

No Longer a Slave

Galatians 4:8-20

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So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
Galatians 4:7 (English Standard Version)

Big-Picture Truth: Spiritual danger must be understood to be avoided.

Warning #1: IDOLATRY COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

*Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist.
⁹So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? ¹⁰You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years. ¹¹I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing.*
Galatians 4:8-11 (New Living Translation)

“. . . *weak and useless spiritual principles of this world . . .*” = what we think we need to save ourselves; what brings “life” and “fulfillment”

“There are an infinite number of different ways that we can choose to earn our salvation through works, even if we don’t think of it as earning our salvation at all. But whatever we choose to use, whether it is achievement or morality or religion or serving our family, we turn that thing into a savior, and thus into a ‘god’. Works-righteousness always creates idols; it’s simply that the false saviors it produces—church attendance, ministry to others, Bible-reading—are things we would not normally think of as idols.”
(From Galatians for You by Tim Keller.)

This is real love — not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. 1 John 4:10 (NLT)

Application Tip: Spend a few minutes and ask yourself this question: “What would it look like for me to live as if the gospel is true?”

- Read Ephesians 1:13-14; 16-19; Titus 2:11-14; Romans 8:31-39
- Take a moment to look at these Scriptures and sit with God. Look inward and ask, “How could I live in a way that reflects the truth of these verses?”
“What would be going on in my heart?”
“How would my behavior be different?”

Warning #2: BECAUSE BELIEVERS ARE CHANGEABLE FOR GOOD OR BAD, A STEADY STREAM OF GOD'S TRUTH IS ESSENTIAL.

Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles—free from those laws. You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you. ¹³Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News. ¹⁴But even though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not despise me or turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt then? I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth? Galatians 4:12-16 (NLT)

If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. ¹¹Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. ¹³Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. 1 Timothy 4:6, 11, 13 (NLT)

Application Tip: Before the beginning of the year, write out a description of the spiritual rhythms and relationships you will use in 2016 that will sustain and transform your soul. Include in that description how you will keep the truth of God's Word firmly in your mind and heart during the year.

Warning #3: IF YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS NEED YOU TO MAKE MUCH OF THEM, YOU NEED NEW LEADERS.

Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them. ¹⁸If someone is eager to do good things for you, that's all right; but let them do it all the time, not just when I'm with you. ¹⁹Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. ²⁰I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don't know how else to help you. Galatians 4:17-20 (NLT)

Application Tip: Find a leader at Lighthouse this week and give him or her your thanks; a pastor, a Home Group leader, or any leader who is trying to speak into your spiritual life!