

Looking for helpful
resources?

The Bible
Project



Free Commentary



Read

In your group, read the passage out loud, with each person reading a verse.

Recall--What's the Sermon Big Idea?

The gospel not only **frees** us from performing for God, it also **matures** us into children known by God.

Head: Grasping the Text

Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of the text.

1. **The Heir vs. The Slave (4:1–3):** Paul says that before Christ, we were like children who owned an estate but were treated like servants. In the Judaism of Paul's day, in what ways did their religion (OT laws, rituals, performance, etc.) feel like being a slave?
2. **The Fullness of Time (4: 4–5):** Look closely at the phrase "born under the law, to redeem those under the law." Why was it necessary for Jesus to live under the same rules and system of Judaism that the Jews failed to keep? What do these verses tell us about the doctrine of the incarnation?
3. **The Great Exchange:** (4:7): "You are no longer a slave, but a son." List the legal differences between a slave and an adopted heir? In light of what Paul has already discussed in his letter, what's the difference between adoption and justification? How would you describe to a new believer?

Heart: Grasping the Internal Transformation

Goal: To examine how the Gospel reshapes our identity, affections, and motivations.

- 4. The Abba Cry (4:6):** Paul says the Spirit in our hearts cries out "Abba! Father!" This is language that speaks more about intimacy than infancy. When you pray, do you feel like you are talking to a distant Judge or a loving Father? Reflect on how much the language of Abba marks your prayer life. What do you think holds you back from using this intimate heart cry?

- 5. The Worthless Return (4:8–11):** Paul is baffled that the Galatians want to go back to "weak and worthless" principles. What are the "weak and worthless" things you turn to when you feel insecure or guilty that you've not performed or been good enough for God? (e.g., overworking, seeking human approval, self-criticism). Why is it tempting to return to old ways rather than press onwards into the full reality of who we are in Christ?

Hands: Grasping Your Next Step

Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out. How can I take a step of action in the next week to walk more faithfully as a disciple?

- 6. Relational Grace (4:12–16):** Paul notes that legalism had ruined the Galatians' joy and their relationship with him. Legalism makes us critical of others. Who in your life do you need to stop "judging by the law" and start "loving as a brother/sister"?

- 7. Christ Formed in You (4:19):** Paul speaks of "labor pains" to describe the goal of maturing in Christ. Where in your life—your temper, your anxiety, your finances, your thought life, etc.—do you most need the character of Christ to be "formed" right now? Now, with that area in mind, consider how the growth ingredient of God's grace must be present to make this change possible. Personalize the change you envisioned with the group. You can share it with a simple statement such as: *"I struggle in ____ (name the area) ____ . I know I can't do it without God's grace. My prayer is that I will become more desperate for God's grace. I know relying on God's grace, it will help me _____ ."*