



Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians

Tom Wright, N.T. Wright

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Tom Wright's eye-opening comments on these letters are combined, passage-by-passage, with his fresh and inviting new translation of the Bible text. Making use of his true scholar's understanding, yet writing in an approachable and anecdotal style, Wright captures the tension and excitement of the time as the letters seek to assert Paul's authority and his teaching against other influences.

Tom Wright has undertaken a tremendous task: to provide guides to all the books of the New Testament, and to include in them his own translation of the entire text. Each short passage is followed by a highly readable discussion, with background information, useful explanations and suggestions, and thoughts as to how the text can be relevant to our lives today. A glossary is included at the back of the book. The series is suitable for group study, personal study, or daily devotions.

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Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians Details

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Ethan says

An entry-level commentary on Galatians and 1/2 Thessalonians.

Wright's commentary, as in all the "for everyone" series, remains excellent. He provides a understandable (if not quite British) translation of the text in sections, followed by some illustration and commentary for each section. The commentary demonstrates the major theme of each letter and concisely sets forth Paul's primary meaning in context to those to whom he is writing. Application is made when appropriate.

An excellent resource for understanding Galatians and 1/2 Thessalonians.

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Chris says

I've been continuing to use these commentaries as a form of daily devotional reading, and have not been disappointed or grown tired of them yet. This may be my favorite so far. Having done an in-depth group study on the book of Galatians over 15 years ago, I was so impressed with how (seemingly) effortlessly Wright works out the major themes of the epistle and follows the quirks of its argument. In fact, he rather easily solves some problems that I and my fellow students had wracked our brains over. Not that I think Wright's interpretation is perfect, but to me it is excellent and well worth a read. Wish we'd had this book as a resource back in 1997!

Rick Boyer says

I love this series. It's great for laypeople; I use it when teaching Bible studies. And it's also very useful as an easily understandable refresher guide for busy clergy. There's no one better than Dr. Wright!

Nancy DeValve says

Once again, I found N. T. Wright's commentary on Galatians to be very helpful. Parts of Galatians are pretty complex, but N. T. Wright does a great job explaining them. I found this book to round out well my study on

Galatians.

Jim Layman says

Tom Wright's straightforward and clear explanations of the text continue to be profitable reading for the layman and yet insightful for the experienced Bible student as well. His sections of Scripture are short enough for daily study. His fresh translation is vivid.

This commentary follows Paul's first letters to churches he has planted in Asia and Macedonia. Reading this commentary alongside his biography of Paul is also helpful in grasping both the timeline of the epistles alongside Luke's Acts account, and the first-time nature of many of Paul's explanations. The Church was a new creation, a brand new entity in the Greco-Roman world.

Don Robins says

You Can't Go Wrong With Wright

Simple but thorough! Tom Wright has a refreshing way of making biblical truth come alive using his own translation of the text followed by stories to illustrate and explanations to instruct.

Lydia says

Mr. Wright explores Paul's writings of Galatians and Thessalonians, again by breaking down the chapters into smaller collections of verses that explore a theme and helping point readers in the direction of where Paul was coming from and opening a picture of the world context his original readers would have had.

This series is good. The sections are fairly short, and explained well, so it's pretty easy to fit this into your daily schedule and have something understandable to ponder over. However, I didn't find this particular book as engaging. Perhaps because the others in this series I've read have had to deal with the gospels and I find story breakdowns more interesting than thought explorations. Generally, I relate to Paul more than most of the other New Testament authors (or even the other apostles), but I was having trouble not getting lost in all the "he was (most likely) traveling or staying here after coming from here and about to head there while writing to this group about this topic before he...". A timeline would have helped me digest this information more clearly, and as interesting as it was, to me, it disturbed the thought processes of the sections it was included in and just pushed me out of the message.

Content notes: No issues; Paul does set out moral guidelines, many dealing with relationships and how they should be healthy and what makes them not healthy, but not graphicly depicted.

Will Turner says

Say what you will about N. T. Wright, but one thing is true: he can write. It's that British-ness that apparently creates good writers.

These brief meditations on scripture provide helpful illustrations focusing on the main thing of the passage. I generally read Wright for his illustrations and how he uses them to explain and tie together the passage. This is where, I believe, he excels.

I only read his commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians. I often (somewhat) disagree with his theology, but his writing always makes me think and challenges my understanding. Rarely does he convince me, but I nonetheless appreciate the engagement. For that alone, I find reading him helpful.

Matt Bianco says

This book has accessibility to commend it. It most definitely lives up to its name, *Paul for Everyone*. I read only the portion on Galatians, so that is all my review will entail. His commentary on Galatians is broken up into smaller portions of the text, in which he provides his own translation of the text, followed by a commentary on it. The commentary generally begins with a story and therefore comes across very pastoral. The translation he provides, is itself not the most accurate. But, Wright is purposing to use language that will force us to consider what the text is really saying, rather than allowing the reader to continue seeing it in the same categories and boxes. Thus, Christ is always translated as Messiah.

