galatians. It is often encouraging to see different ways that people approach reading and marking Galatians.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions. I have provided a quote and page number from the book for your convenience, but always make sure to refer to the wider context of the quote in your discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“It is lazy and irresponsible to ignore genre when reading any piece of literature, especially literature that is labeled Scripture.” pg. 7

What is your initial reaction to this statement? After thinking it through, do you agree?

“It may be worth thinking more about these two ways of approaching reading: reading for entertainment and reading for learning.” pg. 8

Which type of reading do you tend to prefer: entertainment or learning? Do you ever find it difficult to switch between the two?

“The occasion of a letter helps us better understand the purpose of the letter. Understanding both the occasion and the purpose of an epistle makes us better readers and interpreters.” pg. 12

What can go wrong if we read and interpret a passage or verse from an epistle without taking the occasion and purpose into mind? Can you think of an example of this happening?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 3 and Galatians

Session 4: Introduction to Galatians

LESSON

- It may be helpful to look at each other's annotations from the previous reading of Galatians. It is often encouraging to see different ways that people approach reading and marking Galatians.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions. I have provided a quote and page number from the book for your convenience, but always make sure to refer to the wider context of the quote in your discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: Are you frustrated that we have not started studying the content of Galatians yet?

“By writing to the Galatians as an Apostle, Paul is writing with the authority given to Him by Jesus himself. He is to be trusted more than other teachers, as we will hear him argue in the early chapters of Galatians, by virtue of his status as an apostle.” pg. 16

Have you ever thought much about the importance of Paul being an Apostle? In your own words, why did it matter to the Galatians that Paul was an apostle?

“While the thrust of the letter is able to be understood by modern readers regardless of which theory is correct, I hope that you see the importance of exploring questions like this. In the case of Galatians, a fascinating question is answered two different ways depending on which theory is accepted. Did Paul's argument in Galatians flow out of the Jerusalem Council's decision, or did it come before the Jerusalem Council and possibly help shape that very decision?” pg. 20

Are you interested in scholarly questions like the Southern/Northern Galatia debate? Why or why not?

“And like a loving parent, he has even sharper words for those who are harming his children in the faith, not-so-subtly calling for them to be ‘cut off’ in the context of a conversation about circumcision.” pg. 21

What is your initial reaction to this seemingly vulgar language from Paul?

“A quick reading of the epistle will reveal Paul's passion for the Galatians and the gospel, but it will also reveal a well-organized and convincing argument.” pg. 23

Have you ever noticed how structured Paul's arguments seem to be? Did you notice this rough outline as you have been reading Galatians?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 4 and Galatians

Session 5: Galatians and the Old Testament

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Check in on the group's reading progress. Halfway through the study, this might be a good week to encourage your group to continue making time to read and study.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: How would you rate your current familiarity with the Old Testament narrative?

“When the word Law is used in scripture, it refers to more than just a list of instructions. The Hebrew word *Torah*, translated as Law throughout the Bible, refers to not just the 10 Commandments and the other laws that follow them, but also the entire narrative of the first five books of the old testament, commonly called the Pentateuch.” pg. 28

When you think of “The Old Testament Law” what comes to mind?

“And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.’”
Exodus 20:1-3, ESV

What does the introduction to the 10 Commandments — “I am the Lord your God ...” — teach us about the Law?

“Paul’s opponents in Galatians had been making the case that in order to be considered a part of god’s family, the Galatians must be circumcised. We must recognize that, although Paul will argue that they are wrong, they have a convincing biblical case here. Before Galatians was written, the odds were stacked against Paul. The plainest reading of Genesis 17 suggests that circumcision is to be practiced by all males who wanted to be considered part of god’s family.” pg. 30

In your reading of Galatians so far, how would you summarize Paul’s response to the Teachers’ claim that even Gentile Christians should be circumcised in order to show that they belong in God’s family?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 5 and Galatians

Session 6: Why You Can Trust Paul: *Galatians* *1:1-2:14*

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: What is the most memorable verse in this section? What stood out as you read Galatians this time?

“Even from the very beginning of Galatians the reader is introduced to one of Paul’s most recognizable characteristics: he writes very long sentences. Now is a great time to discover how to make sense of them.” pg. 34

Have you noticed this tendency in Paul’s writings? Do you have any tips for making sense of Paul’s long sentences?

