

STUDIES IN GALATIANS

Study #7: Galatians 4:1-11

“You Were Running Well” (Until You Didn’t Graduate)

You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Didn’t Graduate – Galatians 4:1-11

Key verse 5:7 —“You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”

You were running well: who cut in on you that you would not obey the truth.

The Galatian epistle is written to several churches that are in Lyrstra, Derbe and Iconium, and any of the part of southern Galatia.

These churches were formed and many of them had come to know Christ and were excited about their relationship. But these legalistic false teachers came in and said that you Gentiles cannot be Christians just by faith. You’ve got to have circumcision, keep certain parts of the Law and all of those things.

Here is the key to the whole book. In Galatians 5:7: “You were running well, who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth.

So each one of the studies is “You were running well UNTIL.” And this is study number seven but I’m going to review the other six just briefly as part of my introduction here today.

Galatians 4:5-6 are your key verses for today.

You were running well until: you didn’t graduate.

Now you’ll understand that in just a little bit when we get into the passage.

I want to share this with you because I think you’ll enjoy it.

This is an old gentleman just kicking up his heels and said that he is not going to have anything to do with all of this new technology and so he says:

My phone was beeping every three minutes with the details of everything and I’m not ready to live like this. I keep my cell phone in the garage in my golf bag.

The kids bought me a GPS for my last birthday because they said I get lost every now and then going over to the grocery store or the library. I mean that GPS looked pretty smart on my dashboard, but that lady inside that gadget was the most annoying rudest person I’ve run into in a long time. Every 10 minutes she would sarcastically say “recalculating.” You would think she could be nicer. It was like she could barely tolerate me.

She would let go with a deep sigh and then tell me to make a U-turn at the next light. Then if I made a right turn instead, well, it was not a good relationship.

To be perfectly frank, I'm still trying to learn how you use cordless phones in our house. We've had them for four years but I still haven't figured out how I can lose three phones all at once and have to run around digging under chair cushions and checking bathrooms and dirty laundry baskets when the phone rings.

The world is just getting too complex for me. They even messed me up every time I go to grocery store. You'd think they'd settle on something themselves, but the sudden paper or plastic. Every time I check out this knocks me for a loop. I bought some of those cloth reusable bags to avoid looking confused but I can't remember to take them with me.

Now I toss it back at them when they ask me paper or plastic, I just say, "It doesn't matter to me, I'm bi-sack-sual!"

Then it's their turn to stare at me with a blank look. I was recently asked if I tweet I said "No. But I sure do toot!"

The guy's honest isn't he!

Remember the story of the prodigal son? It's probably the most popular parable in the stories that Jesus tells.

Here is a young son who wants to forget that he has a relationship with the family. He asked his dad for the inheritance that's going to be his and he gets that and then leaves.

And Lord only knows where he went and how he spent his time. But to make a long story short, he spent everything he had and ended up slopping hogs. And while he was there he came to his senses and finally he said, "How many servants of my father are having more bread to eat and I'm here perishing with hunger?"

You see, the reason he said that is because he thought he gave up his son-ship and the father would disown him. And the best he could hope for us to go home and be a servant.

Remember what he said? "I will arise and go to my father and I'll say to him "Father, I have sinned, just make me one of your hired servants." In other words, I want to enter into a contractual arrangement where I can work for you. I have surrendered and given up the possibility of ever being a son.

Remember the rest the story? The father is an old man running to get his arms around that kid and immediately he restores in the son-ship.

Now maybe, just maybe, you're saying why do you start with a story like that? Because the minute you were born again by the Spirit of God into God's family, you became a son and a daughter in His family.

Are you live in like it? And are you excited about that you're part of the family? You know, you treat your family different than you do just regular folks that are coming along.

A lot of people in church have forgotten that that's it's brothers and sisters they're sitting next to them so they say some of the nastiest and awful things about each other, feeling like that they're so spiritual because they are setting everybody straight.

You don't try that in your family. Out of deep love and compassion you live together, you learn to mold your lives together as a family and know the joys of seeing growth and maturity take place.

In the book of Galatians, Paul has saved a powerful argument for chapter 4 in these verses we are going to be looking at.

1. You were running well UNTIL: No runs, no hits, and a big error.

As the scene of the study opens in study number one, these people in Galatia have twisted minds, a twisted Gospel and troubled minds. They have departed from the simple Gospel message that Paul had taken to them.

Study #2:

2. You were running well UNTIL: you forgot what God is doing in your life.

I love that section because what Paul does is takes them on the Damascus Road and the dramatic change that took place in his life. The authenticity of the Gospel. The power of the Gospel is known by everybody when they see the changes in our lives and they see the way we're living our lives as believers. Because ever deepening relationship with the Lord automatically changes our lives. When we get over to chapter 5, I'm really looking forward to that.

