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| <b>Series:</b><br>6:8@Six:Eight | <b>Reference:</b><br>Galatians 3:15-25 &<br>Various passages | <b>Title:</b><br>Story | <b>Date:</b><br>11.11.18 |
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## Community Group Questions

### Take time to pray through the Six:Eight Prayer Foci for 2018/19

*If the Holy Spirit gives anyone a specific word for the church  
share them with the other Community Group Leaders.*

- 1. FREEDOM:** Pray against spiritual attack on our church body & it's members, so that kingdom ministry goes unhindered.
- 2. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION:** Pray we'd abide in the Presence of Christ, honoring the Word & Spirit of God, being transformed & becoming more effective in witness. That we'd be drawn deeply into worship & prayer in powerful ways this year.
- 3. LEADERSHIP:** Pray for leadership to be filled with the knowledge of the Word & power of the Spirit, operating out of the two as gracious strong servant leaders.
- 4. MINISTRIES:** For all 8 church ministries to run smoothly, having all current & future resources provided for them to thrive (*Kids, Community Groups, Kingdom Opportunities, Stewardship, Impressions, Worship Arts, Prayer, Missions*).
- 5. LOCAL EVANGELISM:** That we'd preach the Word boldly & minister in the power of the Spirit to see people come to faith & publicly declare that through baptism. - for divine openings with neighbors, coworkers, friends & Community Partners.
- 6. CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION:** To be a *'House of Prayer for all Nations'* (Isaiah 56:7), obedient to the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20), overflowing to our Kinship Network relationships reaching Arab world Muslims, and other mission endeavors of the church.
- 7. GIVING:** Pray that we'd be stretched in faithful giving of our financial resources in order not to be hindered in our kingdom ministry as a church.

### Study Questions

Read through the value of Story & the Mature Christian Profile in light of it...any initial thoughts or comments concerning these ideas?

### Story Matters

We are rooted in the Scriptures, the Story of a loving God pursuing his children. It is a story in four parts, what it was like (*creation*), what happened (*fall*), what it is like now (*redemption*), and what it will be (*restoration*). The central character is Jesus who lovingly bore in himself our judgment, and guides us by his timeless teaching. This story extends through his followers in history. It encompasses and speaks to all issues of life, restoring our relationship to God, and bringing freedom & joy where there was once none.

### The Mature Christian Profile

*The mature Christian in the issue of Story isn't only knowledgeable of God's Word, but has allowed it to influence & guide, all aspects of their life. They see themselves as rooted in the biblical story, which is larger than themselves, beginning in creation & ending in the hope of restoration. They aren't only able to 'quote' or lead a person to certain ideas or verses, but more importantly, are able to apply them in ways which are refreshing & challenging to the soul. Their world view is shaped by the story of God, how they view life & reality; it's born out of this holistic story. They don't try to impress with their knowledge, but if one listens closely to the mature Christian, they can hear that their words are bolstered with the ideas & verses of Scripture. They no longer dwell on the elementary teachings, but have moved onto deeper issues of the faith. They don't try to impress, but are just 'being'.*

- How important are the Scriptures in your life?
- Do they guide your life as they do the person in the above description?
- Are the four points below how you've viewed Scripture in the past? Why is this a faulty view of the Scriptural story??

(1) *God created Adam & Eve to live in perfect harmony with him.*

(2) *They chose to turn away.*

(3) *So, God sat back & scratched his head saying, "Well I'll give them this Law to live by. If they live right, then I'll accept them, if not, I'll cut them off."*

(4) *And then when he figured out that was useless, he sent Jesus as a payment for the sin revealed in us by the very law he put in place - Jesus as a kind of afterthought.*

Read again Galatians 3:15-25 & Genesis 12:1-3 and discuss why our connection to God is based on relationship & grace as opposed to performance.

Then think on the following questions...

- Does this mean we are free to do whatever we want, or live however we want, as if we are not bound by the Law anymore? Is God's moral law still our standard?
- How do you seek to live in line with the Law's standard, but in a way which brings freedom & joy, instead of legalism & judgmental-ness?

- Read from *Love Thy Body*, pp183-184 about the 3 different forms of law in the Old Testament. Has this ever confused you? Does this sermon & this writing from Nancy Pearcey help clarify? (see below)
- Look at the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20 - how is breaking one of the commandments 2-10 equivalent to breaking the first?
- Why does Grace bring freedom, a sense of humor, lightheartedness & joy?

**The following is from the book *LOVE THY BODY*, by Nancy Pearcey - Three Types of Law, pp183-184 (a book we all should read in this day & age)**

*What about the fact that the Old Testament refers to practices that are clearly culture-bound, like prohibitions on blending two types of fiber in cloth? How is anyone justified in picking and choosing among Old Testament laws? In the New Testament era, the most intense controversies were over just this question. Were Christians still required to practice “Jewish customs” (Gal 2:14), like circumcision and avoiding food sacrificed to idols? The answer was no. Moral laws still apply but ceremonial and civil laws do not.*

**CEREMONIAL laws** were symbolic, governing temple worship - sacrifices, feasts, foods, the priesthood, worship, circumcision, and ritual purity (the clean laws). Even in Old Testament times, these laws were not universal; they were not applied to other nations. The prophets recognized the difference between moral and ceremonial laws: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and the acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). Jesus quoted the same verse to get the Pharisees to grasp the distinction (Mat 9:13). And he explicitly rejected the clean laws. “In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean” (Mark 7:19).

*The prohibition on weaving two different fibers together was a ceremonial law, intended to symbolize purity & holiness. In fact, the history of the Old Testament is replete with symbols and foreshadowing of the Messiah. But no one needs foreshadowing after the reality has arrived. Paul writes, “Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Col. 2:16-17). The early church stopped following the sacrificial laws when they understood that Christ came as the ultimate sacrifice.*

**CIVIL laws** were necessary because Israel was a nation. Even in Old Testament times, these laws were not universal: they were not applied to other nations. They ended when ancient Israel no longer existed as a political state.

*The civil law was based on the moral law, but the two were not equivalent. Jesus drew the distinction when he said divorce is morally wrong but it was permitted in civil law because people “hearts were heard” (Matt. 19:8). Similarly, practices such as slavery and polygamy were not presented as ideal morally but were permitted legally. By contrast, same-sex relationships were not permitted morally or legally.*

**MORAL laws** apply universally, to all people at all times. The Bible condemns all nations, not only Israel, for greed, injustice, oppression, violence, and sexual immorality. The New Testament repeats these moral principles to indicate that they continue to be valid.

Jesus himself put his imprimatur on Old Testament sexual morality. When asked about marriage, he quoted the Genesis text as authoritative. "Haven't you read?" he asked - implying that the text should be treated as conclusive. "At the beginning, the Creator 'made them male and female'" (Matt. 19:4). Christians are meant to take their template for human nature from creation.