

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE –

Galatians Series: *Free in Christ* “Law and Grace” - Galatians 4:21-31

FELLOWSHIP

Structure can be a good thing when a situation calls for it. Chaos is hardly the best way to any kind of goal. But what happens when the rules begin to extend outside of their intended purpose? Humanity is inclined towards organization, it's part of our creativity. But sometimes in an effort for efficiency, even something as simple as faith can be weighed down by efforts to systematize or codify how we express our relationship with God. One thing is for sure, God will keep his promises. And as we learned from Abraham this week in Pastor Brian's Sunday message, God's grace is best served without our help.

PRAY, READ, DISCUSS

Read **Galatians 4:21-31** out loud together regarding Paul's use of the story of Hagar, Sarah, Ishmael, and Isaac to illustrate two different kinds of religion. Pastor Brian expressed it this way on Sunday, “The religion that Ishmael represents is a religion of nature, of what man can do by himself without any special intervention of God. But the religion of Isaac represents a religion of grace, of what God has done and does; a religion of divine initiative and divine intervention, for Isaac was born supernaturally through a divine promise. And that is what Christianity is, it is grace not works.”

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: *Philosophy*. “Naturalism” is a worldview that takes only natural elements and forces into account, excluding the supernatural or spiritual. It is the belief that all phenomena are covered by laws of science and that any explanation for life from a higher intelligence are without value.

- What were some of the life moments where you didn't wait for God? How would waiting for him have made them better? What were some of those times where you did wait? How were these experiences different?
- How was Abraham and Sarah's decision to have him sire a child through Hagar a “naturalistic” decision? What were the consequences? What are some of the areas in life where we have left a God worldview and have supplanted it with “naturalism”? What are some of the places where living in God's grace would lift some heavy burdens from our shoulders? • Why does God sometimes seem to move slowly? What are some of the promises of God that you feel like you are waiting on right now? What can the Christian do while they wait? cf. Ps 27:14, Is 40:31.

FOCUS AGAIN ON VS. 28-29, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is now*.”

- Paul indicates that those who choose to trust God, and live by faith could be persecuted for it. This could be possibly very intimidating. When have you experienced being shamed because you were choosing to wait on God for something in your life to be resolved? Where can we as Christians find the strength, support, or solace in order to continue on in trusting God and relying on his promises?

PRAY

Please finish your time together by breaking into smaller groups so we can encourage and pray for each other as openly as possible.

