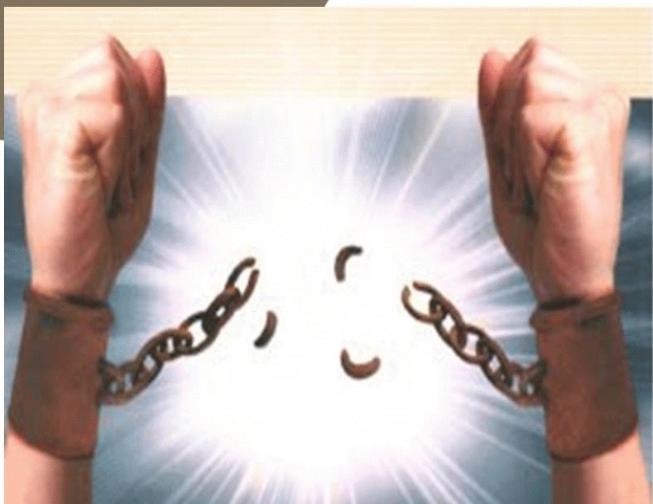


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 7

Day 1

Study: Galatians 4:1-7

Reading: Romans 8:1-25

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

When my first daughter was just born, I asked my wife why babies couldn't come out being one year old. She didn't like the thought of that. The reason I said that was because it wasn't much fun to play with a newborn. I enjoyed my daughter during the first year, but when my daughter reached the age of one, I really started having fun with her. I longed for the day when she would say, "I love you, Daddy." That day soon came and I loved every time I would hear the word "Daddy."

Today, we are going to see how God has adopted us as His children and we can come before Him calling Him "Daddy."

What Does the Bible Say?

Most slaves under the Roman empire were not treated like the slaves were in the United States before the Civil War. Many slaves in Roman period would be more like hired servants and many of them would be educated at the cost of the owner. Children in those days were not given special treatment, but were treated similar to the slaves. The age that a child would become an adult varied throughout the Roman empire, but most of them would be declared adults some time in their teen years. Until then, they were raised similar to the way the slaves were raised, though they would some day receive their family inheritance. A child would be under the authority of tutors and guardians (normally slaves) who would help raise that child until he was declared to be an adult. Once he was declared an adult, he could make decisions on his own and had access to a part of the inheritance (vs 1-2).

This illustrated the fact that before a person accepted Christ, they were just as that child who couldn't make his own decisions, because they were under the strict direction of the law (vs 3). This would all change because God sent forth Jesus Christ at the exact time he wanted Him to come to earth. Before He created the world, God knew exactly

when Jesus would come to the earth and die on the cross for our sins (vs 4). The reason that He sent Jesus to earth was so that He could redeem us from our sin. In the process of redemption, He has freed us from having to obey the Jewish law and has given us the right to be his children. He has adopted us to be his children and has made us heirs to all the riches of His kingdom (vs 5).

As a gift to His children, God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell inside of each believer to guide them to do what is right. The words “Abba Father” could be best translated into our modern day term “Daddy.” Just as a child is totally trusting in his father to take care of him, we totally trust in God to take care of us and we also have personal access to God through the Holy Spirit (vs 6). Those who have accepted Christ are no longer slaves, but are children of God (vs 7).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you ever pause to think about what it means to be a child of God? As His child, you are an heir to all that He possesses. Psalms 50:10 says, “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” God is the Creator of the earth, therefore He owns all things on the earth. God has unlimited resources and will provide for you in ways you never thought were possible. This is the same God that you can come before and call “Daddy” because He loves you like a father would love his only child. You can talk to Him whenever you want and He is always there to listen to what you have to say. Not only can you talk to Him and have access to all His wealth, but you also have a home in heaven waiting for you when you pass from this life. When you think about all that God has done for you, it should cause you to want to know Him more and serve Him in a greater way.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for making you His child.*
- * *Ask God to help you love Him more each day.*

Thought for the day

Day 2

Study: Galatians 4:8-12

Reading: Galatians 4

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

When my wife visited Thailand to do some missions work with my daughter, one thing that stuck out to her was how there were statues of Budah everywhere. The inhabitants of the land would not only worship Budah, but believed that by placing Budah and many other religious trinkets around their houses and property they would have better fortune. Though it may not exist on the same level here in the United States, if you look around you will often see people place statues or images of something in their houses or yards thinking that it will bring good luck to them.

The natural thought of many people is that if we do things to appease the gods (or God), then life will go better for us. Yet, when we fall into this pattern of thinking, we miss out of the true depth of love our heavenly Father offers to us. Today, we will be reminded that we have been set free from efforts to appease God and instead have been given the opportunity to freely love Him.

What Does the Bible Say?