3. You are running well UNTIL: divine direction was not discerned.

Remember what happened? Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch preaching at that church. It was all Gentiles. That's where they were first called Christians. And there were some false teachers that came in there.

They said you Gentiles don't know anything about salvation. And if you're going to be or if you're going to claim to be Christians or you're going to claim to know the Lord then you're going to have to do this and this and this and they had these laws. Well, if Paul and Barnabas had just been going and ministering to the Gentiles and so they were really upset by that.

So what the church did was send Paul, Barnabas and Titus, who was a Gentile Christian (uncircumcised)—who had come to know Christ through their ministry—as a test case. They went to the Jerusalem Council (Acts chapter 15). In this third study they learned that the Jerusalem Christians had the

same message that Paul and Barnabas had. Remember what came out of that? Peter's going to go minister to the Jews and Paul's going to go minister to the Gentiles but it's going to be the same message.

And they ended that study with singing "Blest be the tie that binds" as they're holding their hands with the pillars (Peter, James and John) in a circle, committing themselves to each other.

We think the problem was settled there, but still divine direction was not discerned.

4. You are running well UNTIL: peer pressure postponed progress.

Peter was so curious. He took that 365 mile trip north from Jerusalem to Antioch just to see how Gentile Christians acted in their relationship with the Lord. And when he came in, man, he was just so cool. He'd just gone around, sitting with all the Gentiles and he'd eaten supper with them. Get this big dining room for 500 people in there, eating their meals together. And Peter's right with them. But then all of a sudden some guys from Jerusalem, some Jews came in.

What did Peter do? He got up from the table, wouldn't have anything to do with the Gentiles, went over and sat with the Jews.

He forgot the counsel. The other thing you need to remember, if you don't learn your lesson the first time you are probably going to get another opportunity to learn it. And Peter really blew it on the night in the Garden of Gethsemane. He made this glorious statement that "I would even die with you" and the next minute he's denying three times that he even knew Him.

And then you've got the picture of him being so embarrassed, standing before that crowd. And Paul stood right up and confronted him with the message of the gospel and that responsibility that they had. And he said some pretty strong things in it if you remember.

5. You were running well UNTIL: you said "I do it myself."
(Galatians 3:1-14)

The normal thing about becoming a Christian is we think we've got to help God make up for lost time because we've been living all these years in sin like the prodigal son.

But see, that is straight from the pit. What God wants is for you to just surrender and let the power of the Spirit produce Christlikeness in you as you read and feed on the Word of God and you learn what it is to pray and to walk with Him.

Those are the things that are your witness for Christ. It's not how much money you get or where you go to church or all these other glorious things that we're so proud of, that's from the flesh, and that's what he tells you in Galatians 3.

You were running well until: you said I do it myself.

And then:

6. “You were running well UNTIL: you failed to read the instructions.

That is one of the most glorious presentations of the purpose of the Law and why the Law was given.

And so in capsule form, that leads us to study #7:

7. You are running well UNTIL: you didn't graduate.
(Galatians 4:1-11)

These Galatians are wanting to go back and live in bondage with performance rather than moving on to an intimate relationship with our blessed Lord.

And so when we get to this particular passage that's the very thing that we're going to have to see. They have been deceived by these legalistic teachers that are coming in to say that Paul was all wrong and they really need to understand that it's Christ, yes, but it's Christ plus and the keeping of the Law.

Chuck Swindoll says it this way:

It is doubtful if there is any greater joy on earth than the joy of being free. And the ecstasy is heightened if a person has once

been in bondage, held captive by a power that is impossible to overcome. Being liberated from such clutches brings pleasure beyond description.

(source unknown)

That's the joy you felt the night you came to know Christ. The complete cleansing, perfect before Him, washed by the blood of the Lamb. Why do we complicate it? Why do we join the Galatians in going back to a performance? That's what he's going to be talking about in our verses under consideration.

Now are you ready?

v. 1 Now I am saying as long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.

“Now I am saying as long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.”

Let me read it from Peterson's message, I think this will help.

“Let me show you the implications of this. As long as the heir is a minor, he has no advantage over the slave. Though legally he owns the entire inheritance.”

Now, you have to understand the Jews and the Greeks and the Romans all had a different plan for their kids. When their kids were born they were *nēpios*, little babies, just like our children. But they put that child in a rigorous, rigorous program under a

guardian. The Guardian was a tutor. He was everything else to that child until, in the Roman situation, the father decided when it was going to be time for that child to be considered an heir to everything that's coming. That's what Paul's using here. That little baby is just like an enslaved child. He's the owner of all but he will not realize it until the father appoints the time for that to take place.

