

Message Discussion Guide

FREE TO GROW

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

December 28, 2008

Galatians 4:8-31

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Ask people in your small group if they think God is more concerned with what we do or with who we are. Once you get some feedback from the group, begin talking about the relationship between what we do and who we are.

- How have your actions this past week shown you your true character (ask for specifics)?
- What's something you do because others tell you must do it, but that you really don't want to do? What does this say about what is going on in your heart?
- Do you think it's possible to do the right thing with the wrong motive?
- How does doing the right thing with the wrong motive point to who you really are?

In Galatians 4:8-31 we see that God's desire is for us to become more like Jesus Christ, and as a result of becoming more like Christ (who we are) our lives (what we do) will be radically different.

Option 2

Ask people in your small group how they thought of Christianity before God saved them (religion or relationship?). Ask them why they thought about it this way.

- Do you ever portray Christianity as a religion rather than as a relationship, particularly with non-Christian friends, family member, or neighbors? Discuss how simply asking people to "go to church" with you, or telling people they need to read the Bible or pray more, or how telling your children they need to do this or that religious activity, can actually portray Christianity in an inaccurate way.
- How can you be more faithful in portraying Christianity accurately to others? How can you portray a grace based Christianity that is neither legalistic nor lawless?

How does this change the way we pray for, talk with, and relate to non-Christians and our fellow brother's and sisters in Christ? Let's see how Galatians 4:8-31 relates to this discussion.

Review the Message . . .

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Three Prayers...

First Prayer...

- God, show us how to walk in Your _____ grace _____.

Discussion questions

- Why should we be praying this based on what the book of Galatians has taught up to this point (see Gal. 1-4:7)?
- In what ways had the Christians at Galatia been led astray from a grace based walk with their heavenly Father?

Application

- Look back at Gal 1-4:7 and find 3 things that Paul is teaching the church at Galatia about ways they can walk in grace.
- Identify 2 ways that you have personally been tempted away from (or led astray from) a grace based walk with your heavenly Father.
 - How we got here...
 - We've not been obedient to the _____ law _____.
 - We've been awakened by the _____ Spirit _____.

Discussion Questions

- How does Paul use the story of Ishmael and Isaac from Gen. 16 and 17 to show the difference between being under the law and being under grace (read and think about Gal. 4:21-31)?
- Has anyone kept the law perfectly? How does this relate to the person and work of Jesus Christ (law keeper)? If Jesus Christ was perfect why did they persecute Him?
- What does it mean to be born of the Spirit (Gal. 4:29)? See also Jn. 3:3-8 and Gal. 3:2.

Application

- What ways have you been persecuted for being a child of promise like Isaac? If you don't see persecution in your life, why not? Remember, you don't have to live in a hostile area of the world to see this type of persecution. The more we take on the character of Christ the more we will be persecuted by those who are not sons of God by promise.
 - Who we are...
 - We are not slaves to _____ religion _____.
 - We are sons in a _____ relationship _____ with God.

Discussion Questions

- How does your performance for God sometimes affect how you feel about your salvation?
- What are the religious rituals in your given cultural setting that people often think make them right before God (read Gal. 4:10)?
- How should the work of Jesus Christ affect the way you think about knowing God and being known by God (read Gal. 4:9)?
- What actions flow from a relationship with God, and how do actions that flow from a relationship differ from actions that flow from forced duty (religion)?

Application

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- Think deeply and pray discerningly about whether or not your Christianity is religion based or relationship based.
 - Where we're going...
 - We are not living for _____ earthly _____ pleasure.
 - We are living for a _____ heavenly _____ home.

Discussion Questions

- David pointed out that in Gal. 4:25 Hagar corresponds to the earthly city of Jerusalem, which symbolizes slavery. What things about the earthly city are the hardest for you to give up? What things do citizens of the earthly city live for? Why do they live for these things?
- In what way did Jesus view the earthly Jerusalem? In what way should we view the city we live in?

Application

- What are some ways your life would be different if you began living more for your heavenly home than for your earthly home in the city you currently live in?

Three Prayers...

Second Prayer...

- God, help us to trust in Your _____ Word _____.
 - Help us to live it when it's not _____ easy _____.
 - Help us to hear it when it's not _____ popular _____.

Discussion Questions

- In Gal. 4:12 how do we see Paul following the missionary method of His Savior and Lord (Jesus)?
- How does the incarnational method of Jesus (followed by Paul) take away our personal ease and possible popularity among men?

Application

- In what ways is it hardest for you to live out God's Word practically on a day to day basis? How can your small group pray for you in particular ways this next week?

Three Prayers...

Third Prayer...

- God, give us great zeal for Your _____ purpose _____.
 - Give us a passion to _____ be conformed _____ into the image of Christ.
 - Give us a passion to _____ see others transformed _____ for the glory of Christ.

Discussion Questions

- What was Paul so zealous about in Gal. 4:12-19?
- Do you have a passion for Christ-likeness? What do you think a passion to be conformed to the image of Christ would look like in your life? How did it look in Paul's life?

Application

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- Whose spiritual growth into Christ-likeness are you zealous for (specifically)?
- What purpose do you live for each day? Could you really say you are living to know and become like Christ?
- Is there anyone you would rather know and become like? Think deeply about this last question and it may help you to see what you are really living for, if you are not living for Christ.

Conclusion...

Pray these 3 prayers for each other before you go.