



Darkwood Brew.org

Wherever You Are, We'll Meet You There

New to the role of facilitator? Here are a few tips to help you get started.

- First of all, a facilitator's job is to coordinate the flow of each session. View the video segment ahead of time and make your own notes and observations.
- Prepare the meeting place so that it is comfortable. Arrive early; help organize any refreshments and test your video player/computer.
- Getting to know one another helps the discussions flow. Welcome all, catch up and reflect a bit on last week's session in the first few minutes.
- You don't have to be the expert. You are not expected to provide answers to questions provided. So let the questions ignite the conversation and see where it takes the group.
- It's everyone's responsibility to make sure everyone else gets an equal amount of time to talk.
- Listen first; evaluate later. Make sure you understand a comment, then ask questions or pose other options.
- Encourage participants to bring a Bible or other resources.
- If you feel so moved, start, and/or end your session in prayer.

Leaders Guide

"Abrasive Grace"

An unconventional journey through Paul's letter to the Galatians. Cantankerous and controversial, Paul remains one of Christianity's most intriguing and influential characters. This six-part series provides surprising insight for our lives today. Join scholars, authors, theologians and Darkwood Brew host Rev. Eric Elnes, Ph.D. in this invitation to study this often abrasive but surprisingly graceful message.

Welcome to the Darkwood Brew journey!

We are glad you can join us. Our primary resources for small group study are condensed versions of Darkwood Brew's weekly one-hour episodes. These are called GUIDED EPISODES. Each Guided Episode is 25-30 minutes in length. There are pause points with questions provided for each Episode, intended for group discussion or individual reflection.

On the following page, you will find information on the Series Topic, Skype Guests, Scripture passage, and Questions posed during the episode.



Questions:

1. What unearned gifts have you received?
2. How do you think it felt for the Galatians when Paul challenged their beliefs?
3. Where do you find constancy in your experience of God?
4. How would Paul's message of inclusivity for the Galatians?
5. What does it mean if Grace is not about our faith but about God's faithfulness?
6. How can our gift of radical grace affect our actions in the world?
7. How does 13 billion years of grace manifest in your life every day?

EPISODE TITLE: "Episode 1"

Abrasive Grace, Episode 1

Featured Guest: Michael Hegeman

Dr. Michael Hegeman holds a Ph.D. in Homiletics (Preaching) and New Testament Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a professor of Spiritual Studies at the Southwest Institute of Healing Arts in Tempe, AZ. Michael is also a composer and a "mystic": seeing the Divine in all of life. Michael has lived and taught in northwest China, the South Pacific, and in the Middle East. He is a Reiki Master Teacher and has been deeply involved in spiritual retreats (with music, dance, and prayer) for the last thirty years. He volunteers his time tutoring high school and elementary school children in reading skills. He loves gardening and communing with the Divine through nature.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 1

1 Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—²and all the members of God's family who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed! 10 Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ. 11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; ¹²for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. ¹⁴I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. 18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; ¹⁹but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother. ²⁰In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! ²¹Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, ²²and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; ²³they only heard it said, 'The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.' ²⁴And they glorified God because of me.

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Questions:

1. Are there any rules that Christians follow that seem off the mark to you?
2. In what ways can diverse practices enrich our Christian experiences?
3. Where do we find our identity as Christians? Is it in rules and actions, or in some other way?
4. How does grace overshadow rules, actions and human failings?
5. What does it mean to trust in grace?

EPISODE TITLE: "Episode 2"

Abrasive Grace, Episode 2

Featured Guest: Beverly Gaventa

Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Princeton Theological Seminary's Helen H.P. Manson Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis, specializes in the Pauline epistles and in Luke-Acts with an emphasis on theological interpretation. She holds an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in New York, a Ph.D. from Duke University, an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Kalamazoo College, and an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Christian Theological Seminary. She also is an honorary professor of New Testament at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. She is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church. Her courses include Paul's Letter to the Romans, The Acts of the Apostles, Sin and Salvation in the Old and New Testaments (cotaught with Professor Jacqueline Lapsley), Women and the Letters of Paul, and Paul and Karl (cotaught with Professor Bruce McCormack). She is currently working on a commentary on Romans for the New Testament Library.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 1: 11-24

11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; ¹²for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. ¹⁴I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. 18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; ¹⁹but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother. ²⁰In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! ²¹Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, ²²and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; ²³they only heard it said, 'The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy.' ²⁴And they glorified God because of me.

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Questions:

1. What is important enough to risk making mistakes for?
2. Are you comfortable making mistakes in your understanding of God?
3. How do you think mistakes relate to the creative process?
4. What does it mean to live into being fully human?
5. Are there ways your doubt about God can fuel your faith?
6. Have you experienced a call in your life involving risk?