Now in the Roman administration, at the age of 14, they get the *Toga Virilis* which is the robe that describes *Virilis* sonship. And so they continued that child from 14 to 25 to be under special stewards to be sure that that kid was grown-up and mature. But the inheritance was involved at the first point.

Jews, 12 was the age when they were passed from babyhood into the heir to all of the estate of the father. So that's in back of what's being said here.

Now I'm saying as long as the heir is a child—a little minor—he is no different than a slave, though he's legally owner of all. So he's connecting the sections with the last one and he saying you became a child when you were born again and you also became a son in God's family at that same moment. There's no time here as far as the believer is concerned.

The very minute you came to know Christ, the Spirit of God put you into God's family, and He also made you sons and daughters in that family.

So what they were doing, they were staying under the Guardian rather than taking the inheritance which was theirs in Christ.

Remember in 1 Corinthians 13—I think it’s probably one of the best verses to describe it—verse 11:

“when I was a child I used to speak as a child and think as a child and reason as a child and when I became a man I did away with childish things.”

“...As long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.

Robert Fulghum always makes me laugh. He’s the one who *And I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.*”

(*Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance* by Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker)

Don’t worry the children never listen to you;
worry that they’re always watching you.
Robert Fulghum (p. 191)

They’re looking to see whether this thing is really real. You know, the reason so many people are so content to live in this whole world without really thinking about heaven and getting excited about it is because they have this distorted view of being born again. That’s going to get it done, but they never learn that at that same process that we’re taken out of Adam

and put into Christ, and they became part of his family. And so they're sons and daughters in His family.

Now listen to C.S. Lewis:

(Uncommon: Finding Your Path to Significance by Tony Dungy with Nathan Whitaker)

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one.

C. S. Lewis (p. 197)

v. 2 But is under Guardians and stewards until the previously appointed time of the father.

“But”—now notice verse 2—[this child] “is under Guardians and stewards [if it’s the Roman situation] until the previously appointed time of the father.”

This is the only place in the Bible you have the word “appointed.” That special time, by the father, when this is going to take place.

Think back on your own salvation. Did you ever think of it as an appointed time by the Father to meet you face-to-face and make you an opportunity to receive Him by faith and to become part of His family?

Well the Jews and the Romans and the Greeks all had their plans for transitions into sonship and in the heir-ship, which is what he's saying.

It's a time prearranged by the Father. He's under the tutor until he's 14. Curator until he's 25.

All he's saying is, the Law was given for a period of rigid training to prepare us to receive the grace of God. And when you take the Law and you put it over into your Christian life you are telling God that He didn't get it done adequately so therefore you've got help Him. And you don't want to put yourself in that position but a lot of people do. And they're just determined to live by the Law.

Now, let me give you a couple of verses so that you can see that these things are compacted together. New birth and sonship. One you're very familiar with and you've quoted a lot. Now watch it come alive.

John 1:12

but as many as received him, to them he gave the right or the authority to become the sons of God.

There it is. When by faith, they have received Christ, God the Father, makes them sons and daughters in His family.

Now you will recognize this passage too.

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

So there! You're born again, but you're a son already within an inheritance. Now do you understand 1 Peter chapter 1?

“You have an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled,” [that is what?] “reserved in heaven for you.” It's got your name on it! Do you think it's just some little piddling deal?

Put 1 Corinthians 2:9 right beside it:

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that the Lord has prepared for them that love Him.

Man it would blow your mind today to know what God has your name written all over up there for your inheritance as a son and daughter in his family.

That's what Paul is trying to help them understand. Now, I love verse 3 because you have the author identifying with the readers. When you have the word “we” and you got “wee, wee, wee, wee” all the way home, you've got four of them here altogether. Look at that!

v. 3 So also we when we were children we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.

“So also we when we were children we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.”

All he’s telling you is—now remember, he’s writing to Gentile Christians. He’s not writing to Jews at this point. It’s just that the Law has come in because the false teachers have made it a part of it, but they haven’t grown up in that—“So when we were children,” before we became Christians, what were we? We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were strangers to the covenants of promise. “We were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments.” What does that mean?

Well, you love to teach your grandkids and your great-grandkids the ABCs, don’t you? And you really know that what you’re trying to do is teach them something that they can build on in other things. But as they begin to learn to read and the write you throw away the rudiments, the ABCs.

The Law was the ABCs to bring us to Christ. It was never meant to be the basis for your eternal salvation. Not by works but by grace through faith, the washing of regeneration takes place. (Titus 3:5)

And so he said, you know before this all happened, you were under these rudiments, these foundational things.

Now, did you get the “we’s” there?

