

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4

In your group read Galatians chapter 4 aloud. As a group discuss the general content of the chapter.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP: Read and Discuss each verse and translation along with the “Additional Information.”

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 VERSES 1-3

.....> READ THE FOLLOWING: Galatians 4: [1] Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; [2] But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. [3] Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (King James Version)

¹Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves great wealth for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. ²They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. ³And that’s the way it was with us before Christ came. We were slaves to the spiritual powers of this world. **(New Living Translation)**

[1] What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. **[2]** He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. **[3]** So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. **(New International Version)**

1 Let me say this another way. A young child who will get all the riches of his family is not different from a servant who is owned by the family. And yet the young child owns everything. **2** While he is young, he is cared for by men his father trusts. These men tell the child what he can and cannot do. The child cannot do what he wants to do until he has become a certain age. **3** We were as children also held by the Law. We obeyed the Law in our religious worship. **(The New Life Testament)**

Additional Information: (Verse 3) – The “basic principles of the world” are the elementary stages of religious practice, whether in Jewish or pagan religion. Paul uses the illustration of slavery to show that before Christ came and died for sins, people were in bondage to the law. Thinking they could be saved by it, they became enslaved to trying – and failing – to keep it. But we who were once slaves are now God’s very own children who have an intimate relationship with him. Because of Christ, there is no reason to be afraid of God. We can come boldly into his presence, knowing that he will welcome us as his family members (Life Application Bible, p. 2121). **<..... STOP AND DISCUSS.**

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4
VERSES 4-7

.....> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [4] But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, [5] To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. [6] And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [7] Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. **(King James Version)**

⁴But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. ⁵God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. ⁶And because you Gentiles have become his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, and now you can call God your dear Father. ⁷Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, everything he has belongs to you. **(New Living Translation)**

⁴But when the time was right, God sent his Son, and a woman gave birth to him. His Son obeyed the Law, ⁵so he could set us free from the Law, and we could become God's children. ⁶Now that we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. And his Spirit tells us that God is our Father. ⁷You are no longer slaves. You are God's children, and you will be given what he has promised. **(Contemporary English Version)**

[4] But at the right time, God sent His Son. A woman gave birth to Him under the Jewish Law. [5] This all happened so He could buy with His blood and make free all those who were held by the Jewish Law. Then we might become the sons of God. [6] Because you are the sons of God, he has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. The Spirit cries, "Father!" [7] So now you are no longer a workman who is owned by someone. You are a son. If you are a son, then you will receive what God has promised through Christ. **(The New Life Testament)**

4 but when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, **5** to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons. **6** the proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries, "Abba, Father," **7** and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave any more; and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir. **(Jerusalem Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 4) – "Under the Law." Like all men, Jesus was obligated to obey God's law. Unlike anyone else, however, He perfectly obeyed that law (Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5). His sinlessness made Him the unblemished sacrifice for sins, who "fulfilled all righteousness," that is, perfectly obeyed God in everything. That perfect righteousness is what is imputed to those who believe in Him (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1795).

(Verses 5-7) – Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to his father's property, even if he was formerly a slave. He was not a second-class son; he was equal to all other sons, biological or adopted, in his father's family. *Abba* is an Aramaic word for father. It was used by Christ in his prayer in Mark 14:36. As adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God's resources. As God's heirs, we can claim what he has provided for us – our full identity as his

children (Romans 8:15-17) (Life Application Bible, p. 2122). <::::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 **VERSES 8-11**

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [8] ¶ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. [9] But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? [10] Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. [11] I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. **(King James Version)**

[8] In the past you did not know God, and so you were slaves of beings who are not gods. [9] But now that you know God – or, I should say, now that God knows you – how is it that you want to turn back to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits? Why do you want to become their slaves all over again? [10] You pay special attention to certain days, months, seasons, and years. [11] I am afraid for you! Can it be that all my work for you has been for nothing? **(Today's English Version)**

8 Once you were ignorant of God, and enslaved to 'gods' who are not really gods at all; 9 but now that you have come to acknowledge God – or rather, now that God has acknowledged you – how can you want to go back to elemental things like these, that can do nothing and give nothing, and be their slaves? 10 You and your special days and months and seasons and years! 11 You make me feel I have wasted my time with you. **(Jerusalem Bible)**

