

## Discussion #7 — Galatians 4:21-31 — Hagar and Sarah

Read Genesis 15:17-16:10, Genesis 21:1-13, and Galatians 4:21-31.

In this part of Galatians, Paul uses the story of Hagar and Sarah as a picture of the relationship between God and man. The Jews traced their lineage through Abraham's legitimate son, Isaac, the son of Sarah, and regarded Ishmael, the son of Hagar, as an outcast. Here, Paul tells them that Hagar represents the covenant given on Mt. Sinai, which is the law that the Jews in Jerusalem pride themselves on keeping. He goes on to quote from Genesis—"the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son"—and encourages the Galatians to claim the promise made to their ancestor, Isaac, by shaking off the bonds of slavery imposed by the law.

1. What makes this such a powerful message for the Galatians? How do you think this message made them feel?
2. Do you take pride in any ethnic, national, or spiritual ancestor? What effect does that relationship have on the way you live your life?

### Freedom in Christ - Galatians 5:1-15.

3. What is the "yoke of slavery" to which Paul refers in verse 5:1?
4. Is there anyone in your life who tries to impose a yoke of slavery on you? How should you respond?
5. What does Paul tell the Galatians they will be obligated to do if they comply with the requirement of the Judaizers to be circumcised?

6. Circumcision made it easy for Jews to identify others who believed as they did. Paul tells them (v. 6) that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value." How, then can they—and we—identify others who hold similar beliefs (Christians)?



Galatians 5:14-15. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

7. What is Paul's tone in 5:7-12?
8. We are surrounded by the kind of yeast to which Paul refers in verse 7:9. Give an example—positive or negative—from your own life. How did you respond?
9. Paul tells us that we "were called to be free." Does this mean we can do anything we want to do?
10. How does God want us to use the freedom He has given us?