<http://www.swapmeetdave.com/Bible/Galatians/GalIntro.htm>

**Galatians Bible Study - Introduction**

**Date and Place of Writing**  
       One view holds that Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus or Macedonia between 53 and 57 A.D. to the churches in north-central Asia Minor that he was believed to have visited on his second missionary journey, though Acts contains no reference to such a visit. Other scholars believe it was written from Syrian Antioch between 48 and 49 to the churches in the southern area of Galatia (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) that Paul founded on his first missionary journey. A third view holds that it was written from Ephesus or Corinth between 51 and 53. For the purposes of these Bible studies, the when and where doesn't matter; it's the content that counts.  
  
**Occasion and Purpose**  
       The Galatian churches have come into being as a result of Paul's missionary labors. He was moved to write this letter when he learned that certain Jewish Christians called Judaizers were seeking to impose many of the ceremonial practices of the Old Testament, especially circumcision on the Gentile converts to Christianity. The Judaizers may have been motivated by a desire to avoid the criticism (Paul says "persecution," although that seems unlikely) of the Zealot Jews who objected to their fraternizing with Gentiles. The Judaizers also argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that out of a desire to make the message more appealing to Gentiles he had removed certain legal requirements.  
       Paul responded by clearly establishing his apostolic authority and substantiating the gospel he preached. He says by introducing additional requirements for justification (observing the law), his adversaries had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring Paul's converts into the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified, and it is by faith alone that he is to live out his new life in the freedom of the Spirit.  
  
**Theological Teaching**  
       Galatians stands as an eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential New Testament truth that man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ—by nothing less and nothing more—and that he is sanctified not by legalistic works but by the obedience that comes from faith in God's work for him, in him, and through him by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, it was the rediscovery of the basic message of Galatians that brought about the Reformation. Galatians is often referred to as "Luther's book," because Martin Luther relied so strongly on this letter in his writings and arguments against the prevailing Roman Catholic theology of his day.  
  
**Bible Studies on Galatians**  
       I have arbitrarily divided the book of Galatians into ten sections for discussion. I have found that in small groups (6 to 20 people) each unit takes about an hour to go through. You can give your group members the handout the week before or simply hand it out at the time of the study. The discussion questions are slightly different from traditional Bible studies in that they emphasize the application of the book to your life today. The Leader's Guides provide "answers" to most, but not all of the questions because many of the questions are designed to be a springboard to further discussion and there is no truly right or wrong answer. If you have questions or comments, please use the "Contact Me" button on the menu below. I guarantee that I will read your comments, however, as this web site gets more than 3,000 visitors per day, I can't possibly answer every one.  
  
**The PDF file** for each lesson includes a page with the discussion questions, a page with the scripture verses [NIV, 1984], and several pages of notes for the leader.