

ONE LESS "THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD" GALATIANS 4:1-7

This Week's Core Competency

Compassion – I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need. Psalm 82:3, 4

*3Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*

*4Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*

You would think that following the earthquake in Haiti, the pregnancy rate might go down. After all, who would want to bring a child into the Port-au-Prince world! Surprisingly, just opposite has occurred. According to an article published in *The Globe and Mail* online recently, it's gone up (January 11, 2011). The title of the article tells it all, "Unprecedented, unwanted: Inside Port-au-Prince's 'baby factory.'" Here's an excerpt from that article.

One year after an earthquake devastated Haiti, the country has launched into a post-disaster baby boom. The birth rate has tripled in spite of the fact that the country is experiencing the most uncertainty its people have witnessed in decades.

As the anniversary of the quake approaches, officials here are struggling to identify bright spots from the past year; more than a million people remain in cramped camps that are morphing from temporary to long-term accommodations with no schools or job possibilities. This is particularly true in the urban

Children long for somebody to accept them, to love them, to praise them, to be proud of them.

-Mother Teresa

capital, where conditions are growing ever more desperate. At this hospital, which is designed to handle difficult pregnancies, about 1,500 babies are now born each month.

While some families have deliberately started to rebuild after losing loved ones in the earthquake, the pregnancies are more commonly described as accidental, chalked up to desperate camp conditions that have made prostitution enticing and have enabled rapes.

On this morning, Isaie Jeanty's halls are filled with the haunting moans of women in labour; few of them are happy about bringing children into such uncertain conditions.

Milla Charles, a 24-year-old, staggered through a hallway toward the showers in her blood-stained grey T-shirt, a dazed look on her face. Minutes later, she was sitting on a hospital bed with her yet-unnamed twins, wondering how she will take care of them when she has nothing more than a tent.

She was "not responsible" for getting pregnant, she explained, adding that the father "doesn't care" to be involved in the situation, the magnitude of which instantly doubled when two babies came out instead of one.

Asked what their future might be like, Ms. Charles barely moved her lips. A few hours later, once her bleeding had stopped, Ms. Charles was discharged.

Tara Newell, a Canadian who runs the hospital for Doctors Without Borders, said women who cannot manage their babies - particularly if the newborn is sick or weak - often leave their children at the hospital. An entire wall in the

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neonatal unit is lined with orphans, including a set of twins whose young mother died during childbirth and whose extended family couldn't manage with them in their tent; there is three-month-old Luis, ailing Job and tiny Moise, a month-old preemie no bigger than a robin, who was discarded by his mother.

In a tent outside for cholera victims - the only treatment centre here set up for pregnant sufferers - there are more orphans. A nameless boy barely bigger than Moise sleeps with his left hand splayed across his heart. His future is unclear. If, unlike his mother, he survives cholera, there will be no one to take him home.

The situation in Haiti is overwhelming and heartbreaking. No wonder charities like World Vision and others plead for money to help there and elsewhere around the world. Some see the faces of the orphaned and abandoned infants and children pictured on these websites and are moved by compassion. Some decide to give. After all World Vision can provide food, clean water, healthcare and education for a child for about \$1 a day. And while sponsoring a child is an act of compassion, it pales in comparison to adoption. A few who see the plight of the parentless decide to adopt, and their act of love leaves One Less. They do for the homeless what God did for us. They make an orphan their child, give a son or a daughter their name, and make that one their heir.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Galatians 4:1-7

1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (NIV, (c)1984)

Cf., the NET Bible

4:1 Now I mean that the heir, as long as he is a minor, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. 4:2 But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 4:3 So also we, when we were minors, were enslaved under the basic forces of the world. 4:4 But when the appropriate time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights. 4:6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls "Abba! Father!" 4:7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son, then you are also an heir through God.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Bracket the temporal expression "as long as" in v. 1.
- * Underline "heir" and "slave" in v. 1.
- * Circle "guardians and trustees" in v. 2.
- * Highlight "the time set by the father" in v. 3 and "the time had fully come" in v. 4.
- * Box "so also" indicating *comparison* in v. 3.
- * Circle "we" in v. 3.
- * Double underline "the basic principles of the world" in v. 3.
- * Box "to" indicating *purpose* in v. 5.
- * Box "that" indicating *purpose/result* in v. 5.
- * Bracket "full rights of sons" in v. 5.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 6.
- * Circle "you" in vv. 6, 7.
- * Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 7.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. "What I am saying" alludes to something Paul said in a previous paragraph. Which one?
2. You would probably rather be an "heir" than a "slave," so how can Paul say there's no difference?
3. In Paul's analogy, who is represented by the underage child?
4. In Paul's analogy, what is represented by the ones in charge of the child?
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 4 in terms of *before* and *after*.
6. God sent his Son "when the time had fully come." Time for what? (see v. 2)
7. List two facts about the Son God sent.
8. Identify the two-fold purpose for which God sent his Son.
9. Explain the significance of the Spirit's cry "Abba, Father."
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what we learn about our identity in Christ from this passage.

