SERMON STUDY GUIDE
“Experiencing Grace”
For the sermon preached on 11/17:
“What’s Grace Got to Do With It?”
From the text:
Galatians 6:1-5

How to use the Groups Study Guide
Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method. In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).

2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group. It’s recommended that you rephrase the questions to match your voice and have an understanding of the interpretive questions as you prepare to lead and facilitate.

3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

As we near the end of our Galatians section in our Experiencing Grace series, we hope to see a fresh angle of God’s redemptive love and power to each of us. We hope to experience God’s grace together.

But as we all are painfully aware, this is not easy as life brings us unexpected challenges, problems, and pains. Complicating this further, is the isolation we often feel. Pastor Bryan mentioned Nicolas Kristoff’s article in the NY Times Opinion section, quoting that “we humans make a lonely crowd, and it’s literally killing us.” The examples include health issues brought on by stress, substance abuse, mental illness and more – we are dying from loneliness and in need
of hope-filled salvation, restoration, and community. Again, we are all in need of God’s grace.

Here in this section of Galatians, we’ll see how Paul instructs the church in dealing with another person’s struggles, sins, and needs and how others should minister to us. There’s much for all of us to learn as we prayerfully and honestly turn to the Scriptures.

---

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load.

Galatians 6:1-5

O – Let’s enter into a time of silent reflection: Take a few moments and read this passage silently to yourself. Answering only to yourself, what strikes you as a powerful and needed reminder as you read Paul’s words? (You can answer the remainder of these out loud in community).

O – For those entrapped in sin, how does Paul say they need to be brought back into the Christian community? What is the warning connected to it?

I – What does Paul mean when he says that when you carry each other’s burdens, you fulfill the law of Christ? (One of the most beautiful ideas Paul writes about is how the “law” has dramatically changed. In Galatians the law used to mean keeping Moses’ teachings. And while that is still important, a greater law has been brought by the Messiah Jesus and that is to love God and to love and serve others. And so when we carry each other’s burdens, we fulfill Christ’s law of love.)

I – Verse 4 tells us that “each should test their own actions.” How does one do that? (The ways include: in prayerful reflection to God, in the practice of applying Scripture, in being open to the Lord’s conviction that happens not only in personal worship but also in Christian community, as well as other moments the Lord is speaking through someone else.)

A– As we reflect on the societal and personal issue of loneliness, how might we as a group live out the truth contained in these five short verses? Consider the
strengths of our group, consider our needed improvements, how can we grow and depend on the Lord’s strength to put these words into action?

Often we come to the end of these gatherings realizing how much needs to change within us and around us in order to bring the truth of Scripture to light. As we pray, let us ask God to help us depend on His grace in whatever steps we make next. And let us ask God to be with those in need of restoration, those who are burdened, and those who are lonely. May we do our part in bringing God’s love to those around us and beyond.

a. Please note that not all these questions might be able to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your group the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your group.
b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.