

EXPLORING GALATIANS

Chapter 4 Study Guide

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I. You are now part of God's Family [Galatians 4:1-7]

- A. (4:3) "You were *enslaved to the basic principles of the world*" (i.e. man's attempts to gain a right standing before God).
- B. Basic principles of the world:
 - 1. Principle 1: You can gain a right standing before God by living under the Mosaic Law
 - 2. Principle 2: You can gain a right standing before God by trying to keep man-made laws, rules, and regulations
 - 3. Principle 3: You can gain a right standing before God by ritually observing certain days, months, seasons and years
 - 4. Principle 4: You can gain a right standing before God by being a physical descendant of Abraham
 - 5. Principle 5: You can gain a right standing before God by self-denial (asceticism)
- C. (4:5) Now you have the full rights of sons (i.e. adopted)
 - 1. Roman adoption (*patria potestas*; the father's power)
 - The father chose the child
 - The adoption was permanent
 - The adopted child had all the rights of a legitimate child
 - The adopted child was no longer accountable for debts and obligations of its former family
 - 2. The believer's adoption
 - The believer was chosen (redeemed) by God to be his son/daughter (4:5)
 - The adoption is permanent (John 10:28, 29), and the believer is given the Holy Spirit as a mark of ownership (4:6; Eph. 1:13, 14)
 - The believer becomes a legitimate heir (4:7; Rom. 8:17; Titus 3:6; Jas. 2:5)
 - The believer's sins are forgiven, the old ways of living are passed away (2 Cor. 5:17)
- D. Human misconceptions of the heavenly Father
 - 1. Career-oriented Father: God doesn't care about his family
 - 2. Performance-based Father: God's love is based on my works
 - 3. Drill-sergeant Father: God's love is based on my self-discipline
 - 4. Permissive Father: God doesn't care what I do
 - 5. Favoring Father: God loves others better/less than me

II. I'm concerned about you [Galatians 4:8-20]

- A. (4:9) "You have *turned back again*" (to backslide)
- B. Backsliding

1. The word *backslide*, in a Christian context, implies movement away from Christ rather than toward Him.
2. A backslider is someone who is going the wrong way, spiritually.
3. He is regressing rather than progressing.
4. The backslider had at one time demonstrated a commitment to Christ or maintained a certain standard of behavior, but he has since reverted to old ways.
5. Backsliding may manifest itself in several ways, e.g., dropping out of church, losing fervor for the Lord, walking away from a ministry or a family, or falling back into old habits.
6. Some people use the word *backslide* to mean that a person has lost his or her salvation. However, since a saved person is secure in Christ (John 10:28–29)—God will not kick His children out of His family—that is not how we will use the word.
7. Rather, when we speak of backsliding, we simply mean that someone is growing cold toward Christ.
8. A backslidden condition could indicate the person was never saved to begin with—in which case, the backslider is only showing his true colors.
9. But it's also possible for children of God to backslide, temporarily.

III. Hagar vs. Sarah [Galatians 4:21-31]

HAGAR/ISHMAEL (LAW)	SARAH/ISAAC (GRACE)

IV. Summary

- ✓ You have been _____
- ✓ Don't _____ to a self-centered life
- ✓ By God's grace you are _____