

Galatians – Embracing Grace and Truth

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

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Thursday October 22, 2026

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Galatians 4:9 (NLT) So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world?

Children of God

Point 2 – Realization of Sonship (Continued)

Galatians 4:6–11 (NLT)

⁶ And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.” ⁷ Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir. ⁸ Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. ⁹ So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? ¹⁰ You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years. ¹¹ I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing.

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ITS CONFIRMATION

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (4:6) NASB

God confirms believers as His adopted **sons** through the gift of the Holy Spirit, **the Spirit of His Son**. They not only have the knowledge of sonship through the truth of God’s Word in their minds but the very essence of sonship through His indwelling **Spirit** in their **hearts**. A human father cannot give his own nature to an adopted child, but God can and does by sending His Holy Spirit to dwell within the **hearts** of believers.

The Lord tells His children that He “has blessed [them] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” that “He chose [them] before the foundation of the world, that [they] should be holy and blameless before Him,” that “He predestined [them] to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself,” and that “in Him [they] have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of [their] trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon [them]” (**Eph. 1:3–5, 7–8**). But when believers experience trying circumstances or fail to live in obedience to God, it is easy for them to doubt their exalted position as His children.

One of the ministries of **the Spirit** to the **sons** of **God** is to enable them with full confidence to cry out to Him, “**Abba! Father!**” **The Spirit** offers subjective ministry that confirms the objective truth of Scripture. Declaring that same message to believers at Rome, Paul wrote, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which

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we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” **(Rom. 8:14–16)**.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, **Abba** is an Aramaic word for father. It was a term of love and affection used by young children of their fathers and could be translated “daddy” or “papa.” The Holy **Spirit** brings us into a personal, intimate relationship with our heavenly **Father**, whom we may approach at any time and under any circumstance, knowing that He always hears us and lovingly cares for us, because we are truly His own.

“In Him, you also,” Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” **(Eph. 1:13–14)**. The fact that a believer has an intimate relationship with God, and can confidently cry out to Him as **Father**, is beautiful and magnificent proof of sonship. Those who have the status of divine sonship through the **Son** also have the essence and the assurance of it through **the Spirit**, who draws them into intimate communion with their heavenly Father.

ITS CONSUMMATION – (ULTIMATE OUTCOME)

Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. (4:7) NASB

The consummation of divine sonship is given in the promise of joint inheritance with Christ. The ultimate outcome of our relationship is inheritance of the Father’s estate. In the spiritual realm, a person who believes in Jesus Christ is no longer under the law, **no longer** its **slave**. Because he is now in the Son, he is himself a

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son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Just as it was in the ancient laws of adoption, so it is in the family of God—Sonship means heirship.

Because believers are God’s children, they are “heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (**Rom. 8:17**). What an incomprehensible truth: that by giving ourselves to Jesus Christ in faith, God gives us everything His Son possesses!

Discussion Questions (Gal. 4:6-7)

- 1. What stands out to you in this section of the lesson?**
- 2. What does “Abba Father mean in Gal. 4:6?**
- 3. What does it mean to be an heir through God in Galatians 4:7?**

ITS OBLIGATION

- 8** However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. **9** But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless ^eelemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? **10** You observe days and months and seasons and years. **11** I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (4:8–11) NASB

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The gracious gift of sonship is free, but it brings serious obligation. Great blessing carries great responsibility (Luke 12:48). But the believer's great responsibility is not to the ceremonial and ritual features of the law, from which salvation sets him free. It is that truth that the Galatian believers had forgotten under the seductive influence of the Judaizers.

Paul reminds those believers of the **time, when they did not know God and were slaves to those which by nature are no gods**. Before they came to Christ their religion was that of works, and they were **slaves to** various man-made gods that were actually **no gods** at all. The unredeemed are slaves not only to the law but also to idols.

Several years ago, I visited a very large Buddhist shrine. Scores of men and women, and even some children, were bowing down to a giant stone image of Buddha, reciting prescribed prayers, going through various rituals, and making offerings of incense and food. My heart broke because of their spiritual darkness and hopelessness. I wanted to shout, "Why are you doing all this? Don't you know that image is only a piece of stone carved by men? There is no god here. Buddha can't help you. He himself is long dead—physically and spiritually—and will eternally remain dead. If you continue to trust in him, you too will die and forever remain dead." There are many false god's men put their trust in, but none can save.

While those people were pitiable because of their ignorance of God, they were also condemned because of their rebelliousness against God. "That which is

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known about God is evident within them,” Paul says of such people; “for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.... For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” **(Rom. 1:19–21, 25)**.

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, Paul asks in bewilderment, **how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things** to which you once gave your devotion? Why do you **desire to be enslaved all over again?** Now that you are sons, he asks the wavering Galatians, why do you want to go back into slavery? Now that you are free adults through faith in Christ, why do you want to revert to your childhood servitude under the law?

Among the **weak and worthless elemental things** to which some of the Galatians were returning was the ritualistic observance of **days and months and seasons and years**. During his ministry in Galatia, Paul doubtlessly gave believers the same warning he gave to the church at Colossae: “Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” **(Col. 2:16–17)**. “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world,” he continues, “why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’, (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are

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matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence” (**vv. 20–23**).

In his commentary *The Message of Galatians*, John Stott mentions the wonderful account of John Newton, author of the beloved hymn “Amazing Grace.” Newton was an only child and lost his mother when he was seven. At the age of eleven he went to sea as a sailor and became involved in the inhuman African slave trade. Soon hardened by his evil surroundings, he outdid his companions in immorality, vulgarity, and blasphemy. But when he was twenty-three his ship was caught in a severe storm, and when he began to fear for his life he cried out to God for mercy and was marvelously saved. Not wanting ever to forget the depths of sin from which he had been rescued by God’s grace, Newton later inscribed the words of **Deuteronomy 15:15** above his mantel: “Remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you!” (**NLT**)

Unlike John Newton, the Galatian Christians did not remember what they were once like, and Paul was inexpressibly disappointed with their immaturity and lack of discernment. He was not able to fathom how they could so quickly forget their former bondage in unbelief and so easily surrender their new freedom and blessings in Christ. **I fear for you**, he lamented, **that perhaps I have labored over you in vain**.

How sad for such a faithful servant of the Lord to believe that all the life-threatening, sacrificial service he had given in behalf of the people of Galatia was worthless. All the travel, illness, loneliness, struggles, even the stoning he

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received in Lystra that left him for dead, was for nothing if they reverted to their old slavery.

No wonder this is such an impassioned epistle. The thought of all that effort being void compelled Paul to write as he did.

Discussion Questions (Gal. 4:8-11)

- 1. What stands out to you in this section of the lesson?**
- 2. How can Christians avoid falling back into legalistic bondage today?**
- 3. What does Paul mean by knowing God in Galatians 4:8-11?**

Closing Prayer