

**Galatians:
Commentary
Galatians 3:15-22**

Beginning in verse 10 (continuing through verse 25), Paul had begun an extended parenthetical in his defense of grace, using the promise given of the Patriarch Abraham, fulfilled in Jesus and guaranteed in the Holy Spirit. Now (starting with verse 15), Paul broadens the laser focus of the Old Testament to a comprehensive application of history and theology. Paul will later use this expansive teaching as the firmament for the deeply personal application to follow (in 3:26-4:11).

15

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

It should not be lost in deference to weightier matters that Paul deliberately calls the Galatians "brothers." In addressing the contentious issue of who is included in the family of God, his use of such an endearing fraternal term - even in light of earlier expressing frustration and calling them "foolish" and "bewitched."

The effort of the Judaizers seemed to hinge upon forcing the Galatians to prioritize the law over grace. Paul's rebuttal was to use their own history to emphasize the backwardness of that intent. God's covenant with Abraham was established first in grace. It was only following the Exodus and Mosaic covenant that the laws with its restrictions and requirements was added. Here in verse 15, Paul explains that the historical sequence of events was no difference in effect than the contemporary example that would have been easily understood by his audience.

Paul referenced a widely recognized standard practice that any man-made covenant (Gr. [diatheke](#)), such as a will or other legally-binding contract, once agreed upon by both parties and ratified (literally "[put into effect](#)"), no one can invalidate it or alter it in any way.

However, then as now, it was possible to alter wills as the preferences of the testator changed because the ratifying event was the death of the testator. This is a problematic concept when applied to the Divine, eternal Testator initiating an irrevocable covenant with man. This "problem" is profoundly addressed by Paul's deft reminder of the crucifixion of Jesus (cf. [Gal. 3:1](#)). In the context of history, the covenant of grace established with Abraham was indeed ratified on the cross in Jesus.

16

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

Much is made of Paul's theological "hairsplitting" in this verse, distinguishing between the singular and the plural of "offspring." Interestingly, the original word [sperma](#) is a collective noun, and is correctly rendered in the context of the entire verse which makes the distinction between the singular and the plural. Paul's use here is to refute the claim of inherited righteousness by the Jews (or received promise) on the premise of biological favor. Rather, the promise is fulfilled on the Christological premise through Jesus alone.

The singularity of promise fulfilled through Jesus is an important theme developed by Paul because it demands unity by those included in the family of God through Him. Whereas a premise of favored birthright and inclusion in family by adherence to the law fosters division and exclusion, the reality that all people come to God through faith alone in Jesus alone is the great equalizer. No

one can boast lest they boast in the cross. No one can claim any modicum of superiority by race, creed, family, and certainly not by works. To be in the seed of Abraham means that you are identified by faith in Jesus, who alone is worthy and righteous.

17

This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

Paul returns to his point being made in verse 15 of the superiority of the Abrahamic covenant of grace by emphasizing the late (by almost a half-millennium) arrival of the law relative to God's covenant with Abraham. As such, the law has no ability to annul the prior covenant God had established. The law was revered by Israel (and specifically the Judaizers) as being the culmination of the covenant between God and Israel through Moses. Paul was correcting that wrong thinking by essentially pointing out if this were the case, God could not be trusted because He therefore would be a God who changed the terms of the prior agreement. Furthermore, even the "work" being heralded by the Judaizers as justifying -- circumcision -- began not as a legal requirement upon man to appease God, but instead a faith act by God's people (Abraham and his offspring) as a sign of what they had received from God by faith alone.

18

For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Leading to this verse, Paul had emphasized the initial promise of God offered freely to all people "in Abraham" through the vehicle of faith in Jesus, and also the late arrival of the law and its inability to change the terms of the promise to include the works of man. Now, Paul builds on the premise of family in the context of covenant by introducing the term "inheritance." This word in its various forms enjoys a prominence throughout the remainder of the letter. Paul is declaring that the lines have been drawn once we understand the covenant is one of inheritance - accordingly, it can only be received, not earned. The law came "too late" to define the terms of God's unconditional covenant. The law has no power over the covenant, for if it had, it would indeed render the covenant of inheritance to be a different agreement altogether presented by an untrustworthy, ever-changing, unsatisfiable God. Clearly, Paul asserts, this covenant is a promise of inheritance given unconditionally to Abraham by promise...and to his seed, Jesus. This clarifies that the only manner by which anyone therefore receives the inheritance is by the same terms by which it was initially agreed - by faith.

