

Children of God

26 For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

1 Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. 2 They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. 3 And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world.

4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. 6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." 7 Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

Galatians 3:26-4:7 (NLT)

Other great passages on this topic include John 1:12-14, Romans 8:14-16, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 John 3:1-3,

**Observation** (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

**Discussion/Topic Starters** (Ice Breakers)

- What images and impressions come to mind when you think of your earthly father?
- Instead of choosing to be a Father, what implications/differences would there be if God chose to be more of an indifferent monarch, a harsh master, etc.?

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

**3:26-29**

O: What are the implications of v.26 for those who have not put their faith in Christ? For those who have?

I: How does "putting on new clothes" of Christ (v.27) eliminate major cultural barriers (v.28)?

I: What does it mean to be "true children of Abraham" (v.29)?

How do you see the promises God made to Abraham being fulfilled by the Church (v.29)?

*(see also 3:6-18. It would be a good exercise to teach the group how to use the cross references in a study bible to locate some of the promises God made to Abraham in the O.T.)*

A: What difference, if any, has your baptism made (v.27)?

A: (v.28) This passage has tremendous implications for the life of the Church. How is Riverside living out this truth of equality in Christ? How can we make it more of a reality (think specifics, not theory, and not just what someone else can do)?

**4:1-3**

O: How is being under the Law like that of an heir who is still a minor (v.1-3)?

**4:4-7**

O: How has God entered time to alter human history and make us adult heirs (v.4-7)?

Why do you think it was necessary for Christ to be born so completely entangled into the human situation (v.4, see also Gal. 3:13)?

O: What is the Spirit's function in regards to our sonship (v.6-7, see also Romans 8:15-17, Eph. 1:13-14)?

I: Make a list of how the adoption of a child is similar to salvation (v.5)?

I: Why is the name "Abba Father" used in this passage (v.6)?

*Note: "Abba" is an Aramaic word for "father" that was more domestic (vs. patriarch) and was used to express the father in the affectionate intimacy of the family circle. It's roughly equivalent to "Papa" or "Dad." Jews never used this term, Jesus did in Mark 14:36.*

A: Do you on a regular basis more often feel like you are still subject to the law or a child of a great king?

A: How have you personally experienced being an "heir" (v.7)?

A: What does it mean that God has adopted you (v.5)? How has the Spirit confirmed this fact in your life (v.6)?

**Recommended Follow-up:**

- **Pray:** Pray through (thank God for) all the implications of our identity as God's children through Jesus (ex. new nature 3:27, true community with fellow brothers & sisters in Christ 3:28, heirs 3:29-4:3, freedom 4:5, true "Abba" 4:6, etc.).
- **Respond:** Reflect and pray over Galatians 4:9 this week. Have you identified any areas of your life where you are "slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world?" Reflect/journal on how 4:6-7 can help break these chains.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (4/11/2010) will focus on John 15:12-17. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

\* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon *Brandt & Hinckley Galatians Study Guide* (ISBN: 9780891095620).