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Study Questions for the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*

The Letters of St. Paul to the Galatians
and to the Ephesians

Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch

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THE LETTER OF SAINT PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:1–10.** What makes the opening of this letter different from those of most other Pauline letters? How is this difference corroborated by the contents of this letter?
2. **1:8.** In the Greek OT, what Hebrew term is the Greek *anathema* used to translate? What does the Hebrew word mean? How does the NT use the term? How does Paul use it here, and why?
3. **1:10.** What are the Judaizers accusing Paul of doing with the requirements of the original gospel? What does Paul accuse them of doing?
4. **1:18.** How soon did Paul travel to Jerusalem after he became a Christian? What does the Greek (not the English) wording indicate that he did during this time? Whom did Paul visit?

For application

1. **1:6–7.** How well do you know your Catholic faith? How committed to it are you? How willing would you be to defend your commitment to it if a non-Catholic evangelist were to try to “disprove” the Catholic understanding of the gospel?
2. **1:8–9.** Since even Catholic preachers, teachers, and theologians may differ in their view of what is authentic Church teaching, how is it possible to recognize whether they are preaching a “different gospel” or not? How often do you consult a trustworthy adult catechism to answer questions you may have about your faith?
3. **1:13–14.** If you were ever lukewarm about your faith, or even fell away from it for a while, how did you relate to friends or relatives who were still active? What brought you back to a serious practice of your faith?
4. **1:18.** Who has had the greatest influence on your understanding of the faith? What did that person (or those persons) do or say to make such an impact? How has that example influenced the way you encourage others?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:3.** What historical events in Jewish history provide a background for the expression “compelled to be circumcised”? How are the Judaizers acting in an analogous way?
2. **2:9.** What might be the reason Paul names James before Cephas (Peter) in this verse? What is James’ position?
3. **Essay: Works of the Law.** What do several modern Scripture scholars think Paul was referring to in using this expression? How is this new understanding actually an old one? What is the theological meaning of these “works”?
4. **2:20.** To what did Paul die when he was “crucified” with Jesus? In what sacramental context does this union with Christ take place?

For application

1. **2:2.** If you teach others the faith, who oversees what you do? What is the link

between your role as a catechist or teacher and those who represent the Magisterium?

2. **2:11–14.** When someone in authority over you acts in a way that appears inconsistent, insincere, or even morally dangerous, what do you do about it? When someone confronts you with such an accusation regarding your own conduct, how do you respond?
3. **2:15–21.** If one is not justified by works of the law, what is the point of the Church's Code of Canon Law and other religious precepts?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:15–18.** How does Israel's failure to keep the Mosaic covenant affect God's self-imposed obligation? What is the reason for this?
2. **3:19.** Why was the Torah inserted into history between the Abrahamic covenant and the New Covenant? Explain both reasons given in the note.
3. **3:20.** What does the fact that Moses is a mediator between God and the chosen people imply? How is the Abrahamic covenant different from the Mosaic covenant in this regard?
4. **Word Study: Custodian (3:24–25).** What was the role of a tutor in Hellenistic society? How does Paul apply this role to that of the Mosaic Law? What does the coming of Christ do to the function of the Law?

For application

1. **3:2–5.** How would you apply these verses to developments in your own life? Is it possible to have a life-changing experience of God through faith, only to end up as a good "keeper of the rules"?
2. **3:10.** Most rule books come with lists of consequences for infractions of the rules. How do you feel when you deliberately break a rule you know to be reasonable? What does it mean to say that, by breaking one rule, you break them all? What is the "curse" in that?
3. **3:23–25.** How do these verses reflect the normal process of growing up? If you are a parent, how do you know when it is time to relax certain forms of discipline? How does one grow from too narrow a focus on keeping rules and into a life of faith?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **Word Study: Adoption (4:5).** In what stages does adoption as a *process* take place, according to Paul? From what does divine adoption *result*? What is the main difference between Christ and the Christian?
2. **4:6.** Why does Paul say the Father sent the Spirit? What is the joint mission of the Son and the Spirit? With what does the Spirit fill us? What does the word "Abba" suggest about the Spirit's mission?
3. **4:8.** What does Paul mean by saying that the Galatians "did not know God"? How did the gospel change that situation?
4. **4:24–31.** How do Hagar and Sarah symbolize the Old and the New Covenants,

respectively? What contrast is Paul setting up between the sons of the earthly Jerusalem and those of the heavenly Jerusalem?

