

GALATIANS 4

Lesson 3

**A new Father
A new Me
A new Address**

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Galatians 4:1-7, “Father, my loving Father”

Paul explains in the beginning of chapter 4 what it means to be *heirs* of Abraham. He shares that those who were still caught within the snares of sin and the law could be compared with heirs who were still too young to inherit anything (vv. 1, 3). In that state they were not much better than slaves, because even though the testament might say that they are legally heirs, they are still under the supervision of guardians and trustees (v. 2). These guardians will officially have control over the inheritance until the day that the testament states that the heirs can now receive their inheritance (v. 2b).

When Christ came, at the perfectly right moment, this all changed (v. 4a). Jesus was born and followed all the rules of the law perfectly (v. 4b). Therefore he could now relieve us from the heavy load of the law (v. 5a). He came to *change our status* from being slaves of sin and the law, from being minors, to being *children of the Living God who could now inherit* what God had always wanted us to have (v. 7)! Through faith in Him we could now become heirs with all the privileges belonging to someone who had been bought from slavery to sin and death by the blood of Jesus (v. 5)! And to make sure that we stay in this close and special relationship with God as His children he had *given us the Holy Spirit* who would bind us with an *unbreakable bond of love* to Him (v. 6a). It is through His work in our hearts that we can now cry out: “*Father, loving Father!*” (v. 6b).

- ❖ You are an *heir* and a child of the Living God, with the Holy Spirit living in you to remind you of that daily and to lead you. This is extremely special. Do you find joy, comfort and strength in knowing this? Do you believe this? Spend some time with God just letting these precious truths soak into your heart.
- ❖ Sometimes our *earthly fathers* fail (or have failed us). Be careful that the devil doesn’t use this to steal away a wonderful relationship that you could have with your *heavenly Father*, Who gave His One and Only Son so that your relationship with Him can be perfect. Find a quiet place to have a great talk with your heavenly Dad this week. Start your conversation with, “Abba, Father, my loving Father...” —Jesus gave you His Holy Spirit so that these words can cross your lips...

Galatians 4:8-20, Let only the True Truth direct your Path

The challenge as children of God is to *live differently*. As slaves to sin the lives of the people of Galatia were filled with serving dead idols (v. 8). However, now that they were serving God they can truly live! This is why it would make no sense to start following a bunch of manmade customs and laws again (v. 9a). Why would they want to go back to the lifestyle of slaves (v. 9b)? None of the holy days, months or festivities would bring them any closer to God (v. 10)?! This could only break down everything that Paul had been spiritually building amongst them... (v. 11).

Paul cared so deeply for the people that he had been called to serve (v. 12). He reminded them of the precious relationship that they had while he was with them (vv. 13-16), and encouraged them to be careful now that he was not physically with them anymore to simply start following a bunch of false teachings (vv. 17-18). These *false teachers didn't really care* for them and they knew that once they could ruin the relationship of the believers with Paul they would be able to steer the young believers in any direction that they would want to (v. 17). This is dangerous! Therefore Paul reminds them how they received him as if he was an angel, as if they were receiving Jesus Christ Himself...how they were even ready to hand Paul their own eyes if he would need them (vv. 14-15)! And they did all of this because they believed that Paul had brought to them the *Truth that could change everything in their lives forever*.

This is the Truth that the believers were challenged to continue to follow, and not only when Paul was with them...also when he needed to do ministry elsewhere (even though he would have loved to just stay with them) (vv. 18, 20)! As children of God they now had to live differently. They had to *serve God diligently* (v. 18). This is what Paul longed for, because they were to him like his own children. In fact, it felt to him as if he was experiencing birth pains, and he would continue to feel this way until the day that they would give Christ the place of honor in their lives as they should (v. 19).

- ❖ How are you doing with the challenge of *serving God diligently*? Would you say that your life reflects a lifestyle where Christ has the place of honor in your life?
- ❖ *Do not go back* to a life that is enslaved to sin and manmade rules. Are there some *manmade rules* that had sneaked back into your life? What might they be? Is there still an area of your life that is enslaved to sin? Write all of these down, repent of it, and be sure to live differently, child and heir of the Living God!

Galatians 4:21-31, You have a New Address...and it is Out of this World!

Paul keeps going back to the example of Abraham (v. 21). He reminds the Galatians that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael from his slave, Hagar, and Isaac from his wife, Sarah (v. 22). Ishmael was born while Abraham tried to fulfill the promise of God's covenant with him by himself (v. 23a)! On the other hand, Isaac was born just as God had promised (v. 23b). Paul uses these two births to explain that the law from Sinai in Arabia had only produced slaves, just as it had happened with Hagar and her offspring (v. 24). This can be seen in the earthly Jerusalem with people still following the law with thousands of rules and regulations... (v. 25). On the other hand, *we now have a new address: The heavenly Jerusalem*. We are on our way here because of faith in Christ. This Jerusalem is like the believers' mother, and she has a lot of children over whom she would want to celebrate (see also Isaiah 54:1; vv. 2-27)!

Just like Isaac, we are now also part of God's children, and therefore all the promises that were meant for Abraham now also applies to us as believers (v. 28). However, just as Ishmael once tracked Isaac down, we should know that believers are also being tracked by false teachers (v. 29). And this is how we should react: Just like Hagar and Ishmael had to be driven away, we are now to *drive false teachers away* (v. 30a). There is no way that the slave and the real son can inherit together (v. 30b). Believers are children of Abraham, freed by God, and should have nothing to do ever again with those who are longing to enslave us (v. 31).

- ❖ *You have a new address!* You are on your way to the New Jerusalem! You have a Godly destiny! Don't let anyone track you down and ambush you into a life of trying to make it all work out on your own and following all kinds of manmade rules. Live to honor God and get rid of false influences in your life. What would some of these false influences look like in your life—can you clearly identify them?
- ❖ Are you starting to look differently at *Who your God is...* and *who you are*, because of Who He is? How is this shifting your life?
- ❖ What are some of the main takeaways you have from this lesson?

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