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

There were Judaizers in Galatia, Jews who continued to live according to the law even after they had become Christians. Their way of life didn't change much once they were saved. Among other things they still observed the traditional Jewish dietary laws, and like Peter, before his meeting with Cornelius recorded in Acts 10, refused to eat anything impure or unclean. Old habits die hard even for apostles. After his Joppa vision, Peter lapsed into his former Jewish ways; Paul, however, wouldn't let him get away with it. He called him out for his hypocrisy. Paul writes in Galatians 2:11-14, "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, How is it, then that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?'"

In a nutshell, Judaizers taught that Gentiles had to become Jews in order to become Christians, i.e., be circumcised (Ac 15:1), and once Christians they had to live Kosher lives (v. 5). *The NIV Study Bible* describes them nicely, "Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church. Following Paul's successful campaign in Galatia, they insisted that Gentile converts to Christianity abide by certain OT rites, especially circumcision. They may have been motivated by a desire to avoid the persecution of Zealot Jews who objected to their fraternizing with Gentiles (see 6:12). The Judaizers argued that Paul was not an authentic apostle and that out of a desire to make the message more appealing to Gentiles he had removed from the gospel certain legal requirements" (1779). Galatians 4:1-7 must be read in this context.

Here's a good summary of the passage with which to begin. "In 4:1-7, having dealt with the purpose and function of the Mosaic law in 3:19-25 and then the new relationships that exist 'in Christ' in 3:26-29, Paul brings his argument to a close with an illustration (vv

1-3), the quotation of an early Christian confession (vv 4-5), and an application to the situation at hand (vv 6-7). The thrust of all that he says in 3:19-4:7, particularly in 4:1-7, is that the believer's life is to be lived not 'under the law' but 'in Christ'-that it is to be lived in the full freedom of mature sonship, and not in slavery to a legal code" (Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 41, *Galatians*, 176).

Paul's illustration takes the form of an analogy (vv. 1-3). An underage child is like a slave in that both live under rules and regulations. It doesn't matter that as the heir the child owns the whole estate. As long as he is a minor, his guardian/trustee controls him and his money. He controls neither until the time set by his father. Like a slave he takes orders; he doesn't give them. In Paul's analogy, Jews were underage children before God sent his Son, and they were like slaves, too. They, however, were in slavery to the law that the Father put in charge over them. Paul is illustrating the point he made in 3:23, 24. "Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." While Gentiles were not strictly speaking "under the law," they, too, were enslaved by their own brand of elementary religious principles.

But when God sent his Son everything changed (vv. 4, 5). The Son, truly human and fully obedient, was sent by his Father for two purposes: in order to redeem those who were under law, in order that they might receive adoption as sons. Once they "receive the full rights of sons" they're no longer minors and are no longer like slaves. So unlike slaves they give orders; they don't take them. More specifically, they no longer take orders from a guardian/ trustee. Here Paul is illustrating the point he made in 3:25. "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

The relevance of all this is unmistakable (vv. 6, 7). The Galatian Christians are sons. Paul says it three times in two verses. "You are sons," (v. 6), "you are no longer a slave, but a son" (v. 7), and "since you are a son" (v. 7). And we who believe are, of course, sons too. Therefore like them, we are not slaves to the law in particular or to legalism in general. And apart from the fact that we believe, how do we know we are sons? Because the Holy Spirit in our hearts calls out "'Abba,' Father."

