

Galatians 1:1-9

Counterfeit Gospel

Scripture: Galatians 1:1-9

Memory Verse: Galatians 1:8 *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."*

Lesson Focus: This book starts out with a bang as we learn about the true gospel and the dangers of "counterfeit" gospels. We pray the kids will see how important it is to know and cling to the true gospel of grace!

Activities and Crafts: Intro to Galatians Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Find the Treasure Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: ABCs of Salvation Bookmark

Starter Activity: Real vs. Knockoff Product Challenge

Consider getting the lesson started with a little food challenge to see if kids can recognize the real product vs. the "knockoff" product. First have some discussion with the kids about what a knockoff product is. *

Q: How many of you like going to the grocery store with your Mom or Dad? * Maybe you have noticed that right next to one of your favorite food items, say Fruit Loops, there is another "knock-off" box called Fruit Rings. You see, somebody noticed how popular Fruit Loops were and decided they could make a quick buck by making their own version that looks a lot like it, though not true "Fruit Loops".

This happens with so many popular things: Cookies, Chips, Soda, etc. * Well, I'd like to challenge you with a little taste test to see if you can recognize the real vs. the knockoff brand! (**Teachers:** We will leave a box of Fruit Loops and Fruit Rings in your room and consider inviting a couple volunteers up to see if they can tell the difference! Feel free to bring in your own items too!) *

There is nothing wrong with using knockoff brands and sometimes they might even be better than the original! But imagine if it was a matter of life and death that we know and choose the real thing! As we get into a new book of the Bible, we're going to see how important it is that we know and believe the true gospel well enough that we can even recognize knockoff "gospels" that are not "gospels" at all. That's really what this new book of the Bible is about. Let's get started!

Background:

Important questions to establish context and background of any book of the Bible.

- 1) **What?:** The book of Galatians is a letter written to new believers in Galatia (modern day Turkey). *
- 2) **When?:** The apostle Paul wrote this letter shortly after his missionary adventure to Galatia where he and Barnabus established many churches.
- 3) **Why?:** These new believers in Galatia were falling for a "knockoff" gospel. They needed to return to and hold to the REAL thing! *

Bible Study:

Galatians 1:1: Like any letter you would write to someone today, you would put your name on it so that who you are sending it to would know who it is from! This is what Paul does as he begins also identifying himself as an apostle. This means this letter was not just from one friend to another, but from someone chosen by God to speak with authority to the church! *

Galatians 1:2: Like any letter you would write today, you would next address it to someone.

Q: How do you begin most letters? A: **Dear** "So-And-So" * This verse is Paul's way of saying "**Dear** Believers in Galatia".

Galatians 1:3: Paul begins most of his letters with this wonderful greeting. Only believers in Jesus can experience the grace and peace of God. You hear these words at church a lot, but what do they actually mean?

Grace: Freely getting what you do NOT deserve! Because of our sin and rebellion against God we deserve punishment and hell. Yet, He freely offers us forgiveness and favor, blessings that we do NOT deserve. How? By faith in Jesus! This is grace!

Peace: After receiving God's grace by faith, this is what we experience as God's kids. We are at peace with God! Our sins past, present, and future are forgiven! We are on His side now and will be with Him forever in heaven because of His grace!

Galatians 1:4-5: Paul briefly explains how God made this amazing grace and peace available to us: through Jesus's loving sacrifice on the cross. He willingly took the punishment we deserved so that we might be delivered or rescued.

Q: What does it mean to rescue someone? A: To save them from danger. *

Boys and Girls: This is the true gospel which means "good news". The bad news is that we are all sinners and deserve only punishment. * But God made a way for us to be rescued and that rescue is only through belief and trust in Jesus Christ. *

Galatians 1:6: After reminding them what the real and true gospel is, he cuts right to the chase and points out how they have turned away from the real gospel toward a different or "knockoff" gospel. Remember the food challenge we did at the beginning? It appears they cannot tell the difference between the two. * But the gospel isn't breakfast cereal. It's a matter of life and death! For notice that in rejecting the true gospel, they are rejecting Jesus Himself! This is serious! *

Galatians 1:7: Here we see where this knockoff gospel has come from: False teachers have introduced it to them. And they have perverted or twisted the true gospel such that it is no gospel at all. In fact, it is a counterfeit gospel!

Q: What does counterfeit mean? A: It is worse than "knockoff"! It means a fake version of something that is intended to represent the original. Like counterfeit money! (**Teachers:** Consider taking a sheet of paper that says "Fruit Loops" and tape it over the "Fruit Rings" label of the box to help kids understand this concept)

To get true "Fruit Loops" you need to have the right mixture of ingredients.

Q: If you change the ingredients at all, do you have Fruit Loops anymore? A: NO!

It's the same with the true gospel! The main ingredient of the true gospel is faith or trust in Jesus Christ for salvation by God's grace. As we will learn later in this book, these guys are adding other ingredients in saying trust in Jesus isn't enough. They say you must believe in Jesus AND do this or that. * But then it is no longer based on God's undeserved grace, but on our works and trying to earn God's love. This is no gospel at all (and it is not good news either!). *

Galatians 1:8-9: Whoa! These are strong words from Paul. Remember at the beginning we said that this is a matter of life and death? It's also a matter of heaven and hell! If people are trusting in a counterfeit gospel, they will not be saved! That's why the church must fight to protect and promote the true gospel!

Key Point: There is only one gospel and its main ingredient is faith/trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Q: How do you think someone can get really good at recognizing counterfeit money?

A: They become experts of the real thing!

Boys and Girls: It's the same with the gospel. We need to be gospel experts! We need to be amazed at the grace and peace of God that we freely receive by faith and trust in Jesus. This way when people present us with a counterfeit gospel, we will be familiar enough with the true one to see how it was wrong. This is what Paul wanted the Galatians and it's what we want for you as we study this book! *

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Galatians 1:3-4. What is grace? What is peace? How did God make this grace and peace available to us?

Second

Read Galatians 1:8. What is the main ingredient of the gospel that Paul preached?

Parent Challenge

How can we protect ourselves from falling for a "counterfeit" gospel?

By His Grace,

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