

# Small Group Study

## Our Vision

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

## Our Mission

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people

## Discussion

### Freedom in Christ: Equality in Jesus

## Scripture

Have a volunteer read the following scripture: Galatians 3:26-29

## Introduction

Have you ever been made to feel as if you were a second-class citizen? Paul has been dealing with this throughout Galatians. Certain people in the churches of Galatia were seeking to stratify the church between the haves and the have-nots. The haves were the people who were still operating under the Mosaic ceremonial law. They took great pride in their having been circumcised and were seeking to compel others to join their little club of superiority. The requirement to participate in their Christian sub-culture went all the way to accusing others of not being saved. For them, faith alone in Christ alone was insufficient; more had to be added.

Paul dismisses anything any person can do to augment their own justification before God. He then spent a little time explaining the purpose of the ceremonial law (washings, sacrifices, temple rituals, etc.), which was to foreshadow the cross and lead people to be justified by faith in Christ.

We might ask "But doesn't God have requirements? Aren't we called to live a certain kind of life?" The answer to this is "yes," and will be addressed in the later chapters of this letter. But it is absolutely critical for Christians to understand who they are before they understand what they should do.

To teach people what a Christ-follower does without first teaching them who they are—emphasizing our new identity as adopted sons and daughters of the living God—will simply cause them to work hard to obtain something that they already have.

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (John 1:12-13).



## Ice Breaker

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. Which is more important to you: equality, freedom, or justice? Explain.
2. What are the various roles you play (or have played) in life? (e.g. father, mother, employee, student, son, etc.)
3. Have you ever been a part of a club or organization besides the church? What were some of the requirements for membership?

When one receives, or lays hold of, Christ, they are given the power to become sons of God. This receiving of Christ is not a result of bloodline or human volition. The receiving of Christ which results in the power to become a child of God is a gift from God Himself. This is further demonstrated by Paul's words in Ephesians:

"In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves." (Ephesians 1:5-6).

Our son-ship is a result of God's eternal decree to adopt us. The reason behind our adoption lies not in the beauty, will, or power of the child but rather in the good pleasure of a loving God, who "so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

## Questions

1. In what ways have you been made to feel like a have-not when it comes to your faith?
2. How is the blood of Christ the great equalizer in the church?
3. Why is it important to know who we are in Christ before we consider a course of behavior in life?
4. In what ways are all people brothers/sisters? In what ways are they not?
5. How do you know you're a child of God?
6. How does one become a child of God?
7. Why is it important to understand and accept our son-ship in Christ?
8. What does it mean to put on Christ? How does this remove gender, ethnic, and social distinctions in the church? What are the implications of this in our world today?

God bless,

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