19

Why then the law?

The culmination of Paul's argument results in this profound question - "Why then the law?" The Judaizers and other Jewish critics made a habit of crying out against Paul and the apparent threat he brought to the validity of the law (cf. [Acts. 21:28](#)). If, as Paul has expressed, the covenant passes from Abraham directly to Jesus and it couched exclusively in the context of faith, then this question of the place and Moses and the law is vital to a full theology. To disregard the law as completely distracting, extraneous, or dismissible is to suggest a divisiveness or even indecisiveness in God's salvation plan for humanity. Fortunately, in ordaining Paul as the mouthpiece of grace, God demonstrates this is not the case. Recall that Paul was an adherent to the law and had practiced it flawlessly prior to his salvation. Because of this, Paul offers a full, respectful, and accurate explanation. to the question in the context in which it is being asked. It should be noticed that this is not a full answer of all considerations and effects of "Why then the law?" but merely a full answer of "why then the law" in the context of salvation history. He will go on to offer a different (but related) response later in this book when he explains the purpose of the law in relation to the daily living or sanctification of Believers.

Paul offers four statements regarding the purpose of the law in the context of salvation history:

(statement 1) It was added

Paul already alluded to the addition of the law, noting that it came 430 years after the initial promise. The word "added" is interesting. In the Greek *prostithemi*, literally means "to come along side." Its picture of an auxiliary road constructed alongside a main thoroughfare designed to handle excess carriage. It is a "side road" not designed to lead to a separate destination, but to serve as a means to deliver travelers back to the main road and its destination. The law, therefore, was added 430 years after the fact to point people back to the covenant of grace.

because of transgressions

The understanding for the rationale for the law being added hinges on understanding the word "because." This preposition can be interpreted as having causal (looking backward) or telic (looking forward) force. If "because" is causal, it would mean that the law has a mitigating force against the transgression because the offense was already bad. In this case, the law could cure the ails of the transgression, or having a preventative purpose. However, if the "because" instead points forward, the opposite is true. This would mean that the "of transgressions" is the result of the law rather than the law being the remedy for the transgressions. Essentially, it means that the law is given with a provocative purpose, to make an already bad situation even worse.

[Romans 5:20](#) makes a clear argument for the latter, that the giving of the law has a provocative purpose. In two verses, Paul will address the mistaken notion that if God gives the law (which is declared to be holy) to provoke humans to sin, God therefore must be the author of sin.

(statement 2) until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made,

Inasmuch as it pertains to the salvation history of the Jews, Paul is explaining that the law has a temporal provocative purpose that begins with Moses and ends with Jesus. It was this "secondary road" addition that was given after the fact to Israel that was intended to point people back to the covenant of grace given by faith. This addition was purposeful until the promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Jesus, the heir (Seed) of Abraham to whom the promise had been made.

(statement 3) and it was put in place through angels

These next two reasons are provocative in their own right. Here, Paul is declaring that this law is a temporal provision given after the fact to increase the sin of Israel and point them in humility to the covenant of grace -- was in fact inferior because it was "put in place by angels." This is a statement that compares the giving of the law to the giving of the Abrahamic covenant. Abraham dealt directly with God in receiving His covenant (cf. [Gen. 15](#)). A cursory reading of [Exodus 19 & 20](#) where Moses receives the law includes details of clouds and thunder and lightning...and God speaking to Moses. But nothing about angels. However, details given elsewhere indicate that the storm phenomena are in actuality the arrival of God in the company of his heavenly host (cf. [Deut. 33:2](#); [Psalm 68:17](#)), and that an angel actually spoke the law to Moses. This is Stephen's testimony that he gave at the expense of his life ([Acts 7:38, 53](#)). The angels are not the source of the law, but the messengers of it. In this, the law is inferior to the Abrahamic covenant.

(statement 4) by an intermediary.

