The book of Galatians is dynamite. In it Paul brings us face to face with the gospel. The gospel that is not only our entry into the kingdom, but also the way to live as part of the kingdom. The gospel is how Christ transforms people, churches and communities.

One of our core values at Hope Valley is being Open to God's Word. As we spend time soaking up the gospel truth of Galatians may your heart be open to what God would say to you.

Within our 6pm community we have used the phrase Gather, Grow, Go to describe our discipleship strategy. We gather regularly and invite others to our gatherings, we grow together in Life Groups and we go out into ministry in our world. For these life group studies they are split up into these three sections:

Gather: These questions/activities are generally ice-breakers to help connect your life group to one another.

Grow: These questions help to unpack the text so that we can hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. Each starts off with the same two questions. What stood out from the text and what did God say to you during the sermon. This questions can be done in varied ways. The group might want personal reflection/journalling time, they may want to reflect silently for a moment or you may even want to spend your whole life group looking at these two questions!

Go: Finally we finish up with questions and prayers that send us out with God-inspired homework!

It’s not about answering all the questions but maturing in Christ, if the Spirit leads you on a divine tangent then go with it! Just make sure that you look at the Go section so that we are making sure every time we meet we are applying the Word to our lives.

Our hope and prayer is that God will use the book of Galatians to continue to grow us by his gospel for his glory.
Further Resources:

Quiet Time Bible Study, https://www.ivpress.com/bible/galatian/
United | Week 1: Astonished

Galatians 1:1-9

Gather: Highs and Lows
Each member of the group shares a highlight and a lowlight of their week.

Grow:
There is no other gospel. We find in Galatians that to change the gospel even the tiniest bit is to lose it completely.

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?
What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?
Paul begins (v 1) by stating that he was commissioned as an Apostle directly by the risen Christ. He goes on (v 3-5) to explain his gospel that he has preached. What do we learn? How else can the gospel be describe eg. John 3:16, Romans 3:23-24.
How would you explain the gospel and its effects on your life to someone who asked you today what you believe?
  Paul’s tone is uncompromising when it comes to the gospel, that’s because the gospel is something we need to be uncompromising about!

    Timothy Keller
How do you live out the good news? How does the truth of the gospel shape your life?
How important is gospel truth to you? How is this shown in your life?
What are some ways the gospel is being watered down today?
How can we ensure that the gospel we believe and preach is the true gospel?

Go:
What can you do to grow in your understanding of the gospel?
Finish your time together by sharing prayer needs and praying for them.
United I Week 2: Testimony

Galatians 1:10-24

Gather: Two Truths and a Lie

Each person tells three facts about themselves, but one is not true. The group guesses which statement is the lie. After everyone has participated, ask questions of each person to find out the whole story behind one of the facts.

Grow:

Paul moves from his astonishment of the Galatians to sharing his testimony of what Jesus Christ has done in his life. It is our shared stories of what God has done in our lives that unites us. How our stories may be different but it is the same grace of God that meets us.

Read: Galatians 1:10-24

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

This section is often called the autobiographical section of Galatians. In it Paul outlines how he came to faith and what occurred after his conversion.

How does the gospel of grace (v 15 or Ephesians 2:6-10) free you from pride and from guilt?

In verses 13-14 Paul traces how God has shaped his life for his kingdom work. How Paul’s training is Judaism is being used to preach and lead the early church In what ways can you see how God worked in your life before your conversion, to equip you to serve Him after it?

God revealed Christ to Paul so that he could reveal Christ through Paul.

Timothy Keller

How could you live your life so that people would respect and praise God more because of you (v 16)?

How are you most tempted to fear men and seek their approval (v 22)? What would change if, in those moments, you lived to please the God who is pleased with you?

How committed are you to spending time with God to spending time telling others your testimony?
Go:

If you had only two minute to share your story of how you came to faith what would you say?
United I Week 3: Common Ground

Galatians 2:1-10

Gather: I've Never

Each person starts the game with five points, keeping score on one hand. Each person in turn says something they have never done. Everyone who HAS done the activity loses one point and folds down one finger. The person with the last point remaining wins.

Grow:

When Paul visits the Apostles in Jerusalem we find the common ground we all walk on.

Read: Galatians 2:1-10

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

Three marks of Christian unity found in this section are:
1) Accept all who are in Christ Jesus (v 3-4)
2) We have different callings (v 7)
3) Remember the poor (v 10)

1) Accept all who are in Christ Jesus

We must never exclude someone whom God has included in His people.

