

# Study Guide

**For the Week of January 18, 2009**

*This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Message manuscripts are available at [www.spwired.com](http://www.spwired.com).*

**Monday—Read Acts 15:1-35** in the New Testament. This is an important part of Church history. Christian legalists were insisting that male Christians be circumcised and that male and female Christians follow all of the Jewish laws and rules to be a Christian. Paul argued that salvation comes only through accepting the gift of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. A decision had to be made in the early church and this is a record of that decision. How would your Christian life be different if the council had sided with Paul's opponents?

**Tuesday—Read Romans 3:21-25a.** Restate this in your own words. **Read Romans 5:1-11** and restate this in your own words. **Read Ephesians 2:8-9** in the New Testament. These passages are at the very heart of the Christian understanding of salvation. Our sin leaves us alienated from God and we need help to live a life of joy and peace. The law could not do this. Paul asserts that the law only served to increase our guilt and create people who were only outwardly religious. God sent Jesus to do for us what we could not do for ourselves—pay the ransom price on our heads. Have you accepted this gift? If not, a simple prayer inviting Christ into your life, accepting his death for you, and inviting him to lead you as you seek to follow him is all that is necessary to receive the gift of salvation.

**Wednesday—Read Philippians 3:1-11.** Why was Paul so upset by those who taught that Christians needed to be circumcised and follow the law? In verses 7-10 what was Paul saying about his own heart and the goal of the Christian life?

**Thursday—Read Philippians 3:12-16.** Paul was accused by some of offering a “cheap grace”—that is, offering salvation without requiring people to leave behind their sin and offer good works. Just the opposite was true. But Paul challenged people to live transformed lives, not out of attempts to win God's approval, but in response to God's love and grace already given. In this passage Paul describes the effort he puts into living for Christ. What would this look like for you?

**Friday—Read Philippians 3:17-4:1.** Here Paul describes those who only live to satisfy their physical desires. As you read this, can you think of people who fit this category? Look over Sunday's message outline. Legalistic Christianity robs us of joy by making our faith simply a series of rules. Libertine Christianity robs us of joy promising salvation but not inviting us to “press on” and pursue knowing Christ. Joyful Christianity hangs in the balance found in Philippians 3. Where are you in this balance?

## Prayer Concerns

### Serving in Iraq:

Cyle Haywood (non-military)  
Ryan Grindstaff

### Military:

Jesse Smith  
Nathan Lawellin  
Matthew Peak  
Stephen Leadbetter  
Richard Hurst  
James Lesimeister  
Jon Arnold  
Jason Lewis

### Health & Healing:

Jim Grindstaff

Carrol Skelton

Jr. Skelton  
Dolores Barrett  
Shawnda Purdy  
Rose Hymer

### Cancer Treatment:

Sonja Davidson  
Tracy Bowman  
Vicki Cooper

### Grief:

The family of **Jimmy Webb** at his death

### Other Concerns:

Michelle Oettinger

Jim & Freddie McGee

Hannah Cranor  
Alexis Thompson  
Brooklyn Cranor  
Britany & Luke Cranor  
Terry Hoagland Family  
Shalea & Kari Purdy  
Austin Lawrence  
Marion & Shirley Wheatly  
Audrey Efrid  
Luke & Andrea Fields  
Magic Moments Riding Therapy  
Ron Clevenger  
Patrick & Bobbie Hamilton & Family