⁸ Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. ⁹ And now that you have found God (or should I say, now that God has found you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual powers of this world? ¹⁰ You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years. ¹¹ I fear for you. I am afraid that all my hard work for you was worth nothing. **(New Living Translation)**

Additional Information: (Verses 8-11) – While salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 5:15, 16, 18; 6:23; Eph. 2:8), it brings with it serious responsibility (Lk. 12:48). God requires believers to live a holy life because they are children of a holy God and desire to love and worship Him (1 Pet. 1:15-18). That obligation was to the unchanging moral and spiritual principles that forever reflect the nature of God; however, it did not include the rituals and ceremonies unique to Israel under Mosaic law as the Judaizers falsely claimed (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1795).

(Verse 10) – “Days...years.” The rituals, ceremonies, and festivals of the Jewish religious calendar which God had given, but were never required for the church. Paul warns the Galatians, as he did the Colossians against legalistically observing them as if they were required by God or could earn favor with Him (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1795). <::::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4
VERSES 12-16

.....> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [12] ¶ Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. [13] Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. [14] And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. [15] Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. [16] Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? **(King James Version)**

[12] I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. [13] As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. [14] Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. [15] What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. [16] Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? **(New International Version)**

12 I beg you, my brothers and sisters, be like me. After all, I am like you. You have not done me any wrong. ¹³You remember why I preached the gospel to you the first time; it was because I was ill. ¹⁴But even though my physical condition was a great trial to you, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you received me as you would an angel from heaven; you received me as you would Christ Jesus. ¹⁵You were so happy! What has happened? I myself can say that you would have taken out your own eyes, if you could, and given them to me. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? **(Today's English Version)**

Additional Information: (Verse 12) – “Become like me, for I became like you.” Paul had been a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, trusting in his own righteousness to save him (Phil. 3:4-6). But when he came to Christ, he abandoned all efforts to save himself, trusting wholly in God's grace (Phil. 3:7-9). He urged the Galatians to follow his example and avoid the legalism of the Judaizers. **“You have not injured me.”** Though the Jews persecuted him when he first went to Galatia, the Galatian believers had not harmed Paul, but had enthusiastically received him when he preached the gospel to them (cf. Acts 13:42-50; 14:19). How, he asked, could they reject him now? (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1795).

(Verse 13) – It is possible to understand the sickness as simply something that afflicted Paul while he was preaching to the Galatians. Some claim that it was no physical sickness, but that Paul was referring to his sufferings when he brought the gospel to Galatia (See Acts 14:11-23) (Helps for Translators Handbook). <.....
STOP AND DISCUSS.

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4
VERSES 17-20

.....> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [17] ¶ They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. [18] But it is

good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. [19] ¶ My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, [20] I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. (King James Version)

[17] Those false teachers are trying to turn your eyes toward them. They do not want you to follow my teaching. What they are doing is not good. **[18]** It is good when people help you if they do not hope to get something from it. They should help you all the time, not only when I am with you. **[19]** My children, I am suffering birth pains for you again. I will suffer until Christ's life is in your life. **[20]** I wish I could be with you now. I wish I could speak to you in a more gentle voice, but I am troubled about you. **(The New Life Testament)**

17 Those other people show a deep interest in you, but their intentions are not good. All they want is to separate you from me, so that you will have the same interest in them as they have in you. ¹⁸Now, it is good to have such a deep interest if the purpose is good—this is true always, and not merely when I am with you. ¹⁹My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ's nature is formed in you. ²⁰How I wish I were with you now, so that I could take a different attitude towards you. I am so worried about you! **(Today's English Version)**

Additional Information: (Verse 17) – “They.” The Judaizers. **“Zealously affect you.”** With a serious concern or warm interest (the same word is used in 1:14) to describe Paul's former zeal for Judaism). The Judaizers appeared to have a genuine interest in the Galatians, but their true motive was to exclude the Galatians from God's gracious salvation and win recognition for themselves (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1796).
<:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 VERSES 21-23

::::::::::> READ THE FOLLOWING: Galatians 4: [21] ¶ Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? [22] For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. [23] But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. (King James Version)

