

Galatians Chapter 4:21-31

Meeting Guide

Note: Questions were either taken from or adapted from “No Other Gospel, The Book of Galatians” study guide from Citadel Square Church and *Galatians: The Gospel of Free Grace 13-Lesson Study* by Jon Nielsen and Philip Graham Ryken

Pray

Apart from God, we can do nothing. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion. Throughout your time together, continue asking God for help.

Read Scripture

Read Galatians 4:21-31 together.

Bible Study

The bulk of your time will be spent discussing God’s Word together.

Remember:

- Walk through the Bible study together using the HEAR method and talk about what stuck out most to you in the passage.
- Make sure you move discussion to the application section of your study.
- Affections, beliefs, and practices: Make sure to apply the passage to all of your life.

Pray

- Take time to pray for one another and ask for His grace to apply His Word to our daily lives as pilgrims traveling to our true home.

Galatians 4:8-20 (ESV)

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. ²³But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. ²⁴Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. ²⁵Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For it is written,

*‘Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.’*

²⁸Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. ³⁰But what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.’ ³¹So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.”

Open: Have you ever heard someone start a sentence by saying, “There are only two kinds of people in this world...”? Give some examples that you have heard, including any that are humorous!

Study:

- 1) This entire passage hinges on Paul looking back to the Old Testament. Where does he take the Galatians in Jewish history? Why do you think he chooses to reference these stories and passages?
- 2) What does Paul say the similarities are between a Christian and Isaac? (Galatians 4:28-29)
- 3) What are the two covenants mentioned in Galatians 4:24? What does Paul say makes them different?
- 4) Why would it have been surprising to the Judaizers to hear Paul identify them as children of Hagar, not of Sarah? How would the Judaizers have thought of themselves? Why might Galatians 4:25 have been particularly shocking, and even offensive, to Paul’s Jewish opponents? What does this say about the seriousness of the purity of the gospel?

Apply:

- 5) We have seen that Abraham’s approach to the birth of Ishmael and his approach to the birth of Isaac can represent two different ways of relating to God. One way is by human effort and law; the other is through God’s grace and faith. How can you tell when you are beginning to live by human effort and law, rather than by God’s grace and faith? What warning signs or symptoms of gospel drift might you identify in your thoughts, attitudes, and worship?
- 6) To be a child of God—a citizen of the “Jerusalem above” (4:26)—is the greatest honor and privilege in the world! What causes you to forget this? What happens in the rhythms of your daily life that makes you most prone to wander from the joy and peace that come from knowing your true identity in Christ?
- 7) What can you learn from the acknowledgement of persecution that Paul gives to the Galatians in 4:29? How can you prepare your mind and your heart for the struggles and trials that will come as you live as a child of the promise? In what ways can you remind yourself—and others—of the final hope offered by Paul for the free children of grace?

PRAY:

- Take time thank God that He has made you a child of promise through faith in the gospel.
- Confess to God the tendency to act like a child of slavery, rather than a child of promise.
- Ask God to remind you of the miraculous birth into the new Jerusalem that you have received by faith in Christ alone.
- Ask God for opportunities to share the amazing news of the gospel that is offered to all simply by faith in what Jesus has done for us.