



Small Group Guide: Galatians 4 - Living in Freedom, Not Slavery

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for the freedom we have in Christ and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and reveal truth to each person.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you felt truly free. What made that experience meaningful to you?

Key Scripture

Galatians 4:4-7 - "But when the right time came, God sent his son born of a woman subject to the law. 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. And because we are his children, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, prompting us to call out Abba Father."

Main Takeaways

1. Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Freedom

- Our salvation is not based on our works or performance
- We cannot add anything to the finished work of Christ
- Freedom comes through faith in Jesus alone

2. Our Position Has Changed

- We are no longer slaves to the law

- We are adopted children of God
- Our inheritance is secure in Christ

3. Identity is Key

- Our identity is rooted in Christ, not in our titles, status, or performance
- Knowing who we are in Christ gives us confidence to live out God's calling
- We don't lose our identity when we mess up

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. What stood out to you most from this sermon? What phrase, idea, or scripture caught your attention?
2. The pastor explained that Paul's tone shifts in chapter 4 from stern to pastoral. Why do you think Paul changes his approach? When have you needed different approaches in your own relationships?
3. **Read Galatians 4:1-7.** What does the inheritance illustration teach us about our relationship with God before and after accepting Christ?

Personal Reflection

1. **The sermon states: "Many Christians are not living in true freedom today because they still believe they need to earn the favor and love of God."**
 - Do you ever struggle with this? In what ways?
 - What does it look like practically to rest in God's love rather than trying to earn it?
2. **The pastor asked: "Are you living like a slave, trying to earn God's love, or like a son resting in the finished work of Christ?"**
 - How would you honestly answer this question?
 - What areas of your life reveal performance-based thinking?
3. **Identity was highlighted as crucial to our walk with Christ.**
 - Where do you tend to find your identity (job, title, relationships, achievements)?
 - How does finding your identity in Christ change the way you handle failure or success?

Digging Deeper

1. **The sermon mentioned that God doesn't love us more when we do good things or less when we mess up.**
 - Why is this concept so hard for us to grasp?
 - How does understanding this change the way we approach God when we sin?
2. **Paul uses the illustration of Ishmael (human effort) and Isaac (God's promise) in Galatians 4:21-31.**
 - What are some modern-day examples of "Ishmael thinking" - trying to fulfill God's promises through our own effort?
 - What does it look like to wait on God's timing and methods instead?
3. **The pastor mentioned that performance-based Christianity causes us to:**
 - Lose the joy of our salvation
 - Serve God out of fear rather than love
 - Lose our identity as children of God
4. **Have you experienced any of these effects? Share if you're comfortable.**

Application Questions

1. **The sermon challenged us to "get rid of the religiosity" and "cast out" legalism.**
 - What religious rules or expectations have you placed on yourself that aren't biblical?
 - What religious expectations have you placed on others?
2. **The pastor said, "God is not trying to improve your behavior. He's trying to form Christ in you."**
 - What's the difference between these two approaches?
 - How does this perspective change the way you pursue spiritual growth?
3. **We were reminded that God corrects those He loves (like a good father).**
 - How can you tell the difference between God's loving correction and condemnation from the enemy or others?
 - How should we respond when God corrects us?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge

Complete the Fruit Inventory mentioned in the sermon:

1. **Read Galatians 5 this week**
2. **Make two columns on a piece of paper:**
 - **Column 1:** List all the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21)
 - **Column 2:** List all the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23)
3. **Circle which ones are evident in your life**
4. **Consider asking your spouse, close friend, or family member to help you honestly assess**
5. **Pray over the results - not with condemnation, but asking God to form more of Christ in you**

Group Accountability

- Share one area where you tend to fall into performance-based thinking with God
- Commit to praying for the person on your right this week, asking God to reveal their true identity in Christ to them
- **Practice this declaration:** When you catch yourself thinking you need to earn God's love, stop and say, "I am a child of God, adopted and redeemed. Nothing can separate me from His love."

Key Quotes to Remember

- "Jesus plus nothing equals freedom"
- "Your identity is not in your title"
- "God doesn't love you any more or any less because you did something"
- "God changes us from the inside out"
- "The world needs to see more of Jesus and less of me"
- "The greatest tragedy of bondage is not that it chains a sinner—it convinces a son or daughter to live like a slave"

Three Simple Truths (Summary)

1. You have been adopted - You are no longer a slave but a child of God
2. You have been redeemed - Christ paid the price for your freedom
3. You must choose daily - Don't return to the chains Christ already broke

Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying for:

- **Freedom from legalism** - That we would live in the freedom Christ purchased for us
- **Revelation of identity** - That each person would know deeply who they are in Christ
- **Grace for others** - That we wouldn't put performance expectations on fellow believers
- **Boldness** - To live out God's calling without fear of losing His love
- **Transformation** - That Christ would be formed in us from the inside out

Before Next Week

- Read Galatians 5 in preparation for next week's message
- Complete the Fruit Inventory exercise
- Memorize Galatians 4:6-7: *"And because we are his children, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, prompting us to call out Abba Father. Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child and since you are his child, God has made you his heir."*

Additional Resources

- Book recommendation from the sermon: ***"How to Resolve Conflict God's Way"*** by Dr. Bill Graybill
- Rewatch the sermon on the church app or website
- Review previous messages in the Galatians series for context

Leader Tip: Create a safe environment where people can be honest about their struggles with performance-based thinking. Many believers wrestle with this, and vulnerability will help your group grow together. Emphasize grace throughout your discussion.