

The Joys of Growing Up

Galatians 4:1-20

Have you ever wished you could go back to being a child again—to be free from work, mortgage payments, bills and taxes; not having to be concerned about repairs or great responsibilities? The Galatians may have felt that way spiritually. They clung to the spiritual childhood of living under the law. But aren't we forgetting something? Just think of the things we were denied as children. In Galatians 4:1-20 Paul reminds us of the joys of growing up in God's household.

God's Children Through Faith

Read Galatians 4:1-7

1. What position or status does an heir have when they are still a child (or minor)? (vv. 1-2)

2. In what way were we no different from a slave before we came to know Christ? (v. 3)

3. What did Paul mean by "the basic principles of the world"? (v. 3)

4. What happened when the time had fully come? (vv. 4-5)

5. What gifts and privileges have we received now that God has made us His sons (adult children)? (vv. 6-7)

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Paul is concerned for the Galatian believers. He recalls their joy when they first received him and is confused (and maybe even hurt) that they are embracing the teachings of the Judaizers. It appeared that the Galatians had traded their new found freedom for a system of rules and regulations.

Read Galatians 4:8-20

6. What was the status of the Galatians before they knew God? (vv. 8-11)

7. What was the reason for Paul preaching the gospel to them in the first place? (vv. 12-13)

8. How does Paul describe the Galatians' attitude toward him when he was with them? (vv. 14-15)

9. In what ways do you think legalism takes away joy?

10. What does Paul say are the true motives of “those people”—(the Judaizers)? (v. 17)

11. What metaphor does Paul use to describe his anguish over the Galatians’ change of heart toward the gospel of faith? (vv. 19-20)

Life Application

12. Paul says that not only have we come to know God, but God knows us (v. 9). Read Ephesians 2:12-13 for a parallel thought. What is your initial reaction to this? How does this imply that each of us have a personal relationship with God?

13. Have you ever lost your joy in Christ? If so, how did your relationship (fellowship) with your Father in heaven change?

14. Read Romans 8:14-17. Based on Galatians 4 and the Romans passage, what do Christians have freedom from?

Thank God for adopting you as a beloved son or daughter with full rights as an heir. Ask your Father to renew your joy in Christ as you draw near to Him in prayer.