“In 1:16–2:10 Paul sketches a roughly seventeen year history of his early interaction with the other apostles following his conversion.” pg. 36

What would it have been like to be Paul during this period?

“Paul greets the churches in Galatia as an authoritative apostle, rebukes them for turning away from the gospel he originally preached to them, and convinces them that he is to be trusted more than the teachers who have moved in to Galatia in his absence.” pg. 38

Based on your own reading of Galatians, what would you add to this summary?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 6 and Galatians

Session 7: Paul's Theological Argument Part 1:

Galatians 2:15-3:29

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: What is the most memorable verse in this section? What verse or section did you find most confusing?

“We find three greek words in Galatians 2:16 that have been the subject of much debate among scholars. This phrase, versions of which are actually found twice in this verse, appears in Greek as *pistis Christou Iesou*. There are two ways of translating this phrase, both of which make sense grammatically.” p.40

Did you enjoy this section on pistis Christou?

Does it bother you that grammar alone does not solve the translation issue?

Look at the three premises Paul lays out in 2:19-21 (found on pg. 43).

Can you restate these three points in your own words? Do you find his argument convincing so far?

Skim the arguments presented on pages 44-48.

Which of these arguments do you find most convincing? Least convincing?

“While some of *who we are* and *what we do* will change in our conversion to Christianity, we also retain much of who we were before.” pg. 50

How has this been true in your own life?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 7 and Galatians

Session 8: Paul's Theological Argument Part 2:

Galatians 4

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Have everyone in the group commit to memorizing at least one verse in Galatians this week.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: What verse or section of Galatians 4 did you appreciate the most this week?

“Now we see that he has elegantly, and not without reason, put together words from two languages signifying the same thing on behalf of the whole people, which has been called from Jews and Gentiles into the unity of faith.” Quote from St. Augustine on pg. 54:

These two words (Abba! Father!) are pregnant with meaning. As we discovered earlier, so is Paul's traditional 'Grace and Peace' greeting. What other short phrases from Scripture do you find to be packed full of meaning?

“By being united with Christ, the Christian has been freed from those things that used to rule their religious life.” pg. 53

Can you think of anything that used to rule your religious life before your conversion? How did you try to please God before the truth of the Gospel was made real in your life?

“This understanding of the story of Sarah and Hagar is by all accounts unheard of in Paul's day. How does Paul arrive at this radical conclusion?” pg. 56

Does Paul's allegorical reading of the story of Sarah and Hagar make you uncomfortable?

Skim Argument 5 and Argument 6.

Which of these arguments do you find most convincing?

“While some of *who we are* and *what we do* will change in our conversion to Christianity, we also retain much of who we were before.” pg. 50

How has this been true in your own life?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read Chapter 8 and Galatians

Session 9: The Implications of the One True Gospel: *Galatians 5-6*

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Review memory verses from the previous week. Consider repeating the process with a new verse.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question: What verse or section of Galatians 5 and 6 were you previously most familiar with?

“The final two chapters of Galatians give us a glimpse of Paul’s longer response to this question: the true gospel not only provides a way to make people right with God, it also enables them to live a life that distinguishes them from the world.” pg. 59

How ‘distinguished from the world’ is your life currently?

“But Paul insists in 5:13–15 that while we are free from the Law, we are not free to live however we want. we are set free from the Law serving as our master, but that does not mean that we no longer have any masters. our new master is Christ Jesus, and part of what it means to live under our new master—who came not to be served but to serve—is to become slaves to those around us.” pg. 61

Does this notion of freedom bother you?

Revisit the Life Together section on pages 64-65.

How would this look in your specific community?

READING FOR NEXT SESSION

Read the Epilogue and Galatians

Session 10: From Law to Logos

LESSON

- Review and share annotations from the week's Galatians reading.
- Walk through one or more of the following discussion questions.
- Read Galatians aloud one more time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is the single most helpful thing you have learned about God throughout this study?

How has this study changed the way you approach Scripture?

What's next for you, Scripture-wise? What book or passage will you focus on in the coming weeks and months?

Amen.



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