The only other place "intermediary" is used by Paul is to describe Jesus as the mediator between God and man ([1 Tim 2:5](#)). Paul is *not* suggesting that Jesus is the intermediary of the law between God and man (as some early theologians supposed), but rather that Moses is the intermediary of God, and accordingly stands in stark contrast to the mediator of grace, Jesus. The Greek word *mesites* is used both for "mediator" and "intermediary" but two words aren't synonymous. A mediator is one who serves as a broker between two parties at odds with one another, whereas an

intermediary is a medium of communication between two parties. This nuanced difference is profoundly realized in distinguishing between Moses, the medium of communication (an intermediary) between the law of God given through angels, and Jesus, the broker between God and man (a mediator) who himself bodily reconciles man back to God.

20

Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

Paul had no interest in demeaning Moses and the important role he played. At the same time, he was also unwilling to elevate Moses to an unbiblical importance by equating his ministry to the same significance as Christ's. To illustrate this, he reminded the Galatians of the basic Hebrew teaching of the Shema, "the Lord is One. ([Deut. 6:4](#))" God did not send multiple mediators. In Jesus, He sent a mediator to fulfill the covenant of grace extended by God to Abraham. In Moses, He provided an intermediary of the law given by angels. There is no duplication, no division, no confusion. In the cross, God fulfilled the terms of the covenant of faith by Himself coming, not by means of a human intermediary or through the mediation of angels.

21

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

Paul already established that the Galatians had received the Spirit by faith, apart from the law (v. 2), which offered the self-evident answer of their own experience. In verse 19, he asks, "why then the law?" The answer to this question is not so self-evident.

In giving the complex statement about the purpose of the law in the context of salvation history, Paul devotes the next five verses on the predictable accusation that he is in effect identifying God as the double-minded author of sin. He begins by asking the logical question that would result from the confounding presence of the law in the context of faith - is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Before answering in detail, he simply declares, "Certainly not!" This is the strongest negative response imaginable, as translations include, "God forbid!" and "Absolutely not!"

He could have left his response with this simple exclamation. However, he continues, providing his audience with three functions of the law that explain *how* the law accomplishes its purpose.

For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

The first function of the law is to fail. Here, Paul reasons that by its very nature, it cannot do what humans aspire for it to do. Remember, in verses 10-13, Paul already dealt with the paradox that the law promises that if you do it, you will live. Tragically, nobody can meet the law's demands of perfection. Paul simply articulates that insolvable conundrum here which ultimately evidences the inherent failure of the law - it has no ability to give life. If it did, then someone...even one person apart from Jesus could possibly be justified as righteous by the law. No one can, and therefore the law is ultimately wrought to fail.

This "problem of the law" still demands to be addressed, because it would seem that the law *is* in fact contrary to the law. However, Paul makes clear that the law is good and holy (cf. [Romans 7:12](#)). If we *could* live by the law perfectly, we would in fact live. The shortcoming is not in the law. The shortcoming is in our woefully broken nature that makes the necessarily perfect obedience impossible.

22

But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus

Christ might be given to those who believe.

The second function of the law is to bring condemnation as a vehicle to salvation. As is often the case with Scripture, significant meaning is packed in to seemingly insignificant words. Here, "But" carries tremendous importance. With this one little word, he identifies the Scripture as the magistrate that jails everyone and everything under sin. It would be easy and understandable to assume that "the Scripture" is synonymous with "the law" or even a specific, universally condemning verse (such as [Ps. 143:2](#)). However, Paul is asserting nothing less than "the Scripture" is a [metonymy](#) for God Himself (cf. [Rom. 11:32](#)). This is an assertion given by an eminent biblical theologian, not given to unsupportable theories or indefensible imaginings. For Paul's theology, the condemnation of humanity by the law isn't a proof text, or even a collection of verses, it is rather the entire harmony of the totality of the Scripture which is nothing less than the self-revelation of God. This Holy Spirit empowered Scripture of a singularly unified message therefore assigns the law the function of imprisoning everyone because of humanity's inability to attain perfection by the law, to the end that the promise of God can rescue those among the universally imprisoned. The means of rescue from the imprisonment of the law is belief by faith in Jesus alone.

note: The continuation of this commentary on the threefold function of the law will be included in the next installment covering Galatians 3:23-29

Galatians: The Gospel for Everyday Life

Galatians 3:15-22 - Is God's Law Good?