“So also we when, we were children, we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.” And so he’s making an application of this and the Law was meant to lead us to Christ. It was foundational.

I put Galatians 3:23 there. I know that I taught this some weeks ago.

Galatians 3:23

But before faith came, under law we were being guarded, being shut up unto the faith that was about to be revealed.

Now, are you ready? This is the most exciting passage in the next couple of verses so please be all ears.

These are my favorite Christmas verses, if you can believe that.

What does it say?

v. 4 But when the fullness of the time came. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law

“But when the fullness of the time came.”—what happened—“God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law”

What he’s saying to us, is there was a perfect time for the

Father to act. “The fullness of time” was on His schedule long before we are even aware that the earth was going to be here. At that special time what did He do? He “sent forth his Son.”

Now can I ask you a question? Since there are more statements about His second coming, than about His first coming, isn't it pretty knowledgeable and pretty acceptable to make the premise that when the fullness of time comes, God is going to repeat the act by sending forth His Son?

That's the picture. We're living in those times. We're at that time when it's going to run out and God, in His marvelous grace, is going to send forth His Son. And then there are two phrases about it. See the last two?

“born of a woman” and

“born under the law.”

Now I know that probably many of you, and I have too, believe that “born of a woman” is very significant because Jesus came, born of a virgin.

That's exactly what Mary said when the angel came. “How can I have a child since I am a virgin?”

And we know Isaiah 7:14 says that a virgin will conceive and give birth. That's wonderful. But that is not the primary interpretation of this phrase.

It's okay because it says to the world but don't argue for the virgin birth with just this passage ok. You're going to have to use all the others with it.

“Born of a woman” means that He is God's Son sent forth and took on humanity. He was born as a human being. “Born of a woman” just like all of us sitting in this room were born of a woman. The virgin birth, we can say the man was not involved right and that's okay.

But remember “The Word,” John 1:14, “Jesus Christ became flesh and tabernacled among us.” He came and took on our human humanity in a body so that He could be born under the Law and keep it perfectly and die as a human being on the cross, taking your place and mine.

That's the full understanding of those two phrases. “Born of a woman” and “born under the law.”

Now you understand why He needed to be born in Bethlehem, don't you?

Some Caesar had to decide that taxation needed to take place and wouldn't you know that at the very time that the house of David goes to Bethlehem—Micah understood that 700 years before it ever happened, that it was going to take place. Miraculous in itself, but God's sovereign purpose in having this person, God's Son, take our human flesh and be born in Bethlehem.

So what did they have to do? At eight days they said to get circumcised. After that they had to make the sacrifice for purification. As you will remember, they took the birds with them up to the temple.

All of these things took place for the purpose of complete, meticulous fulfillment of the Law. If he'd have tripped up or missed in any way, He would've disqualified himself to take your place or mine.

And so it was necessary for Him to be born of a woman, but also to be born under the Law. And it came at the perfect time. It was in the fullness of time. It was at the appointed time. It was at the time exactly when he wanted it to take place.

That's what he saying is true about the Father appointing the time when the child, the *nēpios*, becomes a *huios*—and a son—and his heir to the throne.

Isn't that great! That just blesses my heart.

He died for a broken Law when He died on the cross. Your broken Law and mine.

Now, why did He do this?

There's two purposes and there in the next verse, in verse five. You with me?

v. 5 in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption.

“in order that”—when you have that, remember I told you, that’s a purpose.

Why in “the fullness of time” did God send “forth His Son, born of a woman, born under [the] law”?

Why did He do that? Two purposes:

1. “in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law,” [That makes you understand the previous verse] and
2. “in order that we might receive the adoption.”

Now that confused you, didn’t it?

We use the term “adoption” in our English culture as taking a child that’s not part of their family and adopting them into the family.

That’s not what adoption means here. Adoption is simply an act of the Father recognizing the son, having arrived at the point of heirship. So he becomes a son and a daughter with an inheritance. That’s adoption.

Now, when you put that together and you remember what I

told you, that they're simultaneous at the time of your new birth, you've got an inheritance to look forward to. And the whole purpose is for him to go back under the Law in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those who are enslaved to the Law.

Before Christ came there was no alternative. You live by the Law. And in this situation, what he saying to us, to go back and live under the Law now is to nullify the grace of God and His whole purpose in coming.

“In order that we might receive the adoption.” And that adoption, you could say, comes at the time that the child is recognized and he is now an heir.

Let me summarize that with just this paragraph.

When we come to know Christ as our Savior, we become children by birth and we also become sons in that we enter into the rights and privileges of sonship.

That is the bottom line from these verses. And that was done exactly at the time that the Father had chosen.

