

Galatians

Lesson 4: Galatians 4

Paul continues his argument that salvation is by grace through faith alone. It is not gained by any merit as the Judaizers were teaching. In chapter 4, Paul develops his analogy of being a child of God that he started back in 3:23–26. He compares being a small child, and therefore a slave of sin, with someone who is still under the Law versus a grown adult, and therefore a son of God, who is free from the Law and having life in Christ. The Judaizers were trying to put the Galatian believers back under the Law and claiming salvation is attained through the Law. Paul’s question to the Galatians is, “After becoming an adult and having freedom, why would you want to go back under the Law that doesn’t save you, but only puts you in bondage again?” Let’s dive in and see what Paul has to say about what it means to be a child of God.

➤ **Read Galatians 4:1–11**

1. In verses 1–2, “child” means “a minor; a child too young to talk.” What does Paul compare this child to?
2. In verse 3, how does Paul describe this child in a spiritual sense?
3. In verses 4–5, what was the purpose of God sending forth His Son?
4. In verse 6, what is the result of someone who is adopted by God?
5. In verse 7, how does Paul describe “a son”?

Application: Have you ever tried to have a relationship with God through upholding the Law? How does your relationship with God now differ from those who are trying to have a relationship with Him through the Law (good works)?

6. According to verse 8, what does Paul say about those who are slaves to sin and under the Law?

7. According to verse 9, how does Paul qualify his statement about the Galatians having “come to know God”? What doctrine is Paul referring to here?

8. According to verse 10–11, why does Paul fear for the Galatians? Are Christians obligated to uphold ceremonies and rituals?

Application: What “weak and worthless elemental things” are you tempted to follow in order to please God or “earn” His approval?

Application: In today’s churches what traditions do people uphold to try and earn favor with God? How can you guard your heart from allowing traditions to replace true worship?

➤ **Read Galatians 4:12–20**

This section begins a personal appeal by Paul to the Galatians. These words are Paul’s strongest personal affection in any of his letters. Out of his great love for the Galatians, he begs them not to abandon the gospel.

9. In verse 12, by moving away from the gospel and towards the false teaching of the Judaizers, Paul says, “you have done me no wrong.” Who are the Galatians wronging by moving away?

10. In verses 13–14, what were the circumstances in Paul’s life when he originally preached the gospel to the Galatians?

11. In verses 14–15, how was Paul received among the Galatians?

12. In verse 16, how did some of the Galatians view Paul for preaching the truth?

Application: Has anyone ever regarded you as an enemy for telling them the truth? Explain.

Application: Why did Paul (and Jesus) risk making enemies or hurting people's feelings to speak the truth? Are you willing to do this?

13. In verse 17, what does Paul say is the Judaizer's motive?

14. In verses 19–20, what analogy does Paul use? What is his desire for the Galatians?

Application: In what ways is Christ being “formed in you”? What are areas that still need to change?

➤ **Read Galatians 4:21–31**

15. In verse 21, what does Paul accuse the Galatians of?

16. In verses 22–26, who are the “two sons” Paul is referring to? (Hint: see Gen. 16:1–16; 21:1–7)

17. According to verse 23, why was Ishmael born? Why was Isaac born?

18. In verse 24, what figure of speech is Paul using to make his argument?

19. Read Hebrews 12:22. What is the “Jerusalem above” that Paul refers to in Galatians 4:26?

20. In verse 28, how does Paul describe believers?

21. In verse 29, who was persecuting the Galatian believers?

22. In verses 30–31, what must be the response of the “sons of the free woman” toward those who are “sons of the bondwoman”?

Application: Why are churches tempted to listen to false teachers instead of “casting them out”?

Application: What one verse impacted you the most in this study? Explain.