

Week 7 | Galatians 4:1-20



GUIDANCE IN STUDYING SCRIPTURE:

1. PLAN

"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." Psalm 16:8

Notice the intentionality of the phrase, "I have set." This is active engagement. You have to make a *plan* for reading the Bible or you will fall back into indifference. Program your automatic coffee pot, lay out your Bible, journal and pen and set your alarm clock. You will also need a Bible reading plan; at the end of this study guide there is a reference page with multiple plans you can choose from.

Quick tip: Do everything in your power to not look at your phone the first thing in the morning because then you immediately become preoccupied with the cares of this world.

2. PLEAD

"Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain." Psalm 119:36

Pray this verse every morning or others of your choosing before reading because our hearts are not inclined to want to focus on Scripture. We want to check our email, the weather and Instagram. *Plead* with the Lord to give you the desire to read His word. Plead with Him to open the eyes of your heart so you can behold His glory in the text. (Psalm 119:18)

3. PLOD

"I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." (Psalm 119:15-16)

"Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything." (2 Timothy 2:7)

This may be the most difficult aspect for us. We are a people of instant gratification and the Word of God cannot be treated as such. We need to be trained to *plod* through the Bible; that is, read it slowly, carefully, and methodically.

We are called to be transformed by the renewal of our *mind* (Romans 12:2). Sometimes we can tend to gravitate toward the emotional highs of Bible reading. What happens when the affections run out and we are in a valley? Like a fish out of water we flounder, not knowing what to read, all the time wondering what happened to our emotional high with the Lord.

4. PRIZE

"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth." (Psalm 119:103)

Do not be passive as you read the Bible. Look carefully for verses and passages of scripture to *prize*. Look for the treasure hidden in each passage of scripture and then write it down, meditate on it, let your heart enjoy the spiritual truth that you find. Job 23:12 states, *"I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food."*

Quick tip: as you read, you are always on the lookout for anything in the text that gives you reason to trust and love Jesus as your greatest treasure.

5. PRAISE

"In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 56:10-11)

When you are finished reading, look back over what you have written down (if you do decide to journal) and respond to the Lord in *praise* about the truth you have discovered.



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I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ²but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. ⁸Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. ⁹But 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? ¹⁰You observe days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. ¹²Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. ¹³You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, ¹⁴and 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. ¹⁵What 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. ¹⁶Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. ¹⁸It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, ¹⁹my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! ²⁰I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the relationship between verse 2 and the first phrase in verse 4, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...*”?
2. What do you think we can conclude from this regarding Christ’s coming and the fullness of time? See 2 Tim. 1:9.
3. According to verses 4-5, what are the two *purposes* for why “God sent forth his Son”?
4. Which of those two purposes is more ultimate? How do you know?
5. Why do you think it was necessary for the Son of God to be born into the such similar circumstances as us (Gal. 4:4)? (See also 2 Cor. 5:21 and Gal. 3:13)



6. According to verse 6 it says we are “sons of God,” but then it says he also “*sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts by whom we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’*” Why do you think we would need the Spirit of his Son in our hearts, in addition to being counted as a son?
7. Romans 8:14-17 is similar in language to Gal. 4:4-7. Read and see what else you can conclude about the role of the Spirit being sent into our hearts.
8. What would be the difference between the Galatians’ original slavery to pagan gods (4:8) and their return to slavery under Jewish laws (4:9)?
9. What would be the same?
10. Why is the distinction between “knowing God” and “being known by God” (4:9) important, especially as it relates to protecting us from falling back into religious slavery?
11. What seems to be grieving Paul so much in v. 12-20?
12. Verse 19 is a powerful image of the ministry. How does this image help you understand the nature of ministry for others?
13. In what way can you identify with Paul for someone else in your life? Who might God be leading you to spiritually “labor in the pains for childbirth until Christ is formed” in them?