Small Group Member Guide

Start the conversation

What are some of the rules that governed your house (either you as a teen, or with you as a parent)?

Were you warned when you were in danger of breaking the rules?

What did those warnings sound like?

What was the result?

Were those rules good?

Has your appreciation for those rules changed? Why?

An Example Given (Galatians 3:15)

Why do you think Paul makes the effort to give "a human example?"

What does it mean that a human covenant has been "ratified?"

The Example Applied (Galatians 3:16-18)

Why do you think Paul distinguishes between the promise given to "the offspring" and not "the offsprings?"

How does verse 17 explain the example of verse 15 in the context of the promise given to all people through faith in Jesus?

How is verse 18 an effective summary of the example?

Question 1: Why, then, the law? (Read Galatians 3:19-20)

What does it mean to you that the law was added because of transgressions?

How does verse 19 say the law is further inferior to the promise, and why?

Question 2: Is God's Law Good? (Read Galatians 3:21-22)

How can you reasonably see the goodness of the law, given that the law cannot save, using verse 21 as the basis for your rationale?

What does it mean to you that the Scriptures imprisoned everything under sin? How have you seen this true in your own life?

Continue in Grace - Living Galatians 3:15-22 in the Week ahead

Day 1

The law is given to bring attention to sin and magnify the promise of righteousness through Jesus. Reflect on your past week, asking God to bring attention to your transgressions. Agree with God where you have fallen short and express praise for Jesus, in His faithfulness to provide redemption for those offenses.

Day 2

Which of God's laws cause you to struggle? Do you have a lustful eye, or an angry heart? Do you have an unbridled tongue? Do you struggle with jealousy, bitterness, or resentment? Today, fall on grace recognizing that God's law has been given to convict you of your need for grace, rather than taunt you as a forever-just-out-of-reach standard for you to pursue. Give your burdens to God, ask for Him to give you grace sufficient for today for your needs.

Day 3

God waited 430 years after giving the promise to give the law. Yet, it didn't take God 430 years to develop his holiness. His holiness is intrinsic to his being, and his law is a means that reveals his goodness. Take time today to consider the laws and rules that exist in your home, in your workplace, in your society that echo God's goodness and holiness. Thank God for his order and dominion that has shaped society and serves as a framework for civilization.

Day 4

The Bible reveals that the angels proclaim, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty," and that "God is love." There is an essential link between God's holiness and God's love. Today, express God's love to someone in need. A kind word, a generous deed, sharing the Gospel...express your love for Jesus and your joy in his holiness by loving others in meaningful ways.

Day 5

Scottsdale Bible recently announced the agreement with Casa Buena Homeowners Association that allows the church to provide additional parking on the Northwest corner of the property that will adjoin the new chapel to be constructed. The ratification of this agreement allows the church to move forward in confidence with the effort to reach more people with the Gospel. Reflect today on the promise of God given to Abraham, available to you through Jesus. Consider how you can confidently move forward through life confidently in faith because of what Jesus has done. Ask God to guide you today to walk by faith in serving and love.

Day 6

Scottsdale Bible has responded to God's grace by taking the gospel of Jesus to nations imprisoned by

man-made laws designed to keep people from Jesus, and to cultures oppressed by sin. Intercede today for those in the Middle East, Western Europe, Central and South America, and Africa who will hear God's message of freedom through Jesus. Ask God's Spirit to go before, and to prepare the ears and hearts of these people to receive Jesus as their Savior.

Family Talk

Gather the family. Ask each person to identify a different traffic law (speed limit, stop signs, lights at intersections, pedestrian walkways, no passing, wear your seat belt, no texting while driving).

Ask:

What would happen if we didn't have these laws? (it'd be much more dangerous, everyone would speed, we wouldn't know whose turn it was to go)

Do we get rewarded for obeying these rules? (In an obvious sense, no. Indirectly, yes, because we are rewarded with safety and order).

Do we get punished for breaking these rules? Why?

