

Discussion #6 — Galatians 3:26 - 4:20 — Sons of God and known by God

Review: In verses 3:15-24 (which we skipped), Paul uses the example of Abraham to reiterate his earlier points. He says that God made a promise to Abraham and has not revoked it. God blessed the world through Abraham by sending the Messiah as one of Abraham's descendants. The law was given to Moses many centuries later for two reasons: on the positive side it reveals the nature and will of God and shows people how to live. On the negative side, it points out people's sins and shows them that it is impossible to please God by trying to obey His laws. Most recently, Paul was then shown the superiority of salvation by *faith* over trying to be saved by keeping the Jewish laws. God knew that we were the prisoners of sin, but he provided a way of escape—faith in Jesus Christ.

1. In verse 3:26, Paul tells us that we are all sons (and daughters) of God who are clothed with Christ. What rights, privileges, and responsibilities do we have as earthly sons and daughters? How do these correspond with the rights, privileges, and responsibilities we have as children of God?

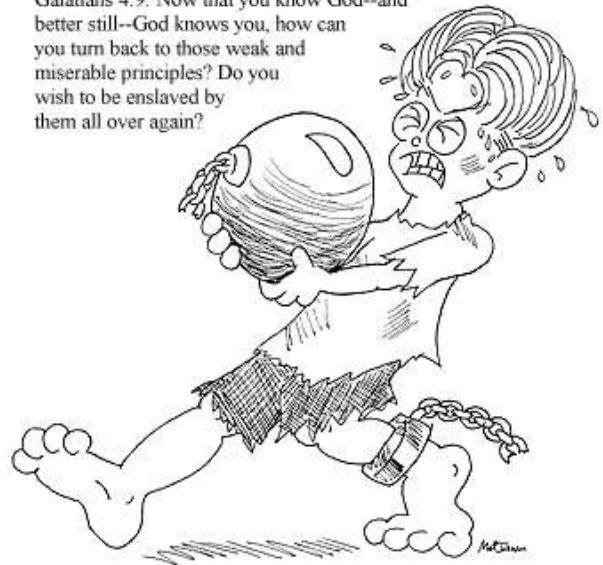
2. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ? Can being clothed with Christ help us to break down cultural barriers? Give an example—either positive or negative—from your own life.

3. In verses 4:1-7, Paul gives an analogy involving children, heirs, slaves, and sons. Can you describe this relationship in your own words?

4. Knowing what we do about the situation Paul was writing about in Galatia, why do you think he felt it was important to include this analogy?

5. In verses 12-16, Paul contrasts the way the Galatians treated him before with the way they are now responding negatively to his teachings. He praises them for having treated him in the past “as if I were Jesus himself.” How do you respond to people who are sick, depressed, chronically ill, homeless, hungry, or otherwise less able than you? Would your response be any different if you resolved to treat them “as if [they] were Jesus himself”?

Galatians 4:9. Now that you know God—and better still—God knows you, how can you turn back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?



6. Paul attributes the Galatians' godly response to his illness to joy (verse 15). How does joy help us to behave more like Christ? (Or does it?)

7. Describe a situation in which you did or did not respond to a trying situation in a joyful manner.