[21] Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? **[22]** For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. **[23]** His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. **(New International Version)**

[21] Listen! If you want to be under the Jewish Law, why do you not listen to what it says? **[22]** The Holy Writings say that Abraham had two sons. One was born from a workwoman (Hagar) who was owned by someone. She had to do what she was told. The other son was born from a woman (Sarah) who was free to work and live as she desired. (Genesis 16:15; 21:2-9) **[23]** The son born from the workwoman who was

owned by someone was like any other birth. The son born from the free woman was different. That son had been promised by God. **(The New Life Testament)**

Additional Information: (Verse 21) – People are saved because of their faith in Christ. Paul contrasted those who are enslaved to the law (represented by Hagar, the slave woman) with those who are free from the law (represented by Sarah, the free woman). Hagar’s abuse of Sarah (Genesis 16:4) was like the persecution that the Gentile Christians were getting from the Judaizers who insisted on keeping the law in order to be saved. <:::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 VERSES 24-27

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [24] Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. [25] For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. [26] But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. [27] For it is written, REJOICE, THOU BARREN THAT BEAREST NOT; BREAK FORTH AND CRY, THOU THAT TRAVAILEST NOT: FOR THE DESOLATE HATH MANY MORE CHILDREN THAN SHE WHICH HATH AN HUSBAND. (ISAIAH 54:1) **(King James Version)**

²⁴ All of this has another meaning as well. Each of the two women stands for one of the agreements God made with his people. Hagar, the slave woman, stands for the agreement that was made at Mount Sinai. Everyone born into her family is a slave. ²⁵ Hagar also stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and for the present city of Jerusalem. She and her children are slaves. ²⁶ But our mother is the city of Jerusalem in heaven above, and she isn’t a slave. ²⁷ The Scriptures say about her, “You have never had children, but now you can be glad. You have never given birth, but now you can shout. Once you had no children, but now you will have more children than a woman who has been married for a long time.” **(Contemporary English Version)**

[24] These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. **[25]** Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. **[26]** But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. **[27]** For it is written: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” **(New International Version)**

Additional Information: (Verse 24) – “**Two Covenants.**” Paul uses the two mothers, their two sons, and two locations as further illustration of two covenants. Hagar, Ishmael, and Mt. Sinai (earthly Jerusalem) represent the covenant of law; Sarah, Isaac and the heavenly Jerusalem the covenant of promise. However, Paul cannot be contrasting these two covenants as different ways of salvation, one way for Old Testament saints, another for New Testament saints – a premise he has already denied (Gal. 2:16; 3:10-14; 21, 22). The purpose of the Mosaic Covenant was only to show all who were under its demands and condemnation their desperate need for salvation by

grace alone (Gal.3:24) – it was never intended to portray the way of salvation. Paul’s point is that those, like the Judaizers, who attempt to earn righteousness by keeping the law receive only bondage and condemnation (Gal. 3:10, 23). While those who partake of salvation by grace – the only way of salvation since Adam’s sin – are freed from the law’s bondage and condemnation (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1796). <:::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 VERSES 28-31

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** Galatians 4: [28] Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. [29] But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. [30] Nevertheless what saith the scripture? CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON: FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN. (GENESIS 21:10) [31] So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (King James Version)

²⁸ And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac. ²⁹ And we who are born of the Holy Spirit are persecuted by those who want us to keep the law, just as Isaac, the child of promise, was persecuted by Ishmael, the son of the slave-wife. ³⁰ But what do the Scriptures say about that? “Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the family inheritance with the free woman’s son.” ³¹ So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, obligated to the law. We are children of the free woman, acceptable to God because of our faith. (New Living Translation)

[28] Christian brothers, we are like Isaac. We are the children God promised. [29] At that time the son born as other children are born made it very hard for the son born by the Holy Spirit. It is the same way now. [30] But what do the Holy Writings say? They say: “Put the woman servant who is owned by someone and her son out of your home. The son of that woman servant will never get any of the riches of the family. It will all be given to the son of the free woman.” Genesis 21:10 [31] Christian brothers, we are not children of the woman servant who was owned by someone, Hagar. We are children of the free woman, Sarah. (The New Life Testament)

