

Galatians—Grace Above the Law
Our Freedom in Christ

Lesson 6—Galatians 4.8-20

Continuing from our last study...

Prayer

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times.

Scripture Meditation/Memorization

One of the most fundamental and rewarding Christian disciplines that pays back in full spiritual dividends is Bible meditation/memorization. It is an absolutely fundamental in the formation of your spiritual development, spiritual walk and faith growth. In Psalm 1:1-2 (NLT), the Psalmist warrior, King David said,

*“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
But they delight in the law of the Lord,
meditating on it day and night.”*

Use the suggested verse(s) to meditate on during the course of this week's study.

Memory Verse

“[18] It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, [19] my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!”—Galatians 4:18-19 (ESV)

Galatians 4:8-14—*Fears for the Church*

When Paul says “we,” he is usually referring to himself and the Jews while “you” refers to the Gentiles in the churches of Galatia. Many have speculated on the nature of Paul’s infirmity or illness. The most common views are eye disease (note verse 15 and Galatians 6:11) or malaria (he came to Galatia from swamp-ridden lowlands infested with malaria).

1. What “gods” is Paul likely referring to in verse 8? What are some “gods” many Americans serve today which by nature are not gods

2. What do you think the difference is between knowing God and being known by God (verse 9)?

3. In verse 10, Paul finds fault in the Galatians celebrating certain days (Sabbaths), months (New Moons), seasons (Passover, Tabernacles, etc.) and years (Sabbath Year). Today our church attendance is the greatest at Easter and Christmas. Do you see any connection between then and now?

4. These Old Testament laws and festivals were only a mere shadow or foretaste of what was to be fulfilled in Jesus. What do the following verses teach us about this?

- a. Colossians 2:16–17

b. Hebrews 8:5

c. Hebrews 10:1

5. Although almost two millennia have passed since Paul wrote these words to the Galatians, we can still hear the distress and angst in his voice as he pleads with them in verses 11–14. Summarize Paul’s concern and his request.

6. *The Galatians once received Paul as they would have received Christ Jesus Himself (4:14).¹

a. Why had their attitude changed?

b. What lessons does this have for us today?

¹ Question taken from The Message of Galatians, The Bible Speaks Today commentary, Inter-Varsity Press-USA, 1986

Galatians 4:15-20—Paul’s Burden For the Galatians

The world may not pay any attention to our bumper stickers or t-shirts proclaiming Jesus but one identifying mark on all spirit filled believers that gets everyone’s notice is a joyful life. One of the quickest ways to forfeit this joy is to substitute legalism and works for the grace God intends for us.

1. A careful reading of verse 15 shows that at one time the Galatians did experience joy and perform good works (ministering to a sick saint—Paul) but all this changed. What do you think happened to them? How do you think we can safeguard against such a change in our own life?

2. Have you ever tried to share the truth of God’s love and offer of salvation to another only to have them react poorly? Take heart, you are in good company. What do you learn from Paul in verse 16? Should this deter us from sharing the truth?

3. In verses 17-20 Paul turns his attention to the Galatians’ real enemy, the Judaizers. Their playbook resembled some of the cults today, what is the Judaizers method and motive in seeking the Galatians?

4. *Why do you think Paul had refused to give up on the Galatian church?²

² Question taken from Galatians—Experiencing the Grace of Christ, John Stott Bible Studies, InterVarsity Press-USA, 1998

5. *Have you ever been in a similar place to that of the Galatian Christians, whom Paul accuses of having lost their joy or blessedness (4:15)?³

a. What prompted those seasons of life?

b. How did you work through them?

c. What are practical ways to rediscover the joy of being a Christ-follower?

³ Question taken from The Wiersbe Bible Study Series: Galatians, published by David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2010

Lesson 6 Summary/Take Away

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, “What did you learn?” We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

Memory Verse

“[18] It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, [19] my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!”—Galatians 4:18-19 (ESV)

Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible. How would these phrases instruct or encourage us today?

Known by God (Galatians 4:9)
