

Galatians 4

Sustaining Freedom in an Enslaved World

We ended chapter three by claiming our adoption right through the same faith that justified Abraham - “For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ” (Galatians 3:26). Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we are all one in Him. No one is above anyone else and no amount of works or good deeds can earn us favor with God. That favor has freely been given to us through the blood of Jesus. It’s what *He* did by taking the blame for us, not what we do. If we haven’t grasped this concept just quite yet, stick with us as we dive into chapter four. Paul continues in his exhortation to live like a child of God set free instead of as a slave in bondage to the law.

Child or Slave? (Galatians 4:1-9)

1. In your own words, what is an heir and what is an inheritance?

2. What part does an heir play in an inheritance?

3. Recalling what you know from the previous chapter, why do you think Paul relates a child to a slave in the first few verses?

4. What were we held in bondage under according to verse 3?

Read Colossians 2:8 and 2:20-23

5. According to these verses, and to what you’ve read so far in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, what are the “elements of the world”?

6. Have the elements of the world changed much from Paul’s time to now? Explain.

7. What do you think Paul meant, in verse 4, when he says “when the fullness of the time had come”?

Read Isaiah 55:8-9

8. Does this passage from Isaiah reveal anything about God that you didn't already know?

9. Do you ever struggle waiting on God's timing? Explain.

10. What should be our heart posture as we wait on God?

God sent Jesus at just the right time - *His time*. At a time ripe for rescue, and judged only by God Himself, He came down. This proved to be the best gift any of us could have ever been given. While we might never know some of the mysteries of God, and why He does things the way He does them, we can remain confident knowing that He's sovereign and His timing is best. Sometimes it's hard to wait on God. We become impatient and push doors open before they are ready to be. This can end up causing us, and potentially those around us, a lot of grief and heartache. In an attempt for our desires to manifest on our timetable, we take the reins and play God over our own lives by thinking we know best. But, while we only get a tiny glimpse of perspective, God sees the whole picture. Learning to give up control of our timetable and trusting His plan for our lives, no matter how long it takes to unfold, is essential to living by the Spirit. God's ways are always higher, and they are always better than anything we could think of. We have to trust that as a father who wants the very best for his children, our Father wants the very best for us. So while it can be difficult to wait, and oftentimes down right confusing, it's critical that we use the waiting period as a time to grow closer in our relationship to God.

11. What action word does Paul use in Galatians 4:5 to describe what Jesus did for us on the cross?

Redeem - greek “exagorazo” which means to buy up, ransom, to rescue from loss. (b)

12. If we are no longer a slave because Jesus bought us, then what have we become? (verse 7)

13. What are some words that come to your mind knowing you are a daughter of the Almighty God?

14. What is your response to Galatians 4:9?

Night and day differences (Galatians 4:10-20)

When Paul first came to preach to the Galatians, it's apparent that they were quick to care for his "physical infirmity". So caring, in fact, they would have given their own eyes to help him. It's obvious their caring disposition had shifted since he last visited. Later in the letter Paul will talk about fruits of the Spirit as opposed to deeds of the flesh, and we will see how this "night and day" difference of behavior played out in the actions of the Galatians.

15. Why do you think Paul reminds the Galatians of their past behavior in Galatians 4:12-16?

16. Explain how their past behavior contrasts with what we know about their current behavior (and the reason Paul is writing this letter).

17. Based on what you've studied so far, what do you think is attributed to this change? Why?

18. Are you in any way different when you spend time with the Lord in prayer and reading His word, obeying His precepts, and following Him as opposed to *not* spending time with Him? Have you experienced both? Explain the differences.

19. When a Godly friend speaks biblical truth into a situation you're dealing with in order to correct you and help you, how do you typically respond? Do you appreciate the feedback and take it to heart or do you get upset and dismissive? Provide an example.

We've all heard the saying "love is blind". Just turn on Netflix, and you can watch a whole series about it. I'm sure we've all been in a situation, in our younger years, when we dated someone that wasn't right for us. Even if this wasn't you, maybe you had a friend. Everyone else could see that this person wasn't right for us, but could we? Of course not! We were so swept away by them and whatever pheromones they were putting out, we couldn't see the danger if it hit us like a 2x4 across the face. Instead of listening to the truth by those who knew us best, we let our feelings run the show! No matter how many times our moms and friends told us to run away, we refused. Therefore, they ended up becoming our enemy because they loved us enough to tell us the truth - the exact thing we needed but didn't want to hear. This is precisely what was happening with the Galatians. Because they were swept away by these false teachers and the idea that they could earn favor with God based on what *they* could do, they became blind and averted to the truth. If we aren't careful, we can become the same way. Well-preached sermons, great christian podcasts, excellent spiritual books, and even well-meaning friends can be beneficial supplements to the truth that is found in God's word, but *these should NEVER substitute the truth that is found in God's word*. Only from the source itself will you find what you're looking for. If we find ourselves growing calloused and deflective to biblical truth, it's likely we need to spend more time reading God's word and in prayer. Our temperament for the truth is a good indicator of our time spent in it. Just like these Galatians were growing hardened toward Paul and his truth message, we can become the same way if we're not tethered, consistently, to God by way of His Word and communication with Him (prayer).

