

# Galatians

## Lesson 7

### Chapter 3:26-4:20

## Leader Guide

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**Lesson 7**  
**Sons of God**  
**Galatians 3:26-4:20**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (*Galatians 3:28*)

**Prayers**

**Introduction**

The theme of Galatians 3:26-4:7 is sons, heirs, and eternal inheritance. Paul made a revolutionary statement by calling all believers "sons," regardless of their sex or social standing. Ancient Greek had abundant nouns and pronouns to describe human relationships, so Paul was not at a loss for words but was making a point by calling everyone sons. In Paul's time, sons received an inheritance, but daughters did not. Paul's point is that everyone in Christ is a son of God because they all receive the same inheritance; eternal life, the abiding presence of Christ's Spirit, and adoption as God's children.

**Read Galatians 3:26-4:7**

Gal 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,

Gal 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Gal 4:1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.

Gal 4:2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.

Gal 4:3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.

Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Gal 4:5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Gal 4:6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

Gal 4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

**Discussion**

1. How do believers become sons of God (verse 26)?

**By faith in Christ Jesus!**

2. How do believers sometimes think they become sons of God?

**Through obedience, good works, service, tithing, good works, mission trips, charity, fasting, discipline, study, memorization... All these are good for coming to a greater understanding of God and can be expressions of a loving heart but are meaningless without faith.**

3. How have you experienced the profound truth of equality in the body of Christ (verse 3:28)?

**I am always deeply moved when encountering humble people with profound faith and wisdom in humble circumstances.**

4. How are we Abraham's seed (verse 3:29), and how is this reference significant to Paul's discussion about the law? What promise is Paul referring to?

**We are Abraham's seed if we have faith in Christ. Paul also uses the term "children of the promise" to express the same idea of being in Christ by faith as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to bless all nations through him (Romans 9:8).**

5. Why is each statement in verse 4:4 significant?
  - a. The time had fully come

**God has had only one plan of salvation for the world. The timing of the life and death of Christ Jesus fulfilled the prophecy, Daniel 9:20-35. We also see the timing was right in the historical record of the rise and fall of empires. The Roman empire, with a unified language, extensive roads, shipping channels, and trade routes, enabled the rapid spread of the gospel from Asia to the Atlantic. The historical record of the early Christian church and the gospel message is well preserved compared to books from earlier in history. For example, only one partial manuscript of Plato's work exists from 200-300 BC, but we have over 5800 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament with 2.6 million pages of biblical text. Lastly, the time had fully come for God's love to be poured out on Gentiles so that they could enter his covenant of new life in Christ.**

- b. God sent his Son

**The Son is the Word, with God from eternity, through whom God created the universe. God sent his Son to reveal the Father's love, do away with sin, unite us with the Father, give us new life in him, and defeat the devil's hold on the world.**

- c. Born of a woman

**Jesus Christ was born of a woman to share our humanity. As the writer of Hebrews emphasized, we have a high priest in Christ Jesus who sympathizes with our weaknesses and knows our temptations.**

- d. Born under the law

**Jesus was born and lived under the law. He lived a perfect life to fulfill the law and be God's perfect sacrifice for all sins for all time (Hebrews 9:26, 28).**

6. What was the purpose of Jesus' ministry? See Paul's succinct description in verse 4:5.

Gal 4:5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

**Jesus redeemed us from sin so we could be in union with God and receive eternal life.**

7. What is the benefit of baptism into Christ as sons of God, verse 4:6?

Gal 4:6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

**The main benefit of baptism is that we receive the Holy Spirit, who is Christ's Spirit and the Spirit of God, so the Spirit can talk to God for us and put God's word in our minds.**

8. Being a son of God through baptism makes us an heir. What are we heir to (verse 4:7)?

**We are heirs to God's kingdom and all his spiritual blessings – and there are so many. We receive forgiveness of sin and freedom from its condemnation, eternal life, the abiding presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the invitation of prayer – to hear and be heard by God, the insight and wisdom of God's plan of salvation through Christ, the gifts of the Holy Spirit to live a joyful and life of abundant blessings in Christ and with others (To name a few blessings of our inheritance!)**

9. The writer of Hebrews said the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves (Hebrews 10:1). With this in mind, how does Paul say the law was like a guardian in Galatians 3:29-4:7?

Gal 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Gal 4:1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.

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Gal 4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

**The law was like a guardian, caring for God’s people until his promise to Abraham to bless all people through him could be fulfilled in Christ. After Christ, there was no need for the guardian and God’s own Spirit guides and cares for us.**

### **Read Galatians 4:7-4:20**

Gal 4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Gal 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.

Gal 4:9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God —how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

Gal 4:10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!

Gal 4:11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

Gal 4:12 I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong.

Gal 4:13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you.

Gal 4:14 Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.

Gal 4:15 What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.

Gal 4:16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Gal 4:17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them.

Gal 4:18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you.

Gal 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,

Gal 4:20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

### **Discuss**

10. Verse 4:7 begins a long, sometimes confusing, discussion contrasting spiritual slavery to freedom in Christ that continues to the end of his letter. Discuss Paul’s images of slavery in the following verses:

- a. Verse 4:7, We are no longer slaves but are **heirs, children of God with an eternal inheritance.**

Gal 4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

- b. Verse 4:8, We are no longer slaves to **Christian Judaizers or teachers and Pharisees of Judaism or anyone who teaches righteousness and salvation apart from Christ or in addition to Christ.**

Gal 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.

c. John 8:34, We are no longer slaves to sin\_\_\_\_\_.

Jn 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Jn 8:35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

Jn 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

d. Galatians 3:23, we are no longer slaves to the law.

Gal 3:23 Before this faith [in Jesus Christ] came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

11. In verses 9-10, Paul refers to the miserable principles regarding the observance of sacrifices on special days and months and seasons and years. Numbers 28:14-15 is an example of the special days and seasons Paul is referring to. How do making the sacrifices described in Numbers 28:14-15 illustrate the futility of maintaining Jewish regulations while trusting in God's grace through salvation by faith in Christ?

Nu 28:14 With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a third of a hin; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at each new moon during the year. <sup>15</sup> Besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering, one male goat is to be presented to the LORD as a sin offering.

**Faith in Christ accomplished what all the sacrifices prescribed in the law never could; complete forgiveness and removal of sin. The Galatians were futilely trying to earn their righteousness by observing the law when faith in Christ had already made them righteous to God.**

12. What language to the Galatians in verses 4:11-20 indicates the seriousness of living by Jewish ceremonial law or by faith in Christ?

**Paul's language is strong throughout the letter of Galatians. In verses 4:11-20, Paul uses words like he fears for them, pleads with them, calls his efforts a waste (if they try to justify themselves through the law), asks them to remember their beloved relationship when they first met, and concludes that he wishes he could change his tone with them but is perplexed by their thinking and actions.**

**Closing Prayer**