1. “God sent forth His Son, in order that He might deliver out by the payment of a ransom, those under the law.”
2. “God sent forth His Son, in order that He might we might receive the adoption.”

So what God the Father did is in the first purpose and what we receive is in the second wonderful, wonderful truth.

v. 6 Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.

Now, you understand that your sons and daughters, look at the sixth verse. Oh this is getting good. You ready?

“Now because you are sons, [and women your daughters too. It’s okay] God sent forth the Spirit of his son.”

What did God do in the fullness of time? He sent forth His Son

Now what has He done?

“God sent forth the Spirit of his son [the Holy Spirit] into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

He “sent forth the Spirit” to endorse the fact that we are sons because the Spirit comes to indwell us at the moment that we receive Christ as our Savior. And we manifested it by “crying, Abba, Father.” The cry of the son to his father in the midst of pain and difficulty.

Do you remember any verses that would describe what we’re talking about here in this? You immediately think of Romans chapter 8, I’m sure.

But would you notice, first of all, that the Trinity is here. God the Father sent forth His Son. The Son paid the ransom and the Spirit confirms that in our hearts.

And the most beautiful thing is, Christ used this word “Abba.” Do you remember where he did it? In the Garden of Gethsemane in Mark 14:36 listen to it:

Mark 14:36

And he was saying Abba Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.

What it is that you want from me.

Paul is saying the Spirit of his son is in our hearts and he expresses the relationship with the Lord himself.

Listen to Oswald Chambers in the *Our Daily Bread* booklet:

According to the ancient philosopher Aristotle, “Nature abhors a vacuum.” Aristotle based his conclusion on the observation that nature requires every space to be filled with something, even if that something is colorless, odorless air.

The same principle is at work in our spiritual lives. When the Holy Spirit begins to convict us of sin, the idea of starting a self-improvement plan immediately comes to mind. We put forth our best effort to defeat our worst habits. But every attempt to get rid of unclean thoughts, attitudes, and desires is

destined to fail because getting rid of one creates a vacuum in our souls. As soon as we empty ourselves of one vice, others move in to take its place, and we end up just as bad or worse than when we started.

Thinking about vacuums helps us to understand the importance of what Paul was saying to the Ephesians when he prayed that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith . . . (January 21, 2011)

But she missed it! Ephesians 5:18. What does the scripture say?

“continually on a daily basis be being filled with the Holy Spirit.”

The key is not me trying to struggle with all these things, but to be so indwelt by the Spirit who is not just a resident but also president and that He has complete control.

He has provided the strength, the insight, the wisdom and all that’s necessary for you and I to forsake these ugly things in the power of the Spirit, not something we’re performing by a legalistic standard. There’s a difference between the two. One is successful and the other one is not.

Then we get to Romans 8 Paul finally realized that. Because in Romans 7 he said “the good I would I do not and that which I would not I’m always doing.” Cycle—cycle—cycle. But he got to Romans 8 and now there’s no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus because the power of the Spirit of God is operative in the life of the believer to make us more like His Son.

The Father sent forth His Son, the Son redeemed us, and the Spirit confirms it in our hearts. Whoa! I hope you got ahold of that truth!

Listen to Romans 8:14-17 the other Abba Father. Now this is personal. You ready for it?

Romans 8:14-17 (NASB)

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, ...

There it all is! Spelled out so clearly of what he’s trying to convince the Galatians of the error of their way.

That makes so much difference, doesn’t it, when you realize you’re crying to a Father who loves you.

Look at verse 7:

v. 7 So that no longer are you a slave but a son, now if (you are) a son, (you are) also an heir through God.

“So that no longer are you a slave but a son.”

When you’ve got “So that,” that’s the result. That’s his argument.

Now he says:

“no longer a slave but a son, now if (you are) a son, [I’m going to tell you something else! You’ve got an inheritance to look forward to!] (you are) also an heir ...” to that glorious, glorious day.

“No longer a slave but a son.”

I like to put things together in kind of an equation when Paul’s trying to teach this thing. The equation is as follows:

From a slave—to a son—by the Savior—through the Spirit.

That pretty well summarizes everything you’ve looked at thus far.

From a slave, dead in trespasses and sin—to a son—by a Savior—through the Spirit.

Martin Luther a lot of times I think he got a smile on his face when he gets so excited about truth like this. And when he got to this passage he says:

Mr. Law, you just lost your throne to Christ.
(source unknown)

In other words, I now belong to the Lord Jesus.

Why is it that we're so frustrated? Why is it that we fail so miserably? It's because we're trying to do His job.

He has designed life to take over in the power of the Spirit and to produce Christlikeness in us. That ought to be a relief to know that He's given everything that's necessary, not only for your salvation, your sonship and daughter-ship, but also everything that's necessary for victory in your life to help you bear fruit in the lives of others.

