

242 Guide - Small Group Discussion Guide

This weekly guide has been created as a tool to help you study individually and/or in a small group and live what you are learning from the Bible and weekend services here at RiverGlen.

In Acts 2:42 we are told that the people in the first church were living out what they were learning from the apostles' teaching. *The purpose of this guide is to equip you to put into practice what you learn.*



Week 2: Finding Freedom

Big Idea: This is our second week in a 4 week journey through the book Colossians. Entitled “Losing My Religion” we are learning how to lose religion and embrace a relationship with Jesus. Colossians was written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome to confront and encourage the Colossians. Apparently the young church was mixing Christianity and other religions and trying to do things to get right with God. Paul teaches that Jesus Christ alone is supreme and sufficient. Jesus, not religion, is our bridge to God and what gives us eternal hope and comfort.

Ice Breaker: Share with your group how you typically pack for a trip?

- Take everything, just in case?
- Pack light?
- Make a check-list and double check it?
- Do your best to remember, but you always forget something?
- Other: _____?

THE BAGGAGE OF OUR JOURNEY Everyone has a different style of packing. Some people like to pack three bags for a weekend getaway. Others prefer to pack just the bare necessities for survival. On our life's journey there are many things we “pack:” skills, relationships, experiences, and memories. These enhance our lives and keep us motivated for the future. Yet there are other things that we shove into our bags: mistakes, hurts, disappointments, and failures. These things weigh heavily on us, producing guilt and shame, and keeping us from enjoying life. As we seek to understand the baggage we carry, we cannot overlook the religious baggage we may be holding. Any time we focus on rules to define our spirituality, we may actually pack heavy bags that slow us down from experiencing the true life of Jesus.

1. Did you have any religious upbringing growing up? What do you remember about it?
2. Have you ever felt weighed down by religious rules or duties? Explain.
3. What positive or negative experiences from your background do you think influence the way you view religion? Or, what positive or negative experiences from religion influence the way you view your life?

GOD, AM I GOOD ENOUGH? Do you remember playing freeze tag as a child? When you got tagged by the person who was “it,” you pretended to be frozen and couldn't move until a free person tagged you. Sometimes we experience this type of captivity in faith. We may often feel the frustrating grip of religious legalism: striving to maintain a high standard of goodness, right living, morality, or modesty. It is an unfortunate

reality found in many religions and even in many churches that makes us feel like we are never good enough. But look at what the following verses in the Bible say about that kind of faith:

Read Colossians 2:8 and Colossians 2:13-14

Christian author C.S. Lewis writes: *“I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that though Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, yet it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond.”*

4. What do you think about this statement that Lewis makes? And what does he mean by “it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond?”
5. How do you think God makes us become alive with Christ?

Read Colossians 2:18-22

GOING BEYOND RULES Guilt and shame tear us away from God, making us believe we are unworthy. Do you remember that something beyond from that C.S. Lewis quote? That “something” is the reality that God has replaced our guilt and shame with righteousness (right living) and reconciliation (friendship). This act of God which puts us in a right relationship with Him is based on grace and is a free gift. You can’t earn it or do the right things to obtain it. We have to go beyond human rules to get that.

6. Describe the kind of spiritual baggage you currently have. Explain.
 - a. **Carry-on only.** I don’t like to get too involved in faith or religion.
 - b. **Lost luggage.** Somehow I lost track of my faith in God.
 - c. **Suitcase with wheels.** I’ve had tough experiences, but God has really helped me.
 - d. **Too many bags.** Many disappointments have weighed my faith down.
 - e. **Under-packed.** I don’t have enough of the right resources in my life to pursue faith.
 - f. **Other:** _____.
7. How do you want to change your religious baggage? What should you pack more of? What should you leave behind?

Reflection & Prayer

Lord we thank you for sending Jesus to take our guilt & shame away & allowing us to be His friends. Help us this week to simply accept the price that Jesus paid for our “baggage” & to live as His Follower in gratitude. Amen.

Spend some time this week by meditating on the following Bible verses.

Monday:	Colossians 2:1-23	Tuesday:	Galatians 5:1-16
Wednesday:	Romans 3:21-26	Thursday:	Psalms 32
Friday:	Psalms 51	Saturday:	Psalms 103
Sunday:	Psalms 142		