So are these traffic rules good or bad? Why?

Read Galatians 3:15-22

Explain that this passage tells us that God gave us rules and those rules are good. Discuss what some of those rules are and why they are good.

Say

430 years before God first gave the rules, he promised Abraham that Abraham and his family for all generations after would be God's children and Abraham believed that promise. When God gave the law 430 years later, it was a bit like the traffic rules. They were given to point people to the promise and trust God who loves us. Unfortunately, people saw these laws and thought that they could get to heaven by just being good enough and following the rules as well as they could.

We should follow God's rules because they are good. When we follow his rules, we are safer and happier and things are more orderly. But we must remember that we can't count on the rules to get us to heaven because the Bible says we have to follow the rules perfectly and never mess up if that's the way we want to try to get to heaven. That way is impossible and we'll never make it. Instead, we remember that Jesus came as the way to get to heaven. And just like Abraham believed in God's promise, we can believe in God's promise through Jesus.

Pray together, thanking God for his law that is good, and praising God for His Son who gives us heaven and eternal life.

The following pages
are for small group leaders.

Galatians: The Gospel for Everyday Life

Galatians 3:15-22 - Is God's Law Good?

Small Group Leader Guide

Prepare: Things to do before your small group convenes

- **Read** the story of Scottsdale's 2013 decision to [overturn a near-40-year ban of ice cream trucks within the city streets](#). **Consider** the following: Prior to the law banning trucks, ice cream sales were allowed. The ban was not a reaction to ice cream, but to the trucks that were delivering something dangerous to people. Do you think the people originally thought the law was good? What changed that led the people to ask for the law to be overturned?
- **Review** Galatians 3:15-22 to review the content of the biblical focus. **Invite** God to speak to you with a fresh application of His timeless truth. **Ask** God give you a timely understanding of this timeless instruction clarifying the roll of . **Submit** your heart to God's conviction, that you may be exhorted to experience anew the timely activity of God's Holy Spirit in your life.
- **Read** the provided [commentary on Galatians 3:15-22](#). **Preview** this material and engage with God's Spirit as He guides your study.
- **Pray** for your small group members by name, asking God to reveal a meaningful appreciation for their part in the family of God. **Seek** God's wisdom in leading your small group to apply God's word to their lives. **Commit** yourself to the Lord, that you would live what you teach.

To The Point - What to impart to your small group

Key Verse: But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:22, ESV)

Objectives: Through your time exploring this passage, your small group members will:

Examine the example given by Paul to explain the purpose of the law.

Discuss the superiority of faith as revealed in Scripture.

Identify individual experiences corresponding with this passage.

Leader Guide Key:

Blue - hyperlinks to other resources

Red - Reading prompts

Green - Leader headers and *sample responses to questions*

Encounter: A suggested plan for your small group experience

Start the conversation

What are some of the rules that governed your house (either you as a teen, or with you as a parent)?

Rules may include: curfew, do chores, call or text where you are and who you're with, be respectful, do your homework, bed time, don't talk back, offer to help, go to church, do your best, work hard.

Were you warned when you were in danger of breaking the rules? What did those warnings sound like? What was the result? Were those rules good? Has your appreciation for those rules changed? Why?

Say

Paul has just clearly reminded the Galatians how Jesus became the curse by assuming the sin debt for people, thus freeing them from the curse of the law, which is death. Now, Paul will explain further using practical and understandable analogies that remain meaningful even to us today. Our aim is not only to further appreciate faith so that we might live in it, but also that we would better understand the law, so we may relate properly to it in our daily lives.

Open in prayer for your time together.

An Example Given (Galatians 3:15)

Ask

Why do you think Paul makes the effort to give "a human example?"

Paul is intentional to make the theological both understandable and practical. His argument that the law is a later provision of God (subsequent to faith) that was never intended to invalidate or alter the original promise, is reasonable and understandable because the underlying principle is evident in human contracts or agreements. By illustrating the human example, the plain reliability of the biblical assertion is more relatable.

What does it mean that a human covenant has been "ratified?"

When both sides agree that the terms are acceptable for completion. In essence, it makes the arrangement formally valid.

