

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE –

Galatians Series: *Free in Christ* “The Flesh, The Kingdom & The Cross” - Galatians 5:19-21

FELLOWSHIP

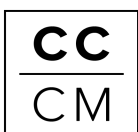
Christians share a philosophy or truth, a code of life, a sacred text, and a God. Even though we have different origin stories, ethnicities, family, or social backgrounds, Christ has re-defined our identity. This blending of people was much more stark in the first century church. The ancient world was a timeline of **kingdoms**, each having their own gods and practices that came with them. Do a search in the Old Testament of the word **kingdom** and you'll be reading a long timeline about conflicts between nations, their territories, and their cultures. But a similar search of the New Testament shows a radical change in the way the Bible uses **kingdom**. Jesus said, “My **kingdom** is not of this world.” (Jn 18.36) Membership and citizenship became defined by things like repentance. Allegiance would be marked by love, mercy and acts of kindness. Like we studied last week, God's attributes would begin to be reflected in his followers, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the **kingdom** of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” (Mt 7.21) The church was and is comprised of people from blended backgrounds, but united in its character. In fact, every time we gather together for fellowship and hospitality, it reminds us of Jesus' promise that he would share the cup and break bread with us again in God's **kingdom**. (Mt 26.29)

PRAY, READ, DISCUSS

Read **Galatians 5:19-21** out loud together and prayerfully discuss all the personal applications that can be made. This passage reads like a long, dirty, laundry list of sins. But there is more here than just lifestyle choices. Paul, as a religious lawyer of Judaic and rabbinic customs, was now the first missionary to the Gentiles, i.e. the Greek world. He was thrust into preaching to those from the Hellenistic and pagan practices of Greco-Roman culture. Magic, drugs, and sexual revelry were tied to the worship of their gods, and the new church was growing in its midst. The irony of Paul's calling was his own Jewish history. During the intertestamental period the Greeks forced the Jews in Israel to either participate or die in their pagan celebrations. Josephus records, “On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, the Jews were taken, under bitter constraint, to partake of the sacrifices; and when a festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreaths of ivy and to walk in the procession in honor of Dionysus.” Now the followers of Dionysus (Roman: Bacchus) were visiting their fellowships, getting saved, and maybe even becoming leaders. But Paul was aware, bad habits die hard, especially those that feed our propensity to sin. The Holy spirit is key to live liberated from the flesh, as he wrote to the Colossians, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the **kingdom** of the Son of His love.” (1.13)

- How does God's kingdom come to bear on your everyday life? How does it protect you, guide you, or inspire you? Thinking about the words *sovereignty* or *dominion*, what do they mean to you regarding your relationship with Jesus?
- The bill boards on the freeway, and even just TV, are some of the stark reminders that Dionysus is alive and well in our society. How can the church engage and grow in light of cultural decline?
- *(From last week, but in case you didn't get to it...)* Paul states in verse 21, *Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Paul tacks on this intimidating warning at the end of this dirty laundry list. What if a Christian falls into one of these sins? How can they recover? Why might this verse be used to argue that someone could lose their salvation? What other verses from Scripture would help you to find an answer?

PRAY



Community Group Leader Guide
Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen's message on March 19, 2017.
Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/galatians/video/the-flesh-the-kingdom-and-the-cross/>