20. According to Galatians 4:17-18, it's apparent these false teachers were treating the Galatians a certain way only when Paul was around. How were they acting towards the Galatians?

21. Why do you think they were so zealous when Paul, the messenger of truth, was around?

It's important for us to realize that anytime the way of truth is made apparent, opposition and temptation will usually always coincide. These false teachers realized this, and made every effort possible to derail and "exclude" their new Galatian followers from hearing it. Instead of the Galatians fixing their attention on Paul's message of truth, these false teachers did everything in their power to get all eyes fixed on them. We need to be aware that this is a common trend amongst false teachers and the enemy himself. He will try to distract and deceive you from following Jesus. This was how it was in Paul's day, and how it is in our day. False teachers care more about people following them than people following Jesus. They will pull out all the stops in order to achieve this goal. Be leery of this common characteristic and stay away.

22. Have you ever had someone be incredibly nice, giving, or considerate to you just because they wanted something? Was this behavior consistent with how they've always acted towards you? Are you able to distinguish when someone is being genuine or not?

23. Is it always easy following Jesus and living in God's ways? Or do you find that there are more temptations, oppositions, and struggles to deal with when trying to live righteously in God's grace? Explain.

Read John 15:18-19, Romans 8:35-37, Ephesians 6:10-13, 2 Corinthians 7:5, 2 Corinthians 11:12-13, and 2 Timothy 4:3-5.

24. According to these verses, and in your own words, what should a Christ follower expect as they live in God's ways?

25. In an enslaved world, we will come across many people who either don't know the truth or have heard the truth but choose to live in opposition to it. Based on the example given by the Galatians, how should we expect people that fit the above descriptions to react to us when we share the truth?

Read the following verses, and write out specifics of how we can be encouraged despite temptations, oppositions, and struggles:

2 Corinthians 10:13 -

Psalm 119:11 -

Ephesians 6:10-11 -

James 4:7 -

Hebrews 2:14-18 -

1 John 4:4 -

Hebrew 4:16 -

John 16:13 -

A brief pit stop to learn about temptation...we'll discover more next chapter

Right before Jesus' public ministry began, the fourth chapter in the book of Matthew tells us that He was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to fast for 40 days and 40 nights. While hungry, He was confronted and tempted by Satan. In the box below, record the temptation along with Jesus' responses. The verses are referenced for you:

Temptation - Satan	Response - Jesus
Matt 4:3 -	Matt 4:4 -
Matt 4:5-6 -	Matt 4:7 -
Matt 4:8-9 -	Matt 4:10 -

26. What aspect of the flesh was the devil speaking to in each of his three temptations?

27. Notice the state Jesus was in when the tempter came. Describe what Jesus could have been feeling at this moment. How would *you* be feeling?

28. Compare Jesus' responses to Satan. How were they similar?

29. List what you learned from how Jesus dealt with temptation.

It's no accident that Jesus' encounter with Satan is recorded in three of the gospels. From this story, we not only learn a lot about the enemy and his schemes, but we also learn about how to resist temptation the way Jesus resisted it. We learn from this story that our enemy, Satan, can use scripture. While he may twist it to suit *his* sinister agenda, he's quick to whip it out to make us question if what we've been told is from God. This is why it is **IMPERATIVE** that we read our Bibles and study the Word. We see, in Jesus' response in Matthew 4:7, how important it is to know *context*. The devil will try any way he can to deceive. He bets on us not knowing what the Truth is. We must stand firm with the powerful Word of God tucked away in our hearts, and like Jesus, be ready to use it when the enemy comes knocking.

Allegorical Abraham (Galatians 4:21-31)

Paul finishes the chapter by giving an allegorical example. According to a google search definition, an allegory is a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. In this case, Paul goes back to the story of Abraham and God's covenant with him. This is the second time he's referenced the Abrahamic covenant. If you haven't read this yet, please read Genesis 12:1-3.

30. Who was Abraham's slave wife and who was his freeborn wife? What illustration do these two women represent?

31. Galatians 3:23 (NLT) says, "the son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise". What "human attempt" is Paul referring to?

Again, Paul is re-emphasizing the fact that our human attempts, our works without faith, are destined for failure. They don't achieve anything because Christ has already achieved it for us!