Timothy Keller

Paul’s main concern is that the Galatian church is being split by those who would force the Jewish Law onto the Gentiles. He has fought so hard to see Gentiles come to Christ and now they are losing their unity. His belief is that the gospel works to unite all under the banner of Christ.

Can you think of examples of churches not prizing gospel unity sufficiently; or adding regulations/human preferences to what it means to be a good Christian?
2) We have different callings

The leaders in Jerusalem accepted that Paul’s calling was different to theirs and looked different. Do you see examples of this in your group or our church? What do you believe God has called you to do?

3) Remember the poor

How has Galatians 2:10 encouraged and/or challenged you? What ways can you/we as a group care for the poor?

Go:

Based off the study tonight which of the 3 area of Christian unity do you feel you need to work on? What is God calling you to do in the next fortnight to be more united in His mission?
United I Week 4: Unstuck

Galatians 2:11-21

Gather: Key Chain

Everyone gets out their key ring and, one at a time, tells the significance of everything hanging on it.

Grow:

Our Christians lives are a continual realignment process. Where we bring everything in our lives in line with the truth of the gospel.

Read: Galatians 2:11-21

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

When Paul says that Peter is not in step with the truth of the gospel (v 14) (or walking in line with the truth) he is calling him to continually realign his life with the truth of the gospel.

In which areas have you been increasingly walking in line with gospel over the last month? The last year?

Are there people in your church you have not been “eating with” (v 12) because they are not “like you”? What self-righteousness or fear lies beneath this attitude?

How does knowing God’s grace motivate yourself, and other Christians, less with guilt and more with the gospel?

“To justify in the Bible means...to declare...of a man on trail, that he is not liable to any penalty, but is entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law. Justifying is the act of a judge pronouncing the opposite sentence to condemnation - that of acquittal and legal immunity.”

J.I. Packer

How would you explain “justification by faith” to someone who has never been to church before (v 16)?

How would you explain the difference between being a good moral person and being a Christian to someone who thinks being good makes them acceptable to God?
Go:

Ask each member to write down a prayer request, their name and their number. Swap pieces of paper with someone in the group. Pray with this person to finish the life group.

Continue to pray for this person during the week and send them an encouraging text message reminding them that they are covered by your prayers.
Promise I Week 1: Faith > Works

Galatians 3:1-14

Gather: M&Ms

Pass around a bag of M&Ms and let everyone take as many as they would like. Don’t tell them anything else. Make sure they don’t eat them yet. Then, have them tell one piece of information about themselves for every M&M they took. You can specify the topics based on the M&M color. (yellow = family, red = high school story, green = a place they’ve traveled, etc.)

Grow:

It is not the level of our faith that saves us, it is the object of our faith that saves us. God has promised us many things and we trust Him not to obtain the promises but to know Him.

Read: Galatians 3:1-14

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

We are not only saved by the gospel, but we also now grow by the gospel...We never leave the gospel behind. We grow by applying the gospel to every area of life.

Timothy Keller & Dick Kaufmann

It is so easy to live by our works and not by faith. What does it actually mean for us to live by faith (v 2)?

Are you in danger of forgetting that the gospel is the source of your ongoing acceptance? how, and why?

Paul says that we don’t have to live in our strength and willpower to become righteous. We have been given Christ’s righteousness. How does having righteousness credited to us change the way we see ourselves (v 11)? Our Christian lives? Jesus Christ?

Have you ever experienced, or witnessed others experiencing, the psychological “curse” of living by the law (v 10)?

Which truth in Galatians 3:13-14 excites you most today?
Go:

Ask each person to fill in the blank and say one thing they’re thankful for:
“God, I’m thankful for ______________”
Promise | Week 2: Promise > Law

Galatians 3:15-25

Gather: Web Game

Have one person hold a ball of yarn in one hand and the yarn end in the other hand. As they throw the yarn ball to someone else, they say something positive about the recipient. The recipient holds onto the yarn and throws the ball to someone else saying something positive about them and the game continues. The yarn ball can be thrown multiple times to each person, each one holding onto the yarn as they throw the ball.

Variation #1: When someone catches the yarn ball, they tell something about themselves before they throw it to someone else.

Variation #2: When someone catches the yarn ball, they tell a little known fact about themselves before they throws it to someone else.

Grow:

When we earn a wage we must obey the ‘rules’ to receive it. With God we don’t earn a wage but receive a gift. With a promised gift all we need to do is believe in the one who has made the promise to receive it.