For application

1. **4:1–7.** Have you ever received an inheritance? What made you an heir? What did inheriting money or property say about your relationship to the one who left it to you? What does it mean for you to inherit what God owns?
2. **4:10.** What do you think Paul might say of the Christian calendar, which includes feasts, solemnities, and penitential seasons? What is the purpose of Christian liturgical seasons? How is that purpose different from what Paul says about the Old Covenant calendar?
3. **4:17–19.** Why do the Christian media make much of a celebrity who adopts the Christian faith? What effects can the resulting publicity have for the Church? What is the danger in that kind of publicity for the celebrity?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1.** Why does Paul regard the Mosaic Law and faith in Jesus Christ as mutually exclusive? What did the Council of Florence (1422) say about Jewish Christians observing Mosaic ceremonies as necessary for salvation? Why?
2. **5:13.** What is Christian freedom for? Why can the Christian who is free from sin in Baptism and from the Law through faith not simply go and do whatever he feels like? What would be the consequence of that kind of license?
3. **5:14.** What is the chief aim of the Torah, and who fulfilled it to perfection? What makes it possible for us to fulfill the Law's intention in our own lives?
4. **5:16–24.** What, according to Paul, is going on in the heart of every Christian? What is meant by "flesh", here? What are the consequences of following the flesh and (by contrast) of following the Spirit?

For application

1. **5:1–6.** Although modern Catholics are unlikely to be tempted to yield to the slavery of the Mosaic Law, scrupulous persons may look on disobeying any of the Church's disciplinary regulations as mortally sinful, whereas lax Catholics may blithely disregard all regulations with no qualms of conscience. What is your position? What really is necessary for salvation? What are the ramifications of that position for how you live your life as a faithful Catholic?
2. **5:16–22.** Think about the "works of the flesh" that Paul lists that have been problem areas in your own life or for others you have known. What other "works of the flesh" are there that Paul did not include in his list? How do people tend to "gratify the desires" of fallen nature in these areas? What does Paul say is the consequence for those who indulge themselves in these ways?
3. **5:22–23.** Read the note for v. 22. How have you seen the development of this "fruit" in your own life? If you do not think you are growing in holiness, what do you think is the reason? Would others agree?
4. **5:24.** What does this passage mean for you? How do you "crucify the flesh"?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:2.** What is “the law of Christ”? What does Christian charity prohibit, and to what does it encourage us?
2. **6:7–9.** To what does the principle of sowing and reaping apply? What do those who sow in the Spirit reap? What do those who sow in the flesh reap? When does the reaping take place?
3. **6:14.** In Christ, what happens to our sins? For Paul, what is the real sign of our salvation?
4. **6:17.** As a slave of Christ, what brand does Paul bear on himself?

For application

1. **6:1.** What do you typically do when you notice a fellow Christian engaged in a pattern of sinful behavior? According to this verse, what should you do? What does it mean for you to be “spiritual”? (Hint: Look at 5:22–23.)
2. **6:6.** How do you “share all good things” with those who instruct or pastor you? Is Paul encouraging merely financial sharing or something more? When was the last time you invited a priest or a missionary to your home for dinner? What kind of fellowship do you think the clergy in most parishes have with their parishioners?
3. **6:10.** To whom does Paul primarily urge you to do good? Why them?
4. **6:14.** How important to you is your relationship to the Cross of Christ? How is this manifested in the way you live? Has the Cross of Christ truly “crucified” the world to you and you to the world? In what ways does the world still exercise an influence on your daily life? (What is your understanding of the term world here? What does it mean for it to be “crucified”?)