Stephen Brown was a Presbyterian minister in Key Biscayne, Florida for a lot of years. He tells a story that he had to adjust to the fact that he needed a secretary and he didn't have one.

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown)

I thought all that was my job. I'll bet, if you're a mature Christian you thought that was your job too. Almost everything we do wrong in regard to freedom—judging other people, trying to get them to fit our Christian mold, telling them what they ought and ought not to do, deciding on whether they are good enough to be called a part of our family, being overly concerned with our witness in the community—is the business of the Holy Spirit.

I remember the first time I had a secretary. I had been

serving a small church in Cape Cod where the pastor did it all: typed the letters, prepared the bulletin, worked the mimeograph [machine], and answered the phone. (I almost said made the coffee, but that would be sexist, so I didn't say it.) I wasn't too skilled at those things, but nobody else was around to do them, so I was elected.

When I became the pastor of the larger church, I continued trying to do all those things. Guess what happened? The church secretary had to train me. Her name was Mrs. Kelsey and she came in one day and said, "Mr. Brown, I'm feeling rather uncomfortable."

I told her to sit down and we would talk about it.

She was hardly seated before she started talking. "I have a job description here, and you're fulfilling my job description. MY concern is the church, and if we can save some money, I will be glad to look for another job. However, to be perfectly honest with you, you are not doing my job very well. In fact, you are making a mess of it. So, either fire me or use me."

She then taught me how to dictate and delegate and trust her to do her job. It was wonderful.

But it wasn't half as wonderful as the discovery that I was doing the Holy Spirit's job and didn't have to. Our Lord the Holy Spirit is perfectly capable of leading Christians in the right direction. He is also perfectly capable of convicting them and of motivating them to do what the Father wants them to do.

I don't know about you, but for me that is a great relief. Someone once told a man who had said he was "self-made" that he relieved God of a tremendous responsibility! Well, I don't want to be self-made. I don't want the people I teach and pastor

to be self-made or Steve-made. I want them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (pp. 145-46)

That's the bottom line.

You were running well UNTIL: you didn't graduate.

A lot of people that are in this boat, that have not really thanked God on their knees for the fact that they have been accepted into God's family. And it is an eternal transaction.

Do you know that today? Do you know that you came by faith to receive Christ and the peace of God flooded your heart? You now have access into His presence so that you can talk to Him. You have a blessed hope for the inheritance that's reserved for you.

These Galatians weren't willing to graduate to sonship. They wanted to go back and live under the rudiments, under the Law. Why? Oh, you're not going to like this but the word "pride" steps into the middle of it.

Listen to Oswald Chambers:

(*My Utmost For His Highest* by Oswald Chambers)

Pride is the sin of making "self" our god. And some of us today do this, not like the Pharisee, but like the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14). For you to say, "Oh, I'm no saint," is acceptable by human standards of pride, but it is unconscious blasphemy

against God. You defy God to make you a saint, as if to say, “I am too weak and hopeless and outside the reach of the atonement by the Cross of Christ.” Why aren’t you a saint? It is either that you do not want to be a saint, or that you do not believe that God can make you into one. You say it would be all right if God saved you and took you straight to heaven. That is exactly what He will do! And not only do we make our home with Him, but Jesus said of His Father and Himself, “ ...We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). Put not conditions on your life—let Jesus be everything to you, and He will take you home with Him not only for a day, but for eternity.
(June 12)

Now that’s convicting, isn’t it?

We still want to control things. We still want to be in the middle of it. We get our noses out of joint when we’re not appreciated for all those sacrifices and things that we do.

Fanny Crosby says it well:

(The Treasures of Fanny Crosby by Fanny Crosby)

Thou my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me.
All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee.

Close to Thee, close to Thee,

All along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with Thee. (p. 28)

Listen to what Drew Brees says. He completely dislocated his shoulder. He was a quarterback when he was playing with San Diego and they thought he was over but he was determined to come back. He said:

(Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity by Drew Brees with Chris Fabry)

It turns out that family really means the people in your life who are always there, even when you are at your weakest.
(p. 87)

That's the love of the body of Christ. If you'll just get ahold of this truth, it'll bring unity, it'll bring closeness, it'll bring out willingness to be accepted and to be vulnerable and transparent with others.

The reason we lock ourselves off is because we're too proud. We don't want people to know the truth about us and we don't want this. We don't want that. We want to control it and create the scenario for ourselves.

Drew says one thing I've learned is family is very, very important.

Well, I got through reading that I start singing "A Child of the King"! Don't you love that great old hymn?

I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth;
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.

[He just has been reading this passage!]

