

The apostle Paul wrote Galatians. Galatians is a letter from Paul to the people of Galatia. A part of the world we now call Turkey. Most of the people who lived there were Gentiles. That means they were not Jewish.

Paul had been a very important Jewish leader. We are told much about him in the Bible.

- A) He obeyed all Jewish laws and traditions.
- B) His name was Saul before he met Christ.
- C) He OPPOSED the Christians.
- D) He put many Christians in prison and also had some of them put to death.
- E) He was well educated and a man in a very important position.

Paul met Jesus in a special way (Acts 9) and became a Christian. His life changed forever because of his new understanding of God's law. He learned that God's law was to show people their sin. This helps them understand that they need to trust Jesus in a PERSONAL relationship.

Paul taught the "good news" that Jesus can free us from punishment for our sins. The Galatian people were happy and excited to hear about the good news of Jesus.

However, some of the Jewish teachers brought a false message to the new Christians. They may have been jealous of Paul because they spoke against him saying he was not an apostle. They said the Christians had to obey Jewish law.

The Jewish laws controlled the people and did not teach them how to live in the true laws of God. They were not taught about the freedom that comes from following Jesus.

Some of the Jews believed Paul but others did not. So Paul and his friend Barnabas began to teach the Gentiles about Christ. The Gentiles were people who were not Jewish.

God sent them to make new churches in four cities in Galatia which was a province of Rome. (Acts 13-14) In these Scripture we read about how the unbelieving Jews, who were false teachers, caused OPPOSITION to Paul and Barnabas by DEVOUT women of PROMINENCE and the leading men of the city (13:50) driving them out of town.

Let's read Acts 13:49-50.

What is the good news and the bad news of Acts 13: 49-50 ?

Good News

Bad News

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Who did the Jews encourage to come against Paul and Barnabas first? _____
Paul tells us they are "God fearing women of high standing". God gave women a wonderful and TERRIBLE gift; the power of INFLUENCE.

In Genesis 3:1 who did the snake go to in causing the sin and ruin of Adam and Eve?
Why do you think the snake chose her and not Adam?

Name some of the ways women use their influence for good and bad.

Influence for good 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Influence for bad 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Let's think for a moment about the power of a woman's influence.

- 1) each mother teaches her children right from wrong.
- 2) many women in single parent families and those with husband's who travel are without fathers in the home much or all of the time.
- 3) we give birth to children and are the ones who are their caregivers creating strong emotional and physical bonds with them.
- 4) most teachers of young children through High School are women.
- 5) we are the ones who also teach them about faith and form their early attitudes towards others in the world.

Women, especially mothers have a great deal of influence in the world. The way you feel about yourself was probably influenced most by the hands and mouth of your own mother. What are some of the things that you remember your mother telling you that you hear yourself saying to your own children? Share some of these.

What did your mother's hands teach you?

That same influence at its worst can CRIPPLE, injure or kill. Give some examples of this fearful gift of influence.

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

We need to think before we act. Today think about honest answers to the question of your influence:

A) in your home B) in your place of work C) in your church D) with your friends

We need to ask God to teach each of us to use our gift of influence only as the Holy Spirit leads us. Just as we as women can use our influence for good or bad so can others as false teachers of God's Word.

When Paul wrote this letter to the Christians of Galatia he was very sad and angry. Paul had visited there only a short time before. After he left the "false teachers" came. They were very skilled at influencing people. Turning the truth around to what they wanted the new Christians to believe. The new Christians were not yet mature in their faith. The false teachers wanted them to believe they must follow Jewish law and religious traditions before God would forgive them of sin.

Because God knows we cannot live perfectly He sent His son Jesus to die so we might be free from our sins. ***God forgives everyone who trusts and believes in Jesus.*** The false teachers wanted the believers to obey laws using their own effort to receive forgiveness. This meant God's love must be earned. Their own good behavior would get them to heaven. The true "good news" had been replaced with lies by the false teachers.

But Paul obeyed God and always wanted to please Him, not people. No Christian can ever teach the true "good news" and please everyone. It is not easy to be a servant for Christ. Paul wrote this letter to ***teach them the truth again*** and about the true freedom from sin that trusting and believing Jesus gives. Galatians 1:6-10

Memory Verse: Galatians 1:10 "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of God."

IS THERE AN ATTITUDE TO ADJUST OR CHANGE? As a woman I need to be sure what I say and do are under the influence of the Holy Spirit and not the desires of flesh. Only in seeking God's Word and through prayer for wisdom can this happen.

WHAT DID GOD SHOW US TODAY?

- 1) Everyone, including disciples, prophets, kings and common men and women fight the battle of the flesh. Doing what we want, when we want to.
- 2) The problem is sin. (Ro. 3:23) The answer is humbling our lives in Jesus. (2 Cor. 5-21)
- 3) We must watch out for false teachers and leaders who do not speak God's truth.
- 2 Peter 2:1-2. To know what is false we must fill our hearts and minds with God's Truth.
- 4) As women we can use our influence for good or bad. It is a personal choice to be filled with the Holy Spirit, humbling ourselves in prayer and seeking God's Truth.

How will you keep your influence under the power of the Holy Spirit?

1) _____

Prayer Request: _____

Word Study:

- 1) cripple: a person that is unable to use mind or body because of injury or other causes.
- 2) devout: earnest or sincere worship, faithful service. The women were devout in worship
- 3) influence: the power of someone to bring changes in actions, influence behavior, opinions and attitude of someone. Her mother's influence changed her attitude for good.
- 4) opposed, opposition: to act against or stand in the way of someone. They opposed Paul
- 5) personal: private; meant for a certain person. Her personal experience was helpful.
- 6) prominence: a person(s) very well known, of importance, with influence or great reputation. The women used their prominence for evil against the apostles.
- 7) terrible: awful, severe, extremely bad, horrible. Her mother's influence was terrible.