THE LETTER OF SAINT PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:3–14.** How does Paul open this letter? What is his principle of organization? What is significant about the blessings that Paul celebrates? What Jewish prayer form does Paul’s blessing follow?
2. **1:5.** For what has the Father predestined believers? Which two mysteries does the doctrine of predestination hold together? What can we *not* know about in regard to predestination, and what can we indeed know? What was God unconcerned about when he predestined us?
3. **Word Study: Unite (1:10).** What does the rarely used Greek word for “recapitulate” or “sum up under one head” refer to in normal usage? How does Paul use this Greek word in Rom 13:9? in this verse? How do the figures of Adam and Christ form the background of Paul’s idea?
4. **1:21.** To what does the expression “rule and authority and power” refer here? What point is Paul making? What are the nine “choirs” of angels recognized by Catholic theologians, and how are they arranged?

For application

1. **1:9.** How aware are you of the mystery behind the ways you think or make choices or even of who you are? For example, how well do you understand yourself? What does it mean for you that God's will—which Paul says is made known to us—even so remains a mystery?
2. **1:13.** Since you “have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”, how would you show that you actually believe it? How seriously do you take your Confirmation?
3. **1:17.** What does “knowledge” of God mean? How does Paul pray that you will acquire it?
4. **1:19.** Paul refers to the “immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe”. What is that power? How have you experienced it as *power* in your life? If you do not experience spiritual power, what do you need to do to receive it?

Chapter 2*For understanding*

1. **2:8.** To what does the word *grace* refer, here? What does each meaning designate? What is the meaning of salvation in this context?
2. **2:10.** What works are made possible by the grace of God within us? What did the Second Council of Orange teach in A.D. 529 about grace and good works?
3. **2:14.** What is the dividing wall that Paul is thinking of in this verse, and what does it symbolize? What has Christ done to it?
4. **2:20.** What symbolic architectural role do the apostles and prophets play in the Church? What is the role of a cornerstone, and how does it apply to Christ? How does Jewish tradition treat the idea of a cornerstone?

For application

1. **2:1–2.** What characteristic behavior might a person show who is physically alive but spiritually dead? Though Paul does not specify here what “trespasses and sins” would cause spiritual death, which of them pose the greatest threat to you? What are “sons of disobedience”, and what spirit do they follow?
2. **2:4–10.** What do these verses have to say to those who feel unworthy of God's consideration or that their sins are unforgivable?
3. **2:14–16.** Within your family—whether immediate or extended—how might Christ bring peace where there might have been feuds, long-term disagreements, or strained relationships? What should your own role be in bringing that peace to bear on such problems?
4. **2:19–22.** How would you characterize your relationship with the Catholic Church? Do you see yourself as a spiritual nobody or as a fellow citizen with all the saints? Alternatively, do you regard yourself as a stranger just passing through or as a member of the household? How might you change from being a nobody or a passerby to a family member?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **Word Study: Mystery (3:3).** When Paul uses the term *mystery*, what is he teaching about? What is the OT background of this notion? How does Daniel's use of "mystery" apply to what Paul is teaching?
2. **3:14.** What is the significance of "bowing the knee"? What does it express?
3. **3:15.** To what kind of grouping does the Greek word for *family* refer? How does that meaning apply to the family role of God?
4. **3:18.** To what do the dimensions listed here refer? What are some other possibilities? How did St. Gregory of Nyssa understand these terms?

For application

1. **3:4–6.** From whom did you "inherit" your faith? Why are you a Christian and not a member of some other religion? What appreciation do you have for the value of this inheritance?
2. **3:8.** Where would you rank yourself among the saints? By what standard would you rank yourself at all? In comparison with the grace Paul claims for himself here, what grace would you claim God has given you for the benefit of others?
3. **3:14–19.** How would you apply Paul's prayer to yourself? What kind of inner strength do you most need? What does it mean to be "rooted and grounded in love"? Of what kind of power do vv. 18 and 19 speak?
4. **3:20–21.** What are some of the limits you set yourself for the things you can "ask or think" in your relationship with the Father? What do you *avoid* asking for? How might praise of the Father expand those limits?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **Chart: The Four Marks of the Church (Eph 4).** In Ephesians, how does Paul touch upon the four essential characteristics of the Church? What does he understand them to mean? What specific verses refer to each of the four marks?
2. **4:11.** What are the ecclesial ministries listed by Paul in this verse established to promote, and how?
3. **4:26.** What is an example of anger that is an appropriate response? When insulted, why should we strive for reconciliation before the day's end? To which psalm is Paul alluding?
4. **4:30.** By warning us not to "grieve the Holy Spirit", of what is Paul primarily thinking? What do his words confirm about the Holy Spirit? What does Isaiah 63 (to which Paul here alludes) mention as having grieved the Spirit?