The Example Applied (Galatians 3:16-18)

Say

Paul now moves from the "human example" to the matter of importance with his Galatian Christians.

Ask

Why do you think Paul distinguishes between the promise given to "the offspring" and not "the offsprings?"

If the promise were given to "the offsprings," the implication is that righteousness is a hereditary birthright (as was the assertion of the Judaizers). In making it clear that the promise was given to "the offspring," the implication is that the promise is extended to all people solely through the one to whom the promise is realized, meaning Jesus.

How does verse 17 explain the example of verse 15 in the context of the promise given to all people through faith in Jesus?

Paul reminds the Galatians that the promise of Jesus was given by God to Abraham 430 years prior to the giving of the law. Therefore, just as with the human example, the later provision of the law does not annul or add to the original, ratified covenant that God made with Abraham.

How is verse 18 an effective summary of the example?

Paul is making it clear that the law and faith cannot both offer the inheritance. To embrace the terms of the law for righteousness comes at the expense of faith. Then, to be clear, Paul repeats succinctly, God gave Abraham his inheritance by promise. Abraham did not earn it. He simply believed God.

Question 1: Why, then, the law? (Read Galatians 3:19-20)

With the promise of God only attainable through faith, it begs this question, why, then the law?

While Paul's answer here is not a full explanation of the entire purpose of the law, he does offer a thorough response of the law's purpose in the context of the law's purpose in salvation history.

Ask

What does it mean to you that the law was added because of transgressions?

While a variety of answers are possible, it is important to reiterate that the law was added, 430 years after the promise through faith was established. You may want to use the analogy of "access roads" around Interstates that provide additional access to the highway - the law is given to "drive" or compel people to the promise through faith, not provide an alternate way to the promise.

Because of this, "because of transgressions" cannot be rightly interpreted to mean that the law is given as a remedy to the problem of transgressions. Instead, the law is given as a result or consequence of transgressions, provided to make clear the need to respond to the offer of God's promise through faith alone. (cf. [Rom. 5:20](#)), performing this purpose until Jesus came as the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (his offspring).

Ask

How does verse 19 say the law is further inferior to the promise, and why?

Verse 19 says that the promise was given directly from God to Abraham, but the law was given to men through angels. While the law is holy and authored by God, its being communicated by angels (cf. [Deut. 33:2](#); [Psalm 68:17](#); [Acts 7:38, 53](#)). demonstrates its inferiority to the promise. Clarify that verse 20 explains that because God is one, the law therefore is not an alternate option to receiving God's promise, but a good gift from God given to point people to the original provision of promise through faith.

Question 2: Is God's Law Good? (Read Galatians 3:21-22)

Say

Paul now reasons with the Galatians. He just explained that the law can't save you. It was given to provoke your awareness of transgressing against God. The purpose of the law is provocative. Now, therefore, it is reasonable to ask, is God's law good? It is undeniable that the promise from God is good. Does the law oppose it, and is therefore bad? Paul explains this is not the case, and that even the law that shines the spotlight on our sin and sin nature is indeed good.

Ask

How can you reasonably see the goodness of the law, given that the law cannot save, using verse 21 as the basis for your rationale?

Paul explains that if the law could give life, right standing with God would be available through the law. This possibility would be a second path to God. This would be confusing and destructive because people would never trust the original promise. It would be destructive to man because he would be forever burdened by the question if he had been good enough, tried hard enough, or failed even in the slightest way which would invalidate all the other earnest labors for righteousness. Paul argues convincingly that the law, then, must not be able to accomplish what the Judaizers claim, and this is good because it means that God's original promise to Abraham, fulfilled in Jesus, is alone sufficient to impart righteousness to all people, Jew and Gentile!

What does it mean to you that the Scriptures imprisoned everything under sin? How have you seen this true in your own life?

Varying answers will offer an understanding that the law lets us know that actions fall short and our nature is corrupted by sin. The law acts as a prison warden that shows us how we are imprisoned by our fallenness, our unrighteousness. It is worthwhile to note that for Paul, "the Scriptures" are not merely the law, but the full self-revelation of God. Essentially, God has revealed his holiness through the law to show the vast expanse between ourselves and Him that we cannot rectify on our own.