28 Now, you, my brothers and sisters, are God’s children as a result of his promise, just as Isaac was. **29** At that time the son who was born in the usual way persecuted the one who was born because of God’s Spirit; and it is the same now. **30** But what does the scripture say? It says, “Send the slave woman and her son away; for the son of the slave woman will not have a part of the father’s property along with the son of the free woman.” **31** So then, my brothers and sisters, we are not the children of a slave woman but of a free woman. (Today’s English Version)

28 My friends, you were born because of this promise, just as Isaac was. **29** But the child who was born in the natural way made trouble for the child who was born because of the Spirit. The same thing is happening today. **30** The Scriptures say, “Get rid of the slave woman and her son! He won’t be given anything. The son of the free

woman will receive everything.” **31** My friends, we are children of the free woman and not of the slave. **(Contemporary English Version)**

Additional Information: (Verses 21-31) – Paul defends his gospel by an allegorical application of the story of Isaac and Ishmael. Some critics accuse him of spiritualizing Bible history, but, rather than establishing doctrine, he is illustrating a point he has already proved. Paul’s premise is that true descent from Abraham is spiritual, not physical. See Gal. 3:14; Matt. 3:9; John 8:31-44; Rom. 4:16. Abraham’s real heir was the son of the freewoman, not the son of the slave girl (Gal. 4:23-27). Isaac represents those who trust in Christ, and Ishmael represents those who are in bondage to the Law. Therefore, Christians are the true sons of God (Gal. 4:28, 31) (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1778). <:::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATIONS AND THEIR TRANSLATORS

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(Galatians Chapter 4)

Instructions for Group Leader: Do not let the group read the following questions and answers. The leader of your group should ask the group the following questions and encourage the group to discover the answers by going to the appropriate Scriptures. **Discuss and answer (as a group) the questions correctly by using the Scripture(s). Turn to Galatians Chapter 4.**

1. **Read Galatians 4:1-3.** We were once like children, slaves to: a. Jewish law and rituals. b. the spiritual powers of this world. c. all of the above.
2. **Read Galatians 4:4-5.** When the right time came, God sent His Son: a. to ransom those who were under the Law. b. so that God could adopt us as His very own sons. c. all of the above.
3. **Read Galatians 4:6.** Because you Gentiles have become His sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into: a. the world. b. the worship services. c. our hearts.
4. **Read Galatians 4:7.** Since you are God's child, everything He has belongs to you. True or False.
5. **Read Galatians 4:8-10 (The Living Bible).** Before you Gentiles knew God you were slaves to so-called gods that did not even exist. Now that you have found God, how can you go back and become slaves once more to: a. caffeine and dark chocolate? b. alcohol? c. another poor, weak, useless religion of trying to get to heaven by obeying God's laws?
6. **Read Galatians 4:12-16.** At one time the Galatians deeply cared for Paul. Now because he has told them the truth some were thinking he was there: a. best friend. b. problem. c. enemy.
7. **Read Galatians 4:17.** The false teacher wanted to isolate the Galatians from the Apostle Paul so they could win them over to their side, the embracing of a false gospel. True or False.
8. **Read Galatians 4:19.** Paul wanted Christ to again be formed in the Galatians, that is, to be seen in them. True or False.
9. **Read Galatians 4:21-23.** Abraham had two sons, his son by the free woman (she wasn't a slave) was born as the result of: a. fertility treatments. b. an act of the flesh. c. a promise.

10. **Read Galatians 4:24-25.** In verses 24-25 we see an allegory, the two women represent two covenants, one of law and one of grace. True or False.
11. **Read Galatians 4:26-27 (NLT).** Sarah, the free woman represents the heavenly Jerusalem (the Messianic Kingdom of Christ). True or False.
12. **Read Galatians 4:28-29.** We who are born of the Holy Spirit are persecuted by those who want us to keep the law as a means of justification (right standing before God). True or False.
13. **Read Galatians 4:29.** Those who have only a natural birth persecute those who have a spiritual birth. True or False.
14. **Read Galatians 4:30-31.** Those depending on the law for salvation shall not inherit God's promise that comes through faith. True or False.

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