

# Good News For Those Trying Harder, by Alan Kraft

## Chapter One: *The Struggle to Make It Work*

### Getting Connected

As you introduce yourself to the other members of your group, briefly tell the story of your spiritual journey to-date. As you share, be sure to include those experiences, churches, ministries, groups or relationships that have made a significant contribution. Give everyone ample time to share, but keep it moving at the same time.

### Insights and Highlights

In your own words, how would you summarize Chapter 1?

Was there anything that really caught your attention, challenged or confused you in this chapter?

On a scale of 0-100%, how much of your spiritual experience would you describe as “trying hard to make Christianity work”?

Put an “X” at that point on the following scale and be prepared to share this with your group.

\_\_\_\_\_

0%      25%      50%      75%      100%

Talk a little about why you chose this number.

What effect has this had on your life—spiritually, emotionally and physically – say, in the last five years?

As of right now, how would you define “the gospel”? Take a few minutes and write out your answer. Then share this with the group. This is not a time for comments; just listen to everyone’s definition.

### Biblical Focus

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-3. How do your answers above compare with Paul’s description of “the gospel”?

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After reading Chapter 1 and Paul's description of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15, use the space provided here and spend some time as a group developing a practical definition of the gospel and its core elements.

In the book of Galatians, Paul is writing to Christian believers who are experiencing a "problem" with the gospel.

Read Galatians 1:6-9 and Galatians 3:1-3.

What specific issues are the believers in Galatia having with the gospel?

Based on the text, why is Paul so upset about this?

### The Heart of the Matter

In this chapter, the author invites us to consider what it might look like to see the gospel not simply as the starting line of our Christian life but as the race itself. In other words, just as we enter into Christianity through brokenness and faith, we are now to live in continual brokenness and faith.

How is this different from the spiritual growth path you've been encouraged to pursue so far in your relationship with Christ?

Are these differences frightening? Freeing? Some other word you'd choose? And why?

As you think about your current spiritual life, would you say there is a greater sense of your need for Jesus than a year ago ... or not? Remember, nothing is gained here by glossing the truth.

How do you feel about your answer to this question?

### In Conclusion ...

Take time as a group to celebrate what God is stirring inside you as a result of this chapter and your discussion. Have each member of the group complete the following statement: "In my relationship with Jesus, I long for \_\_\_\_\_." Spend some time praying that the in the weeks to come this longing will be fulfilled, and the members of your group will be a part of making it happen!

*The gospel is ...*

*Core elements of the gospel*