

CITYGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



Week 11 (Galatians 4:21-31)
Week of November 27th, 2016



#CityGroupsTally

REMINDERS for leaders:

Here's a few reminders:

-  **VIDEO:** Each week we will have a video for you to show at your group meeting.
- **Group Leader Christmas Party:** (Thur Dec 8th from 6-8pm) RSVP!
- **End of Fall Survey:** Please take 5 minutes to fill out our End of Fall Survey to let us know if there any changes to your group for the Spring. (Link found in weekly email)
- **Please** let your coach and Craig know if your group is ready to multiply in the Spring

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **Christmas on the Moon:** Sign up to serve at www.ChristmasOnTheMoon.com
2. **Fall Groups End in December.** This is our last official group meeting for the fall semester. ☹️ (But feel free to get your group together for a Christmas Party or catch up on any group meetings you missed. No discussion guides will be sent out until the Spring Launch on Jan. 15th)

BIG IDEA(s):

DIY (Do-it-Yourself) religion leaves people frustrated and enslaved. The gospel of grace frees us from the temptation to be our own savior and joins us to our inheritance in heaven through faith in Christ. However, the Galatians were back-peddling into slavery again, so Paul had to shock them out of their religious stupor. How? Paul used Jewish history to make an explosive point and turn the tables on the Judaizers. This week Paul will take us back into Genesis and have us questioning what son of Abraham we are actually linked to; Isaac' or 'Ishmael'.

PRAY: *Pray for your group's gathering and for the Spirit to equip us to follow Jesus into the world.*

READ: Galatians 4:21-31

HEAD (20 minutes)



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO

- 1) **What is your favorite Old Testament story? What do you remember about Hagar and Sarah? (Genesis 16:1-4 & 21:1-13)**
 - **Who do you relate to in the story and why?**
- 2) **Who do Abraham's two sons (Isaac & Ishmael) represent in verses 21-23?** (Ishmael represents salvation by works aka DIY religion; while Isaac represents salvation by grace. Ishmael represents slavery and Isaac represents freedom. Covenant of works vs. covenant of Grace)
 - **Why is it impossible for Christians to live by both covenants? (Vs. 24)**
- 3) **Why are the most religious people often the furthest from salvation?** (Religious people rely on their own ability rather than God's supernatural grace. Abraham tried to attain God's promise (a son) by his own effort by sleeping with Hagar. He was acting as his own savior which never leads to freedom.)
- 4) **Which child of Abraham was Paul calling the Judaizers? (Vs. 25) Why would that be offensive or shocking to them?** (The Judaizers though biologically descended from Isaac (Jews) were actually spiritually tied to Ishmael...son of a gentile concubine. Very offensive/shocking to a Jewish audience)

HEART: (15 minutes)

- 1) **Have you ever felt 'persecuted' by religious people? (vs. 29) What was that like?** (In the south we experience 'Bible-belt morality' that gets thrust on people, Christian or not. It is really no different than pagan religion because it does not have Jesus at the center of it. Sometimes this feels like persecution and looks hypocritical. It misses the gospel altogether.)
- 2) **Why is it so easy for Christians to slip back into do-it-yourself religion? Is this a struggle for you? How so? What is an area of your life where you feel tempted to go around God rather than to God?**

HANDS (15 Minutes)

- 1) **What are some ways we as a group can help one another stay focused on the gospel? (vs. 28 & 31)** (Paul reminded them who they are, who they are not. He continually tries to bring them back to the gospel and shows them where they are not believing the gospel in their daily lives.)
- 2) **Have you ever invited people to call you out when your actions indicate you are not believing the gospel?**
 - **What is one practical example of what that could look like for you?**
 - **Where did you need someone to do this for you this past week?**

***BONUS: What did God do in your life through our City Group this fall?**

Pray: Take a few moments to share prayer requests and pray for one another and your lost friends.

Commentary: Galatians 4:8-31 (For more insight into each verse & for hard questions)

4:21. The “law” does not refer specifically to the law of Moses, but to the Books of the Law—the Pentateuch (i.e., Genesis–Deuteronomy). Paul’s logic was that even the law itself would dispute the view of the false teachers.

4:22-23. Genesis records the births of these two sons—Ishmael, born to Hagar, a slave, and Isaac, born to Sarah, a free woman. Ishmael was born “according to... the flesh,” because Sarah and Abraham used Hagar to have a son by their own ingenuity, not through patient trust in God’s promise (Gen 16). Isaac was born as God promised (Gen. 15:4; 17:16-17; 21:1-3) after many years of waiting by Abraham and Sarah.

4:24-26. Paul declared that he was using these things as illustrations in an elaborate allegory. On one side of the comparison of covenants is (a) Mount Sinai, where the law of Moses was given, (b) Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, and (c) the present Jerusalem, from which the false teachers had come to Syrian Antioch (2:11-13) and Galatia. This side of the comparison represents spiritual slavery through the law. On the other side of the comparison is the Jerusalem above, a Jewish hope that will be fully realized only in the new heavens and new earth (Rev 21:2,9–22:5). Interestingly, Sarah is not referred to as the mother at this point, but “the Jerusalem above” is.

4:27. The quote from Isaiah 54:1 in this verse deals with the fact that the children born after the exile were more fortunate and greater in number than those righteously judged for breaking the law. The implication is that those who still rely on the law are being replaced by the church and its law-free gospel.

4:28-30. Paul assumed that those in the Galatian churches would return to his view and show themselves to be children of promise (i.e., Abraham’s seed through faith in Christ; 3:29). But, as Ishmael persecuted Isaac in Gen. 21:9-10, it is to be expected that the Judaizers will persecute true Christians.

4:31. Paul placed himself and the Galatians on the side of Isaac and his descendants, the Jews, while his opponents are children of the slave, making them non-Jews.

Abraham’s Legacy (Gal. 4:21-31)		
MOTHER	Sarah	Hagar
HER STATUS	Free	Slave
HER SON	Isaac	Ishmael
HIS STATUS	Persecuted	Persecutor
BORN BY	Promise	Human effort
COVENANT	Gospel	The Law
MEDIATOR	Jesus [God]	Moses [Man]
INHERITANCE	Heaven	Jerusalem