The majority of the Galatians were not Jews but were Gentiles. Before they were saved they worshiped the Greek and Roman gods. Paul reminded them that before they accepted Christ they worshiped false gods that could do nothing for them (vs 8). Because of their conversion, they were able to have intimate relationships with God who could do all things. Paul asked them why they wanted to go back to the type of teachings that enslaved them. By thinking they had to obey the Jewish law, the Galatians were trapping themselves under the same type of rules they had experienced before they were saved (vs 9). Paul made direct reference to some of these by stating that they were following rituals rather than Christ. The Jews had special feasts in which they were not allowed to do certain things. They also observed the Sabbath in which none of them were allowed to do any work. There were other special days and rituals that the Galatians thought they needed to be involved in

in order to keep their salvation and good standing before God. They had done the very same thing before they were saved, but, for many of them, the feasts and special days were for their Greek and Roman gods (vs 10).

Paul was not able to understand how they could fall back into the same things that they were saved out of. He was extremely saddened by their actions and told them that the time he spent working with them would be worthless if they just reverted back to their former way (vs 11).

Paul begged the Galatian believers to become like him. They all knew his testimony and how he was saved out of the rituals of the Jewish religion. They knew that Paul was one of the most legalistic men of his time before he accepted Christ. He experienced both worlds and knew that freedom in Christ was the best way to live. He wanted the Galatians to have the liberty that he had in Jesus Christ (vs 12).

How Does this Apply to Me?

When my children were little, they often wanted to play with me while I was spending time with God. I would often tell them that I couldn't play and would say "I have to do my devotions." As I think about what I often said, I hope that I didn't give my kids the wrong idea. I never wanted them to think I have to spend time with God out of obligation or to appease Him. I wanted to spend time with God and He wanted to spend time with me so that I could draw closer to Him. It is easy to get the idea that if we don't do what is right then God will become angry with us. When we view God as an angry God, it often makes us feel like we have to do good so that He will be happy with us rather than angry with us. When we were saved, we were freed from having to try to observe laws and do things to please and appease God. As a Christian, you are free to love Him and establish a deep meaningful relationship with Him. Don't ever think that Christianity is a religion. We were saved out of a religion into a relationship.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God that we don't have to try to appease Him.
- * Ask God to help you to develop a deeper relationship with Him.
- * Praise God because He is a God of love.

Day 3

Study: Galatians 4:1-4

Reading: John 8:31-38

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

How were heirs no different than slaves (vs 1) - See Day 1 comments.

What was a child, even though he was no different than a slave (vs 1)?

How is a child treated (vs 2)?

What were we when we were children (vs 3)? What does this mean?

****Children learned the basic principles of the world, like reading and writing. Before Christ, all men, whether Jew or Gentile, were learning the basic spiritual principles of the world. This appears to be a reference to the religious experiences a person had before Christ.*

What do you think the beginning of verse 4 meant when referring to the time being right?

****There are numerous ways that this question can be answered as you look at the timing of the death of Christ. The fact that the Romans were in control and were practicing crucifixion made it a perfect time. The fact that there was one main language which was used to spread the message to the known world made it a perfect time. There are many other things that I can mention that we know about, and many more that we probably don't know about.*

Why is it important to realize that God sent Jesus (vs 4)?

Why is it significant that Jesus was "born of woman" (vs 4)?

What does it mean that Jesus was "born under the law" (vs 4)?

****Jesus was not given any exceptions when He was born because He*

was God. He was born and had to obey the Law like every other Jewish child.

John 8:31-38

What did Jesus say was the sign of a true disciple (vs 31)?

What would true disciples know (vs 32)?

What would the truth do (vs 32)?

What do you think this means?

****Those who grew up with a focus on the law, were enslaved to the law. They were like slaves who were shackled with the burden of trying to do the right thing in their own power and strength.*

How come the Jews didn't understand what Jesus was saying (vs 33)?

Who is a slave (vs 34)?

What is the difference between a slave and a son (vs 35)?

How will a person be set free (vs 36)?

What do you think it means to be set free?

How were the Jews the "offspring of Abraham" (vs 37)?

Why were they trying to kill Jesus (vs 37)?

What was the difference between what Jesus and the Jews were saying (vs 38)?

Personal Application

What can you learn from God about this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 4:5-7

Reading: Romans 8:12-17, Mark 14:36

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

What did Jesus come to do (vs 5)?

What does it mean "to redeem" (vs 5)?

What did we receive (vs 5b)?

****In the Roman world, adoption was much different than adoption today. In most cases, adoption was not done out of a love for a child or to provide a child a home. Children were often looked to as a burden. The purpose for adoption was for the purpose of having an heir. When a man did not have an heir to continue on the family business, he would often look for a son to adopt so that child could become his helper and eventually his heir. History reveals this often happened among the Roman emperors.*

What did God send into the hearts of believers (vs 6)?

What does the Spirit cause us to do (vs 6)? What do you think this means?

What does "Abba, Father" mean (vs 6)?

****The term was an Aramaic term that was used by young children when they made reference to their fathers. The best equivalent we have today is the term "daddy." It was a term of affection and intimacy.*

What transformation did salvation make in your life (vs 7)?