From Wright's perspective, Paul is writing to the Galatians with this in mind.

The Galatians have been divided over circumcision, and he is writing to silence his accusers. Paul is upset that the one family has been divided over the issue of circumcision (which sometimes entails other aspects of the Law, such as keeping the Jewish assigned days, weeks, months, and years--the Sabbaths and Feasts.) Because his own authority and message has been called into question, he justifies them both, and explains that nothing has been added to it, by God or man.

He continues his argument by recounting the confrontation he had with Peter over this very topic. And then explains to them that their adopting the Law means that they are saying they are no longer trusting that God has accepted them by their faith, but that they now need to do more--keep the Law. And is this what they really think will perfect them, they start with the Spirit and end with the flesh?

He argues against this question by explaining that the promises of God to build a family are promises based on the faith of Abraham, not his circumcision, nor the fuller Law which would come 430 years later. In fact, he argues, that the Law came not as a guarantee to receive the promises God made to Abraham, but to protect His people until they were mature in the faith (through union with Christ by their baptism).

He then wonders with them why they would return to these old ways. That these Jewish days and circumcising were the same for the Jews as their pagan rituals were for them--albeit God-ordained rituals in the case of the Jews.

Then, he reminds them that the Jewish Christians are only demanding circumcision so that the Gentile

Christians would continue to look up to them as the inner circle of Christianity. He explains to them that the bondage the Jewish Christians are trying to impose is akin to the bondage of the Law at Sinai. And that, while the Jewish Christians may think they are the seed of Sarah/Isaac and the Gentile Christians are the seed of Hagar/Ishmael, by their commitment to bondage they are actually revealing themselves to be the seed of Hagar/Ishmael and of Sinai, while the Gentile Christians who are resting in their faith are being revealed as the true sons of Sarah/Isaac and the sons of liberty through faith.

By chapter 5, Paul is reminding them obligation to some of the Law (circumcision) means obligation to all of the Law. Therefore, they should not seek to add to what they have in faith. They need to know that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision makes you more Christian, or more united to Christ, but that it is faith working through love. He is so serious about this that he wishes the circumcisers would just castrate/emasculate themselves.

As he moves towards his conclusion, Paul wants them to understand what fruits the flesh produces versus those the Spirit produces. Being in the Spirit, they should restore their brothers gently and bear one another's burdens. This temporary division should not lead them to look for faults in the other party in order to boast in themselves.

Then, he reminds them that a large part of what the Jewish Christians are doing is really only motivated by fear that they themselves will be persecuted. But, Paul needs for them to understand that circumcision nor uncircumcision count for anything, it is being a new creation that matters. And, he, himself, bears the marks of persecution, the marks of Christ, over this very cause.

That is a summary of Galatians according to N.T. Wright and his *Paul for Everyone: Galatians* commentary. I know there are many more nuances that could be made, and much deeper theology that could be gone over here. But, it was intended for accessibility and a wide audience.

Evan Hays says

I own all of the series that he has written so far, but have only read Mark before this. I am now going to keep reading them all continually. They are such a panacea for someone like me who has been to so many Sunday school lessons, heard so many sermons, and even read the new testament several times over each. I need Wright's scholarship, always accessible and compelling, to move me forward in both my knowledge and love of the new testament. I know enough now to know how much I don't/can't get on my own, so Wright helps me here. I love the insight I get into what each new testament church was facing and how this illuminates the text. I would recommend this to anyone.

Mark Taylor says

Good study for first time readers.

Brad Belschner says

Galatians contains some of the most controversial material for the "New Perspective on Paul" movement, so

this book was especially good to read. I believe N.T. Wright explains the epistle well, though I'm still left scratching my head in a few places. I'll certainly be returning to this book in the future.

This commentary series, "The New Testament for Everyone", seems to be designed for devotions, and perhaps small study groups. The text is broken up into nice bite size chunks, with commentary always spanning three pages. Wright interacts with the text carefully and intelligently, but always in an accessible manner. Wright's goal is that even the newest Christians should easily be able to read these books, and I believe he attains his goal. I highly recommend this series, especially this particular volume.

Tim Baumgartner says

Another awesome "devotional" book from N.T Wright I read this summer!

Christopher says

This is a particularly difficult book to review because of how Mr. Wright chose to cover some of Paul's shorter epistles after 1 & 2 Corinthians. Instead of going through it linearly, that is between Galatians and Philemon one book at a time, Mr. Wright has grouped them chronologically based on when scholars believe they were written. And since Galatians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians are believed to be some of Paul's earliest letters they are grouped together accordingly, even though in the New Testament there are three books (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians). Thus, I had to put this book aside for a little bit as I am reading through the New Testament cover to cover. Still, in spite of that weird hiatus, Mr. Wright still shines brighter expounding upon the Pauline epistles than on any of his previous commentaries. Some of the specific commentaries on Galatians and his views on what Paul's vivid imagery means in Thessalonians are well worth pondering. So, if you don't mind the odd grouping of these three epistles, I still recommend this book to you for your daily devotional readings.