For application

1. **4:15.** According to Paul, how should you speak the truth to others? How does love "improve" the truth of what you say? What are some other ways you can speak the truth to others, and what are the likely consequences of speaking it in those ways?
2. **4:17–24.** According to Paul, what causes the mental futility, darkened understanding, and alienation of our pagan society? To what types of behavior does

it lead? What might be the effects of the change he proposes in the last three verses?

3. **4:25.** Compare this verse with v. 15. What is the motive he gives in each verse for telling the truth? As you read from here to the end of chapter 4, what kind of emphasis is Paul placing on truthful speech?
4. **4:29.** What are some of your negative speech habits? For example, how habitually do you speak in a way that criticizes or labels others, especially those to whom you are close? If you were typically to speak to them in an edifying way, how “natural” do you think such a speech habit would feel to you at first? in the long run?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:22–33.** How does Paul view Christian marriage in these verses? What three aspects of marriage does this analogy of faith highlight? What Old Covenant relationship does the marital union between Christ and the Church recall?
2. **5:22.** What does the Greek imply about the submission of the wife? What are the limits of that submission? What is the difference between the perspective of Paul and that of ancient society?
3. **Word Study: Head (5:23).** How is the term “head” used in the Bible? How do non-biblical writers of antiquity use the term? How does Paul use the term in reference to husbands? How does he use Genesis in his thinking, and what reference does it have to Christ?
4. **5:26.** To what sacrament is Paul alluding here? To what might the term *word* refer? How were Jewish brides prepared for presentation to their grooms? What OT imagery stands in the background?

For application

1. **5:8–13.** What kinds of behavior or activities do you keep secret from friends or relatives or try to explain away? Which do you let others see or are proud of? Which class of behavior best fits the standard of v. 9?
2. **5:18–20.** How might following Paul’s recommendations make a difference in the way you speak and even pray?
3. **5:21–24.** Look up paragraph 1605 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: What is the meaning that the *Catechism* attaches to the word “helpmate”? How should the wife relate to the husband? For that matter, how should anyone (male or female) relate to Christ?
4. **5:25.** How is the husband to love his wife? To what (implied) extent?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:2.** Which commandment is Paul quoting, and what is its OT source? What blessing accompanies it? How seriously did ancient Israel treat rebellion against parental authority?
2. **6:5.** What is the difference between the usual treatment of slaves and Paul’s view of slavery? What are the reciprocal duties of Christian slaves and Christian masters?

3. **6:10–17.** What is the “armor of God” we need in order to resist the daily attacks by malevolent spirits? In Paul’s inventory, what kinds of weapons do we have? How do the OT books of Wisdom and Isaiah, to which Paul alludes, picture Yahweh? What does this OT background suggest for our reading of the passage?
4. **6:18.** What does Paul’s command to “pray at all times” indicate for us? What can we expect in our spiritual warfare?

For application

1. **6:1–4.** If you are a parent, how do you discipline your children? What forms of praise and punishment do you use? Which of these seems to predominate?
2. **6:5–9.** If you are an employee, how would you apply vv. 5–8 to yourself? If you are an employer, a manager, or a supervisor, how might your management style be affected by applying v. 9 to your subordinates?
3. **6:12–13.** Do you believe in the reality of spiritual warfare? How have you experienced its reality in your own life? What is going on now that you might call spiritual warfare? If you do not believe that events—especially negative ones—reflect “warfare” of a spiritual nature, how would you explain what Paul is talking about?
4. **6:18.** In what ways do you engage in intercessory prayer? For whom do you pray? For whom might you be neglecting to pray, and what will you do about it?