As a child of God, what have you become (vs 7b)?

Why are these such encouraging verses?

Romans 8:12-17

What are we debtors to (vs 12)?

What does it mean to live according to the flesh?

What will be the result of living in the flesh (vs 13)?

What can you do with the power of the Spirit (vs 13)?

What will be the result of putting to death the deeds of the flesh (vs 13)?

Who are the sons of God (vs 14)?

What spirit did we not receive (vs 15)?

What Spirit did we receive (vs 15)?

What can believers cry (vs 15)?

What does the Spirit do (vs 16)?

What are we if we are the children of God (vs 17)?

What will children of God have to face (vs 17)?

Mark 14:36

What did Jesus call God while praying (vs 36)?

What did Jesus want to happen (vs 36)?

How did Jesus choose to submit (vs 36)?

How did Jesus set the example for us?

Personal Application

What can you learn from God about this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 4:8-9

Reading: 1 Kings 18:20-40,

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

What were the Gentiles before they knew God (vs 8)?

How were these gods described (vs 8)?

What does it mean to know God (vs 9)?

What does it mean to be known by God (vs 9)?

****We can't know God on our own. He called us and reached out to us in love before we even had a chance to know Him.*

What were the Galatians doing (vs 9b)?

****Paul used the same term that he did in verse 3. It was a term that referred to the basics of learning. Like learning ABC's or simple math.*

How can a person go back to practicing the simple principles of earthly religion (vs 9b)?

****Paul compared the knowledge of God to that of having a higher education. Those who were arguing and causing confusion about the works of this world were compared to those who were in their early elementary years. It would be similar for us today to say, "You're acting like first grader."*

1 Kings 18:20-40

Where did this event take place (vs 20)?

What did Elijah tell the people to do (vs 21)?

Who was Elijah battling (vs 22)?

What was the challenge that Elijah offered (vs 23-24)?

How did this challenge start (vs 25-26)?

What did Elijah do after the prophets of Baal spent the morning crying out to their false god (vs 27)?

How did the prophets of Baal practice the simplistic rules of earthly religion (vs 28-29)?

How was the focus of Elijah on God (vs 30-32)?

How was Elijah going to show the greatness of God (vs 33-35)?

What did Elijah want the Israelites to know (vs 36)?

What did God do for Elijah (vs 37-38)?

What was the response of the people (vs 39)?

Ephesians 4:17-20

How were the Ephesians not supposed to walk (vs 17)?

****The Gentiles lives in simpleness, just giving into their flesh and what their flesh desired.*

How did the Gentiles live in the elementary principles of the world (vs 18-19)?

How was the knowledge of Christ revealed to them (vs 20)?

What point do you think Paul was trying to make in this passage?

Personal Application

What can you learn from God about this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 4:10-11

Reading: Colossians 2:16-23

Memory: Proverbs 3:10

****Paul had been rebuking the Galatians for going back to the elementary principles of religion, focusing on the outward acts of the flesh.*

What were the Galatians focused on observing? What does this mean?

****The Jewish life centered around their religious calendar. The Old Testament Law had required Jewish males to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for different festivals. Along with this, there were other rules and regulations about different months and seasons to celebrate specific parts of the law. These were never commanded for New Testament believers to follow.*

What did Paul say he was afraid of (vs 11)? Why would he say this?

****Paul had invested a great deal of time and effort into the churches in Galatia, even being stoned to the point of death for sharing the Gospel with them. After carefully presenting their need for Christ, they had now gone back to a focus on their human works.*

Colossians 2:16-23

What did Paul tell the Colossians not to allow others to judge them about (vs 16)?

****You can't keep a person from passing judgement on you, but you can keep from letting the judgement of others persuade you from changing your beliefs.*

What are things that people were passing judgment for upon the Colossians (vs 16)?

What does Paul say these things are (vs 17)? What do you think he means by this?

****God had established the ceremonial laws as a shadow to point to the coming Christ. Just as a shadow gives you a general outline of a person, it is void of much of the substance of who a person is. The laws were a faint view of God's full desire which was revealed through Jesus Christ.*

What did Paul challenge the Colossians not to do (vs 18)?

What do you think the end of verse 18 means?

****It is easy to allow our good works to cause us to think we are better than others because of the things we do or don't do.*

What are we to hold fast to (vs 19)? What is meant by this?

****Jesus is the head of the body. It is the head that controls the actions of the whole body. When you make your choices based on outward actions, it is like letting a body part control your actions rather than your head.*

What did we die to when we choose to be in Christ (vs 20)?

What did Paul want to know (vs 20)?

What did he say were some of the elementary principles of earthly religion (vs 21)?

What does verse 22 mean?

What value did these rules have (vs 23)?

Personal Application

What can you learn from God about this passage?

How can you apply what you have learned to your everyday life?

Bible Memory

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.