Read: Galatians 3:15-25

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

A gift-promise needs only to be believed to be received, but a law-wage must be obeyed to be received.

Timothy Keller

What has God promised you?

What has changed your life - knowing God’s requirements or knowing God’s promise?

Think back to your conversion, or the first time you understood the gospel. How did your view of God’s expectations change?

How does knowing God’s law increase your gratitude to Christ? What difference does this make to your affections?
If we are saved by grace why do we still obey God?

Go:

At Hope Valley we have many different countries who we are partnering with to see the gospel flourish. We have relationships with Bali, Thailand and India. Spend time as a group praying for the church in these countries. Also pray for the different teams that are going on mission trips this year.
Promise | Week 3: Child > Slave

Galatians 3:26-4:7

Gather: Group Recall

Participants are asked to consider whom they would choose to be if they had to be another person who has lived or is living (a real person). After they have chosen someone, the participants are next asked to reflect upon why they selected this person. When all are ready to share, the facilitator explains the process: A volunteer goes first, telling the person they would like to be and why. The next person sitting to the left first recalls what the volunteer shared and then shares their selection, etc., going around the circle.

Grow:

Through Christ’s work on the cross we have become adopted children of God.

Read: Galatians 3:26-4:7

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

What barriers divide people in the area where you live? How are those broken down within your church; and what do you do to help this (v 3:26-28)? How does knowing they are also a child of God change how you relate to them?

“The notion that we are children of God, His own sons and daughters...is the mainspring of Christian living...Our sonship to God is the apex of creation and the goal of redemption.”

Sinclair Ferguson

How do you feel about being an adopted child of God (v 5)?

A child has certain rights in a family - what are your rights as a child of God?

Is adoption something you experience as well as understand? How can you meditate on the Son’s work more, and ask the Spirit to work on your affections more?

When are you most in danger of living as a slave, not a son/daughter?
Go:

How can we as a group encourage each other to live as children of God this week?

Finish your time together by sharing prayer needs and praying for them.
Promise | Week 4: Known

Galatians 4:8-20

Gather: Guessing Game

Everyone writes on a slip of paper three things about themselves that no one in the group knows. Gather the papers and mix them up. One person reads one at a time and the group tries to guess who it is.

Grow:

We are known by God, his heart is unshakeably set on us.

Read: Galatians 4:8-20

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

The great and central basis of Christian assurance is not how much our hearts are set on God, but how unshakably His heart is set on us.

Timothy Keller

In Hebrew thought to know is a deep connection/relationship/commitment. In what ways is God committed to you?

How does God knowing you reassure you today (v 9)?

What things from the past or things in the world are you most tempted by?

How does remembering that God knows you free you from the temptation to worship idols?

Go: Tea Light Prayer

Each person lights a candle and shares with the group someone who has inspired them to live their life in light of the gospel. Pray a thanksgiving prayer for these people and for God for bringing them into their life.

After praying spend time reflecting on whether there is someone in your life that needs you to bring the light of the gospel to them.
Promise | Week 5: Out of Hand

Galatians 4:21-31

Gather: Ice-Breaker Questions

What is your happiest memory?

What’s under your bed?

What has God been teaching you recently?

Grow:

God promised Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 15) that even though they were older and without children that he would give them children. More than that, he would also bring about nations from their family. In their impatience they took things into their own hands and Sarah gave Abraham her servant to have a child with. This led to Ishmael being born. A few years later God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah by giving them their first child, Isaac.

Read: Galatians 4:21-31

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

Abraham decided to rely on himself to make God’s promises come to pass with Ishmael. Have you ever done something similar? What were the results?

When have you seen God do what seems impossible in your own life, or in the lives of those around you?

Can anyone summarize the story of Abraham and Sarah? Can you identify with Sarah in any way? If you can, how does or can her experience comfort and excite you?

Is there a promise of God yet unfulfilled in your life? What are you doing with it?
Go:

What areas of your life do you need to take out of your hands and place in Gods? Write this down on a piece of paper and pray for it. Stick this piece of paper on your bathroom mirror so you can reflect every day on areas to surrender to God.
Free | Week 1: Freedom
Galatians 5:1-15

Gather: Ice-Breaker Questions

Describe two major turning points in your life.

If you could instantly change one habit in your life what would it be?

Finish the sentence: Ways in which I see myself changing are …

Grow:

For freedom Christ has set us free! Paul is so concerned that the Galatian church has forget their freedom in Christ and gone back to being a slave.