Say

As we move forward in Galatians and together learn how to live in grace, it is important that we take away a right understanding of the law given by God through angels, and relate appropriately to it. We must not disregard it because we mistakenly reason that its time has passed. Rather, seeing the law for what it is helps us appreciate grace and live fully in God's promise when God uses the law to declare his holiness as a stark contrast to our sin and sin nature. Because of the law we know we need a Savior. Because of the promise, we can know and receive God's Savior in Jesus through faith.

Let's close in prayer:

Invite the group to pray for one another. Pray over any needs or issues that were shared in your time together. Pray over the content discussed in your small group, highlighting the aspects that God's Spirit revealed to your group as important.

Encourage your group to use the "Continue in grace" resources (below and on the Group Members Page) on their own or with their family, to extend the small group experience into the week. Confirm your plans for your next gathering!

Continue in Grace - Living Galatians 3:15-22 in the Week ahead

Day 1

The law is given to bring attention to sin and magnify the promise of righteousness through Jesus. Reflect on your past week, asking God to bring attention to your transgressions. Agree with God where you have fallen short and express praise for Jesus, in His faithfulness to provide redemption for those offenses.

Day 2

Which of God's laws cause you to struggle? Do you have a lustful eye, or an angry heart? Do you have an unbridled tongue? Do you struggle with jealousy, bitterness, or resentment? Today, fall on grace recognizing that God's law has been given to convict you of your need for grace, rather than taunt you as a forever-just-out-of-reach standard for you to pursue. Give your burdens to God, ask for Him to give you grace sufficient for today for your needs.

Day 3

God waited 430 years after giving the promise to give the law. Yet, it didn't take God 430 years to develop his holiness. His holiness is intrinsic to his being, and his law is a means that reveals his goodness. Take time today to consider the laws and rules that exist in your home, in your workplace, in your society that echo God's goodness and holiness. Thank God for his order and dominion that has shaped society and serves as a framework for civilization.

Day 4

The Bible reveals that the angels proclaim, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty," and that "God

is love." There is an essential link between God's holiness and God's love. Today, express God's love to someone in need. A kind word, a generous deed, sharing the Gospel...express your love for Jesus and your joy in his holiness by loving others in meaningful ways.

Day 5

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Day 6

Scottsdale Bible has responded to God's grace by taking the gospel of Jesus to nations imprisoned by man-made laws designed to keep people from Jesus, and to cultures oppressed by sin. Intercede today for those in the Middle East, Western Europe, Central and South America, and Africa who will hear God's message of freedom through Jesus. Ask God's Spirit to go before, and to prepare the ears and hearts of these people to receive Jesus as their Savior.

Family Talk

Gather the family. Ask each person to identify a different traffic law (speed limit, stop signs, lights at intersections, pedestrian walkways, no passing, wear your seat belt, no texting while driving).

Ask:

What would happen if we didn't have these laws? (it'd be much more dangerous, everyone would speed, we wouldn't know whose turn it was to go)

Do we get rewarded for obeying these rules? (In an obvious sense, no. Indirectly, yes, because we are rewarded with safety and order).

Do we get punished for breaking these rules? Why?

So are these traffic rules good or bad? Why?

Read Galatians 3:15-22

Explain that this passage tells us that God gave us rules and those rules are good. Discuss what some of those rules are and why they are good.

Say

430 years before God first gave the rules, he promised Abraham that Abraham and his family for all generations after would be God's children and Abraham believed that promise. When God gave the law 430 years later, it was a bit like the traffic rules. They were given to point people to the promise and trust God who loves us. Unfortunately, people saw these laws and thought that they could get to heaven by just being good enough and following the rules as well as they could.

We should follow God's rules because they are good. When we follow his rules, we are safer and happier and things are more orderly. But we must remember that we can't count on the rules to get us to heaven because the Bible says we have to follow the rules perfectly and never mess up if

that's the way we want to try to get to heaven. That way is impossible and we'll never make it. Instead, we remember that Jesus came as the way to get to heaven. And just like Abraham believed in God's promise, we can believe in God's promise through Jesus.

Pray together, thanking God for his law that is good, and praising God for His Son who gives us heaven and eternal life.