

**Read Gal 3:1-14**

This whole passage is about how we get right with God and how we then maintain this through the rest of our lives. The Galatians had begun to lose the whole point of being a Christian, but don't just point a finger at them and go ha ha! - We too could end up being *the dear idiots of Galatia*...

**1. Hearing with faith**

You become a Christian, or you enter into God's promise of eternal life by **hearing with faith**.

Romans 11:17 *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

- > Hearing and believing that there is a problem between you and God. It's called sin.
- > Hearing and believing that God has provided a solution for this problem - His son Jesus taking the blame, the shame and punishment (or curse as is said here) we deserve by dying on a cross 2000 years ago.

Paul uses what happened with Abraham in verses 6-9 to show this as "*he believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness*": God made Abraham right not because of his rule keeping but because of Abraham's faith.

That promise given to Abraham is for us too (we are included in all nations) - we just need to **hear it** and **believe it** - eternal life and forgiveness. If we believe in this promise God will declare us righteous too because of our faith.

**2. The mark of the Spirit is the real sign of a Christian**

Paul says that the evidence that this faith was working was **them receiving the Holy Spirit**. This was the mark of being part of God's family - **God in them**. Paul here cites **what they experienced as proof that they received salvation**. God did something in them that they could not explain away - other than to say God came and lived inside them!

Romans 8:15-16: *You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear but You received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba father" The Spirit himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God and fellow heirs with Christ.*

Paul knows the **only way he can convince them is by their own experience of the Spirit**.

**Isn't this true of us as well?** - Think of how you felt when you became a Christian. Did you think - I feel so wonderful now I am keeping the Ten Commandments! Or did you think it's amazing, God is my father and friend, I'm in his family, he's forgiven me! He's living in me!

**3 So now we've got that sorted out how do we maintain this new life?**

In simple terms it is by **continuing to live life according to the Spirit**. But **what does that look like, and mean?**

**Paul** says it is **all about living in the Spirit rather than by the flesh v3** (human effort in NIV).

- > He makes a bit of a pun here - as they were seeking to continue their salvation through being circumcised - very much by the flesh!
- > The flesh is also about us and our **human efforts**
- > But he also means the flesh is **to live according to the values and desires of life in the present age** that stands in contradiction to God and His ways which is how we live in the Spirit. We get this from later on in Galatians 5:16-23 where he talks about the works of the flesh and contrasts them with the fruits of the spirit.

Paul also says it's about "**living by faith**" (v11), Focusing on how **God sees things** and **believing what he says**. Cultivating our relationship with him and letting that growing love and friendship change our values and desires.

**Conclusion**

How much are you living by faith in what God has said about you and your new life as a Christian?

It's time to believe what God has said and start thinking his way - aligning our minds with his - realising we are new creations, he lives in us, and trusting him. To start and finish depending on what Christ has done for us on the cross:

*Gal 3:14: He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to us (the Gentiles) through Christ Jesus, so that **by faith** we might **receive the promise** of the Holy Spirit*