I'm a child of the King,
a child of the King...
With Jesus my Savior,
I'm a child of the King.

Now, notice the remaining verses.

v. 8 But at that time, (in fact) not knowing God you were enslaved to those which by nature are not being gods.

“But at that time, (in fact) not knowing God you were enslaved to those which by nature are not being gods.

Now you're saying, I don't quite understand that.

In Acts 14, when Paul visited Lyrstra, and Derbe and Iconium, what did he find there? First of all, he found some people who saw Paul and Barnabas as their idols Hermes and Zeus. They made both of them into gods and were going to offer sacrifices to them. And they begged them, “no, no, no, no!” And you'll remember they turned around and eventually stoned them and

drove them out of town. They thought Paul was dead from that. Anyway, they were “enslaved” by nature to those things which are not being gods. They were idolaters. All the Gentiles were like that. Every place they went there was some god or goddess that they were worshipping.

Remember when he came to Athens? He said, as he talked to those guys on Mars hill, “I perceive that you’re very religious. I’ve been walking through your idols but I noticed there was one idol to the unknown god and I want to talk to you about that one.”

Idolatry. Idolatry. Idolatry. He said, that’s that the way you were. You were enslaved in the past time to some pagan form of idol worship. And now you’ve been transformed by the grace of God.

I couldn’t help but think of John Newton at this point. His tombstone reads: “John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.” But a far greater testimony outlines Newton in the most famous of the hundreds of hymns he wrote. His legacy still sings on!

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.

Now when he gets to verse 9 he says:

v. 9 But now having come to know God, indeed rather having become known by God, How are you turning back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments to which you are willing to be enslaved again.

“But now having come to know God, indeed rather having become known by God,”

Salvation from our point of view is to get to know God. Salvation from God’s point of view, from God’s perspective, is known by God. We are known by Him when we have our names written in the Lamb’s book of Life and recorded there. So when the roll is called up yonder you’ll be there and your name will be called.

“known by God” but we call it knowing God because he’s everything that we have longed for. Now the big question, there it is!

“How are you turning back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments [the ABCs] to which you are willing to be enslaved again.”

Why did you throw the DVR in reverse and go back to those things which were foundational? You should have left them a long time ago.

Remember Hebrews 6? Those Hebrew Christians were wanting to go back and live under the Law. And Paul says, “let us go on

to maturity in Christ.”

I love to hear Ian Thomas and I’ve read his books and he’s now with the Lord. But he made this great statement:

Across the rubble of a wrecked society a lonely cross has cast its shadow. The shadow of a lonely God waiting for men to be made men again.
(source unknown)

Yes, he’s wanting a relationship and these Galatian Christians, by adding the Law, are perverting the relationship.

What happens when you do that?

Genesis 19:26

Lot’s wife turned around and looked, and she became a pillar of salt.

God’s judgment right in the face of disobedience. My, how God quickly deals with these areas of our lives. We’ve just got to remember whose we are and who we represent. We belong to Him. We’re His child and He wants to work in our life.

Now, the one thing Paul did before he wrote this letter is he got into their DayTimers and he found on their DayTimers there were some really suspicious things there. And if they would have had their laptop or their [iPads] or their Tablets he would have gotten even more information probably.

Look what verse 10 says:

v. 10 Days you are scrupulously (religiously) observing and months and seasons and years.

“Days you are scrupulously (religiously) observing and months and seasons and years.”

Now, have you read the book of Leviticus? Or the book of Numbers? Or the book of Exodus? Or the book of Deuteronomy? And have you ever just wiped your brow when you got through reading and said “Thank God for the grace of God!” Because of all those feasts and things that you had to act upon because you were under the Law. And here these rights and rules they’re observing and it really bothers him.

Four things:

1. “Days,”
2. “months,”
3. “seasons,” and
4. “years.”

And notice the word “observing.” They’re performing it. They’re trying to gain salvation and acceptance in this way.

One pastor was being interviewed about his flock and he said:

“Well, there are 3 types of people in my flock. There are people who are growing. They are gifted and they’re gracious. And there are people who are carnal. They are childish and critical. But there are the FBOs.” An old guy said “What’s an FBO?” He said “For burial only.”

Some are like that! That’s the only reason they’re around. They want somebody to take care of that.

Isn’t that sad today? I hate this. That I’ve got to end this study on such a downer. Look at that last verse. Oh, it just makes you want to cry.

v. 11 I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have laboured to the point of exhaustion for you.

“I am afraid about you.” I’ve loved you. I’ve travailed for you. I’ve wanted Christ to be born in you. You’re going to see that next week.

“Lest perhaps in vain I have labored to the point of exhaustion for you.”

