

LESSON 3

PRISONERS AND OUTLAWS

GALATIANS 3:1–23



1 Describe an event in your life that shook your sense of security. What did it take to feel safe again?



Read Galatians 3:1–23, the chart “Three Distortions of Christianity,” and the following notes:

☐ 3:2, 3 ☐ 3:5 ☐ 3:10 ☐ 3:11 ☐ 3:18, 19 ☐ 3:19, 20 ☐ 3:21, 22

2 How does the example of Abraham show the superiority of faith over observing the law (3:6–9, 15–18)?

3 What does the sentence “It is through faith that a righteous person has life” mean (3:11)? How would you answer someone who complained that this bases the Christian life too much on personal experience?

4 For Christians, what is the purpose of the law (3:21–23)?

5 How do each of the three distortions of Christianity (see the chart) diminish the gospel? How can each one lead believers astray?



Christ has set us free, but as we attempt to live by faith, we are still in danger of falling into certain traps. Wanting the security of being able to earn our salvation, we add human traditions, standards, and rules to our faith. We slip back into performing a certain way, serving or doing good deeds as if we needed to impress God or earn his approval. And wanting to feel good, we let ourselves be directed by our ever-changing emotions. The security trap makes us prisoners just as surely as if the law had held us in its grip. The emotional trap can result in our becoming “outlaws,” deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong. Either way, we rob ourselves of the true joy and security we share with all who have accepted God’s promise of salvation by faith alone.

6 What rules and regulations have Christians added to the gospel? What problems has this caused?



7 In what ways have Christians blended too much personal experience into the gospel? What problems has this caused?

8 How can Christians avoid falling into the “security trap”?

9 How can Christians avoid falling into the “emotional trap”?

10 Which of the three distortions mentioned in the chart has given you the most trouble in your faith? How can you avoid both legalistic and lawless Christianity?



11 What can you do to restore balance in your Christian life? What first steps can you take this week?

A What blessing did God promise to Abraham? How do we receive this by faith?

B Today, what place do Jews have in God's plan of salvation? How should we, as Christians, relate to them?

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