Read: Galatians 5:1-15

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

What causes Jesus to love you?

Why do people get attracted to religious rules at times?

To “stand firm” (v 1) is essentially a military word, mixing together the ideas of keeping alert, being strong, resisting attack and sticking together.

Timothy Keller

We are called to stand firm in our freedom in Christ. Have you ever come close to losing (or actually lost) your gospel freedom? How did this happen? What lessons can you draw from it?

In what situations do you find it hard to love others (v 13)? Knowing that others are also loved in grace how will that affect how you relate to them?

When have you "cut in on" someone and kept them from trusting God’s grace (v. 7)?

How can you encourage someone you know to stay in the race?
Go:

Are you running the good race (v 7)? In what area do you need to ask God to help you stay on track?

Pray with one another about how to continue running the good race.
Free I Week 2: Fruit

Galatians 5:16-25

Gather: Affirmation

Share strengths you see in each member using the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

Grow:

As we look at the fruit of the Spirit we notice that it doesn’t talk about our gifts but it talks about our character. Those characteristics grow in our hearts as we deepen in love for God.

Read: Galatians 5:16-25

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

In what situations do you find it easy to walk by the Spirit (v 16)? In what situations do you find it hard?

List the works of the sinful nature in verse 19 to 21. Ask people to circle any they see in their life and share with one another if comfortable.

The desires of the flesh (v 17) that Paul talks about are literally an ‘over-desire’, an all-controlling drive and longing. Paul is telling us that sinful desires become deep things that drive and control us.

What are the over-desires that cause you to think or behave in these ways?

How will you remind yourself of the gospel of grace and acceptance to yourself to undermine these over-desires?

Examine yourself. How can you see the fruit of the Spirit growing in your life (v 22)?

What spiritual disciplines will help you stay in line with the Spirit?
Go:

Personally reflect on a sin you are struggling with. Why do you want to sin in this way? How does your gospel freedom undermine that motivation to sin?

Split up into smaller groups to pray. In those groups give specific examples of areas you need prayer for in regards to freedom and fruit growing in your life. Then pray for one another.
Free I Week 3: Restore

Galatians 5:26-6:5

Gather: Ice-Breaker Questions

Describe a moment when you felt loved by God.

What advice would you pass on to someone who asked?

Name something you’ve learned about yourself recently. How did you come to learn it?

Grow:

As we walk with the Spirit he guides us to know what is a burden and what is a load.

Read: Galatians 5:26-6:5

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

The greek translated “restore” (v 1) here is katartizdo. This was the term used for setting a dislocated bone back into place. Has anyone in the group ever had a dislocated bone? What happened for it to heal? How does this relate to how we are to restore one another?

Are you willing to listen to others who seek to restore you? Is there a habitual sin you need to gently restore a brother/sister from? And how will you go about it?

What opportunities has God given you to carry another’s burdens (v 2)?

What things are you responsible for before God (v 4)?

How is it liberating to know that you will only answer for things God has made you responsible for, and not how you lived compared to others?

Go:

From tonights study what has God been telling you to do? Is there someone’s burden that you need to help bear? Is there a burden you have that you need help with? Is there someone’s load that you shouldn’t be carrying? Is someone else carrying your load and you need to take responsibility?
Free | Week 4: Boast

Gallatians 6:6-18

Gather: Adjectives

What three adjectives describe your past week?

Grow:

We made it! We are at the end of the book of Galatians and Paul has some final things he wants to tell us. How we reap what we sow and let us boast in the Lord.

Read: Galatians 6:6-18

What key words/phrases stood out to you and why?

What did God say to you through this week’s sermon?

Do you stop and think of consequences before doing something?

Can you think of times in your own life when sowing to please your sinful nature has forced you to reap “destruction” (v 8)?

How are you sowing to please the Spirit in your specific set of God-given circumstances (v 8)?

Are there any particular changes the Spirit is moving you to make? How have these verses motivated you to “do good to all people” (v 10)?

Why do people seek the approval of others? In which areas of your life are you knowing the peace of living by the gospel (v 12-13)? In which are you forfeiting this peace by living for the world’s approval?

How does verse 14 encourage you? How does it challenge you?

Go:

If you had to sum up the message of the whole book of Galatians in a few words, what would you say? As you reflect on the book of Galatians. What has God been speaking to you loudest? Is there anything you still have to apply that you haven’t yet?

Use the reflections from the above question as a basis to pray for one another.