Read Genesis 3:1-7 and Genesis 16:1-3 and see if you can spot the similarities in the two stories. We are going on a bit of a rabbit trail, but let's see how well a works based mentality worked out for Eve and Sarah. Did you guys catch it?

32. Who was the one who told Adam to eat the fruit off the tree? And who was the one who told Abram to have a baby with her slave because she was too old?

We have to let our husbands lead, ladies! These are two HUGE events in scripture that basically set the course for all of mankind because a woman talked her husband into sinning with her. Yes, the husband had a choice to follow, and he is just as much to blame, but these women could have altered the course of history had they not fallen into temptation and drug their husbands with them. This was too much of an important take-away that I couldn't leave it out. In an effort to get our own way, we can fall into the same trap Eve and Sarah fell into. We have to be careful and learn from their mistakes. Scripture is clear about husbands being "the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church". As hard as this truth is to hear, and even harder to apply; we are called to submit to them in everything (Ephesians 5:23-24 NLT). This can be especially hard when they don't obey the second part of this command: Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25). Fortunately, it's not our job to worry about their part. Our job is to focus on Jesus and obeying what He has told us to do. I believe the fruits of this obedience are abundant, and although we may not think it, this compliance works out way better for us, *and potentially many others*, in the long run.

33. Why do you think God designed the husband/wife relationship this way? Extra credit if you use scripture to back up your answer.

34. If you are married, what's an area in your marriage where you have trouble obeying this command?

Ask God to help you relinquish control. Pray that His Holy Spirit will guide your actions and tone towards your husband. In regards to this specific example in Genesis 16...

35. How did impatience in God's timing, lack of trust in God's ability, and Abraham's need to control affect this situation and everyone in it?

36. How does impatience, lack of trust, and our need to control affect our situations?

Now, back on track...

37. Look at Galatians 4:23-26. Did bondage originate from the flesh or from promise?

We read Romans 8:6 earlier, in chapter 3, but let's take a look at it again.

38. According to this passage of scripture what does being carnally minded lead to? And spiritually minded?

39. Explain how this proves true with the Abrahamic allegory Paul uses in Galatians 4:23-29.

40. In your own words, write a brief summary of how you think the allegory Paul uses relates to the situation the churches of Galatia have found themselves in and perhaps, even, the situation we find ourselves in when we rely on ourselves rather than God.

41. Who are we children of according to v. 31?

The freewoman. We are children of the freewoman. The same freewoman that messed up, just a tad, by trying to convince her husband she was too old and didn't see how God's promise could work out without Abraham sleeping with their slave. Yeah, that one. Again we are given an example of someone who went against God's plan for their life and tried to do things their way. Did God turn His back on Sarah and Abraham because of this? No. Instead He gave them Isaac. Does God turn His back on us when we've royally screwed up and gone against His will for our lives? No! God is faithful even when we are not. God's promises aren't conditional like ours sometimes are. And just remember, Abraham was justified for his faith *before* this incident happened with Sarah (Gen. 15:5-6). But now, we have something Abraham didn't have - we have Jesus! Jesus stands before us clothing us in *His* righteousness. It's His work that sets us free and

makes a way to the throne room of God's grace, and it's His mercy that endures forever (Hebrews 4:16).

42. How does knowing this affect your view of God and Jesus?

Reflection and Action

What's an area in your life or from your past that you feel is unredeemable - where you feel you've messed up so bad and went against God's will for your life that you can't receive God's grace? Write it down here or in your journal and come before God with a repentant heart. Seek Him above all else (Matthew 6:33), and watch how His grace floods your life.

Cited sources:

a) google search for "allegory"

https://www.google.com/search?xsrf=ALeKk000MUZs1Z3NWidF3v8f0yVRWMU4Eg%3A1597161012993&source=hp&ei=NL4yX6SwOcPwsQWs-6yoCg&q=definition+of+allegory&oq=definition+of+allegory&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAziHCAAQRhD5ATICCAAyAggAMgIIADICCAAyAggAMgYIABAWEB4yBggAEBYQHjIGCAAQFhAeMgYIABAWEB46BAgjECC6CggUEMcBEK8BECc6CAgAEJEC EIsDOgUIABCRAjoLCC4QsQMqXwEQowI6CAGAELEDEIMBOgkIIXAnEEYQ-QE6AgguOg4ILhCxAXCDARDHARCjAjoFCC4QsQM 6BQgAELEDOgoIABCxAXBGEPkBUKIEWO8ZYL8baABwAHgAgAHyAYgBtQ-SAQYxOC4zLjGYAQCgAQGqAQdnd3Mtd2I6uAEC& sclient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwikms22wJPrAhVDeKwKHaw9C6UQ4dUDCAk&uact=5

b) NAS Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries

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