I’ve given. I’ve done everything I know to do. I love you.

Remember back in chapter 1 he said “I’m marveling that you’ve departed from the gospel.” Now he’s just saying “I’m at a loss. I am fearing the worst that such is the case.”

Listen to *Green Leaf in Drought* by Isobel Kuhn. She said:

(*Green Leaf in Drought* by Isobel Kuhn)

It seemed to come like an answer: [The Lord was out with the disciples in the boat and he was asleep.] “It is not the storm that worries the Lord. It is the *unbelief of the disciples*.”
p. 48

They’re not understanding who he really is.

Spurgeon said:

(*Lectures to My Students* by C. H. Spurgeon)

Life is short, and time is precious to a busy man. Whatever we do, we wish to make the most of.
p. 429

One of the things I would challenge you to do today, is if you feel like in some of your relationships you’re exhausted, take the little “love dare” from the Fireproof movie. If you feel this way about your marriage and your life, then do this as well.

Listen to this law of the love dare:

(*The Love Dare* by Stephen & Alex Kendrick with Lawrence Kimbrough)

**DEMONSTRATE LOVE BY WILLINGLY CHOOSING TO
GIVE IN TO AN AREA OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN
YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE. TELL THEM YOU ARE
PUTTING THEIR PREFERENCE FIRST.**

p. 59

Why don't you just tell God that today. I'm putting your preferences first. You've given me all that's necessary and I rejoice in it as your son/daughter today and I'm looking forward to the inheritance.

Eleven lessons that come out of the study.

You were running well UNTIL: You didn't graduate.

Just sign the graduation off today. Thank you for the fact that you're His child.

Father, what a privilege to be Your child through faith in Christ. Help me to remember today that I am a member of the ultimate royal family; and give me the wisdom and strength to live up to my pedigree. (Max Lucado, unknown)

Eugene Peterson:

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)

You know, Lord, how faithless and nervous I am in the presence of illness and death: even though I know you are the great

Physician; even though I know you are the resurrection and the life. Teach me to live in hope, responsive every moment to your glory. Amen.

p. 304

Father, we thank You for the chance of studying Your Word tonight and ask your Holy Spirit now to apply the truth of Your Word to each life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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STUDY NUMBER SEVEN – UNTIL: YOU DIDN'T GRADUATE – GALATIANS 4:1-11

KEY VERSES 4:5, 6

NOTES

- v. 1 Now I am saying as long as the heir is a child he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all.
- v. 2 But is under Guardians and stewards until the previously appointed time of the father.
- v. 3 So also we when we were children we were in a permanent state of servitude under the rudiments of the world.
- v. 4 But when the fullness of the time came. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under law
- v. 5 in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law, in order that we might receive the adoption.
- v. 6 Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying Abba, Father.
- v. 7 So that no longer are you a slave but a son, now if (you are) a son, (you are) also an heir through God.
- v. 8 But at that time, (in fact) not knowing God you were enslaved to those which by nature are not being gods.
- v. 9 But now having come to know God, indeed rather having become known by God, How are you turning back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments to which you are willing to be enslaved again.
- v. 10 Days you are scrupulously (religiously) observing and months and seasons and years.
- v. 11 I am afraid about you lest perhaps in vain I have laboured to the point of exhaustion for you.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Galatians 4:1-11 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What do you think Paul means in verse 1 when he says, “the heir is a child, he is no different than a slave though being legally owner of all”?

3. What does Paul mean by “guardians and stewards until the previously appointed time of the father” in verse 2?

4. Why did God send forth His Son, according to verse 5?

5. What is our new relationship with the Father, according to verse 6?

6. What has God done to reveal this relationship, according to verse 6?

7. What conclusions does Paul draw in verse 7?

8. Describe our past life, according to verse 8.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: We become sons and daughters at salvation.

LESSON #2: As sons and daughters, we are part of God's family.

LESSON #3: God sent forth His Son and the Spirit to guide us into all truth.

LESSON #4: The inheritance is for the family.

LESSON #5: God's timing is always perfect. "He has made everything beautiful in its time . . ." (Ecc. 3:11 NIV).

LESSON #6: The cry of relationship is "Abba! Father!"

LESSON #7: The Holy Spirit restrains us from evil.

LESSON #8: We come from a slave to a son by the Savior through the Spirit.

LESSON #9: The two-fold purpose of the Son's coming into the world is: (1) "in order that he might deliver out by the payment of a ransom those under law" and (2) "in order that we might receive the adoption" (verse 5).

LESSON #10: How careful we must be to focus and concentrate upon an ever deepening relationship with Jesus Christ rather than performing for Him.

LESSON #11: May God's Spirit motivate us to press on in perseverance to the finish line.