

## **Galatians Chapter 4:8-20 Meeting Guide**

Note: Questions were either taken from or adapted from “No Other Gospel, The Book of Galatians” study guide from Citadel Square Church and *Galatians: The Gospel of Free Grace 13-Lesson Study* by Jon Nielsen and Philip Graham Ryken

### **Pray**

Apart from God, we can do nothing. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion. Throughout your time together, continue asking God for help.

### **Read Scripture**

Read Galatians 4:8-20 together.

### **Bible Study**

The bulk of your time will be spent discussing God’s Word together.

### **Remember:**

- Walk through the Bible study together using the HEAR method and talk about what stuck out most to you in the passage.
- Make sure you move discussion to the application section of your study.
- Affections, beliefs, and practices: Make sure to apply the passage to all of your life.

### **Pray**

- Take time to pray for one another and ask for His grace to apply His Word to our daily lives as pilgrims traveling to our true home.

### **Galatians 4:8-20 (ESV)**

**“Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup>But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? <sup>10</sup>You observe days and months and seasons and years! <sup>11</sup>I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.**

**<sup>12</sup>Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. <sup>13</sup>You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, <sup>14</sup>and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. <sup>16</sup>Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? <sup>17</sup>They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. <sup>18</sup>It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, <sup>19</sup>my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! <sup>20</sup>I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.”**

**Open:** Can you describe a time when someone made an appeal to you on the basis of their relationship with you. (Maybe as a parent, a friend, or a spouse). What was it about the personal nature of the appeal that made it so powerful? What effect did the appeal have on you?

**Study:**

- 1) What seems to be the general tone of this passage? What words and phrases contribute to this tone? Describe your sense of Paul's emotions as he writes Galatians 4:8-20.
- 2) In Galatians 4:7, Paul says we're changed from slaves to sons and heirs as recipients of the gospel. The Galatians seems to be returning to slavery in Galatians 4:8-20. How are they returning to slavery, and why?
- 3) How does Paul contrast his ministry and his love for the Galatians believers with the influence of his enemies (the Judaizers)? How does he describe his feelings toward the members of the church? What does he say about the behavior and motivation of his opponents?
- 4) Where has Paul used the phrase "*elementary principles of the world*" before? What further hints do you get about what he means by the phrase here in chapter 4? In what ways are the Galatian believers in great danger of becoming "*enslaved*" again by these principles?
- 5) According to Galatians 4:8-11, what are some implicit signs that a person has truly grasped the gospel of grace and is living by it? What might be some explicit signs that a person has fallen back into a "*slave*" mentality with regard to religion? What does this slave mentality look like in the Galatians context?
- 6) Read Galatians 4:12-16 again. Describe the Galatians' original response to Paul's preaching of the gospel. How does Paul remember them responding to the gospel and his preaching? What phrases does he use to describe their devotion to him and his gospel? How does he imply that they are changing their response, both to him and to his gospel message?
- 7) Concerning the Jewish law and rituals, Paul wanted the Galatians to become as he is. What did he mean by that? How did Paul relate to the law differently than the Galatians?
- 8) What are some ways in which Paul contrasts his ministry to the Galatians (and motives) with that of the Judaizers (see 4:17-20)? What are his goals for them as he serves them in gospel ministry? What do the Judaizers seem to be after? Why?
- 9) Based on verses 17-20, why do you think the Judaizers might have succeeded in winning some of the Galatians believers to their teaching, or at least significantly influencing them? What is it that enticed these believers to change?

**Apply:**

- 10) It's perplexing to Paul that the Galatians, who once received gospel preaching with joy, are now wandering away from it. What forces and winds of our culture might lead you to abandon the joyful acceptance of the gospel of grace by faith in Jesus alone? What tendencies can creep into the church and damage the doctrine of salvation by faith alone?

11) Some Galatians oppose Paul for preaching the truth of the gospel (Galatians 4:16). Why is the truth sometimes hard for us to hear? What truth is especially hard for you to understand/believe? Why?

12) In 4:17, Paul says, “*They make much of you, but for no good purpose.*” In other words, the false teachers are flatterers. What similar philosophies do we face in our own culture? How can we become aware of the danger of flattery in our own lives (i.e. that may cause us to adjust the message of the gospel)?

13) In 4:19 Paul says he is “in the anguish of childbirth again” for the Galatians. The emotion he expresses is intense. How can we follow Paul’s example in our own discipleship relationships?

**PRAY:**

- Take time thank God that He has set you free from the penalty of sin!
- Ask God to fill you with renewed joy as you consider the hope you have of sins forgiven, eternal life with God, and the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Ask God to give you strength to hold onto and live in the goodness of His pure gospel.
- Ask God for opportunities to share the gospel with others (both the lost and believers).