EPISODE TITLE: “Episode 3”

Abrasive Grace, Episode 3

Featured Guest: Gareth Higgins

Gareth Higgins is a writer and broadcaster from Belfast, Northern Ireland, who has worked as an academic and activist. He is the author of *Cinematic States: America in 50 Movies* and *How Movies Helped Save My Soul: Finding Spiritual Fingerprints in Culturally Significant Films*.

He blogs at www.godisnotelsewhere.wordpress.com and co-presents “The Film Talk” podcast with Jett Loe at www.thefilmtalk.com. He is also a Sojourners contributing editor. Originally from Northern Ireland, he lives in Asheville, North Carolina.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 1: 1-12

1 Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—² and all the members of God’s family who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,⁵ to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!⁹ As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed! 10 Am I now seeking human approval, or God’s approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ. 11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin;¹² for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

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Questions:

1. What are some of our elemental spirits? What limits or enslaves us today?
2. How does grace allow for questions, differences and doubt?
3. How would grace fit into your list?
4. How does Jay's story relate to Paul's ideas about grace?
5. How have you experienced grace in your life?

EPISODE TITLE: "Episode 4"

Abrasive Grace, Episode 4

Featured Guest: Jay Bakker

Jay Bakker grew up with a theme park for a playground, watched his parents' evangelistic empire self-destruct, turned to drink and drugs as a teen, sobered up in his 20s, and became a pastor to punk-rockers and skate-boarders. Born and raised when Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker were at the height of their TV ministry, Jay – then known as Jamie – spent much of his childhood on the set of their "PTL" show or at their Heritage USA religious resort. Scandal ended his parents' ministries in the 1980s, and dark, angry years ensued for the boy. In the 1990s he hooked up with Revolution, an edgy ministry bringing conservative Christian beliefs into dialogue with punk, skater and other subcultures. Pierced and tattooed, he has served with Revolution in Phoenix, Atlanta, and New York City, where in 2006 he started a small congregation in a Brooklyn barroom, emphasizing Jesus's unconditional love. He was featured in a reality series, "One Punk Under God," on the Sundance Channel in late 2006 and early 2007.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 2: 1-21

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. ²I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain. ³But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. ⁴But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us— ⁵we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. ⁶And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me. ⁷On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised ⁸(for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), ⁹and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do. ¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; ¹²for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. ¹³And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, 'If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?' ¹⁵We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. ¹⁷But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; ²⁰and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

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Questions:

1. Where do you find divisions in the modern world?
2. Why does Paul dismiss ideas of both literalism and non-literalism?
3. If trust and love win over legalism, how does that change how we live?
4. What are some of the Christian “straightjackets” that restrict people?
5. What can help us move away from ideas of who is right and who is wrong?
6. What does Paul’s message of freedom mean for you?

EPISODE TITLE: “Episode 5”

Abrasive Grace, Episode 5

Featured Guest: Susan Smith

Dr. Susan K. Smith is a global thinker with a vast knowledge of current social justice, racial-ethnic, and political events. Since she became pastor of Advent United Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, in 1990, the church’s membership has increased from five members to about 300. In addition to outreach ministries to the city’s poor, the church is known for its focus on social justice for all races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual preferences. Smith has worked to empower urban youth through an annual summer arts program, and she launched a thriving community garden to help decrease hunger in the community.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 2: 15-21

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. ¹⁷But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; ²⁰and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.



Questions:

1. Have uncomfortable situations sometimes yielded positive results in your life?
2. What advice do you think Paul would have for the church today?
3. Can you think of other modern examples of abrasive grace?
4. How can we live into Paul's vision of abrasive grace in the world today?

EPISODE TITLE: "Episode 6"

Abrasive Grace, Episode 6

Featured Guest: Phillip Gulley

Philip Gulley is a Quaker pastor and writer and speaker from Danville, Indiana. An eclectic writer, Gulley has published 20 books, including the acclaimed Harmony series chronicling life in the eccentric Quaker community of Harmony, Indiana and the best-selling Porch Talk series of inspirational and humorous essays. Gulley's memoir, *I Love You, Miss Huddleston: And Other Inappropriate Longings of My Indiana Childhood*, recounts his coming-of-age years in Danville, Indiana. In addition, Gulley and co-author James Mulholland describe their progressive worldview in their books *If Grace Is True* and *If God Is Love*, followed by Gulley's books *If the Church Were Christian* and *The Evolution of Faith*.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Galatians 3: 1-14

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! ²The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? ⁴Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. ⁵Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶Just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness', ⁷so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. ⁸And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.' ⁹For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. ¹⁰For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.' ¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.' ¹²But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, 'Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.' ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'—¹⁴in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

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