The Message of this Passage
*God has adopted you so live like a mature son or daughter, his heir,
not like a minor child enslaved to the law or any legalistic system.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“The Fatherhood of God”
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 1 **heir** I.e., the one who is legally entitled to an inheritance perhaps in the form of property, a hereditary rank, title, or office (e.g., king), or some endowment from a parent. "The son to whom the patrimony is to come in due course" (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC, 192).
- v. 1 **child** Cf., "underage" (NIV, (c)2010; CEV); "minor" (the NET Bible; NRSV). "Infant, properly 'one without understanding' (Burton). Here it describes 'a minor' in any stage of his minority (Lightfoot)" (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 511).
- v. 1 **no different** "He is no different from a slave *in this sense*, that he is not his own master. The patrimony is legally his, yet he has no power to dispose of it" (Bruce, 192 italics added). "Paul's statement that there is 'no difference' . . . is, of course, hyperbole for the sake of the illustration. What he means is that they are alike in that they both live under rules and regulations" (Longenecker, 162).
- v. 1 **owns . . . estate** Lit "is lord over all." "The mundane use of kurios in the sense of 'owner' is unusual in the NT (cf. Matt 20:8; 21:40), though common in everyday parlance" (162). The same author suggests "young master" as a possible translation that connotes both minority position and status as heir.
- v. 2 **guardians/trustees** The meaning of these two terms and what law–Roman, Greek, Greco-Phrygian–Paul had in mind behind them has been the subject of much debate (see Burton, 211-15; Longenecker, 162-64). Suffice it to say that the two terms have overlapping meanings. "If there is any distinction between them, the first is personally in charge of the minor while the second looks after his property" (Bruce, 192). In fact the two terms may refer to two functions of the same person (Burton, 214). Suffice it to say that the specifics of Paul's analogy do not fit perfectly the specifics of any known inheritance law. "It may even be, as Burton goes on to argue, that Paul had in mind more the situation described in 1 Macc 3:32-33; 6:17 and 2 Macc 10:11; 11:1; 13:2; 14:2 where Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) on leaving Syria appointed Lysias to be steward over the affairs of the Seleucid kingdom and the guardian of his son Antiochus V (Eupator) until his return, and to remain as guardian over his son if he should die and his son ascend the throne (Burton, 214) . . . It is entirely possible, in fact, that Paul, being more interested in application than precise legal details, made the specifics of his illustration conform to his purpose" (Longenecker, 164).
- v. 3 **we** The pronoun may be *inclusive*, i.e., "we Christians whether Jew or Gentile by birth" or *exclusive*, i.e., "we Jewish Christians" (vv. 3, 5) in distinction to "you" Gentile Christians (vv. 6, 7). Perhaps it's best to take it as exclusive. "The first person plural of 4:3, as well as that of 4:5, ought to be understood as referring primarily to Jewish believers" (164).
- v. 3 **basic principles** The word [*ta stoicheia*] literally means "things placed side by side in a row" (Bruce, 193), but it has a wide range of meanings (165). The obscure expression "basic principles of the world" presents a difficult lexical problem (see Longenecker, 164; Burton, 510-18; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistles of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT, 153). Suffice it to say, taken in context, the expression pertains at the very least to being "under the law" (3:23), "under the supervision of the law" (3:24) and "under guardians and trustees" (4:2), which describes the state Jews were in before "God sent his Son." Like minors subject to their guardians/trustees, they were subject to the law. But in what sense were the law's basic principles "of the world"? Possibly in the same sense that the tabernacle was "a worldly sanctuary" [*te hagion kosmikon*] according to Hebrews 9:1 (166). Perhaps it also refers to elemental religious teachings familiar to Gentiles (Burton, 216).
- v. 4 **God sent** Some find an allusion to the pre-existence of the Son in Paul's words. Perhaps, but not necessarily. "If the Spirit was the Spirit before God sent him, the Son was presumably the Son before God sent him. Moreover, it seems clear that Paul believed in the pre-existence of Christ as the wisdom of God, his agent in the work of creation (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; 8:6b; cf. Col. 1:15-17), and as one who accompanied the people of Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4 . . . this idea may well have been in his mind when he spoke of God as sending his Son, even if the Son's pre-existence would not be necessarily inferred from his present language (cf. Rom 8:3 where pre-existence certainly seems to be in Paul's mind)" (Bruce, 195).
- v. 4 **born of a woman** "The expression 'born *ek gunaikos*' has often been seen as implying a virgin birth. But *ek gunaikos* is a Jewish locution for a human birth or idiom simply for being human" (Longenecker, 171; cf., Job 14:1; Mt 11:11; Lk 7:28).
- v. 5 **to redeem** I.e., "to buy out of the marketplace" (Rienecker, 511).
- v. 5 **full rights of sons** Cf., "so that we might receive adoption as sons" (ESV; ". . . of sons" NKJV); "so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights" (the NET Bible). Adoption here involves "instatement as sons" (Bruce, 197) not subject to legal guardians.
- v. 6 **Spirit of his Son** I.e., the Holy Spirit; cf., "the Spirit of sonship [*huiiothesia*]" in Romans 8:15. "For Paul, it seems, sonship and receiving the Spirit are so intimately related that one can speak of them in either order" (Longenecker, 173)—because we are sons, we receive the Spirit (v. 6) and because we receive the Spirit, we are sons (Ro 8:14).
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Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Say, "It's a lot easier to show compassion for someone when you know some of the details of their situation." Ask the kids to share the story about someone they care about. Read John 5:1-8 for a great example of someone Jesus cared for after learning about his story. After seeing and hearing about his difficulties, Jesus was better able to care for the man.

Pray it!

As a parent you can teach your child to pray by using actual scriptures as a guide. Pray this scripture with them this week..

Father, would you show me how to defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Ps 82:3

Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

Compassion – I believe God wants me to help others in need.

Memory verse – "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in," Mt 25:35

Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- *What does it mean to be "invalid"?
- *How long had he been an invalid?
- *How do you think Jesus found out how long the man had been an invalid?
- *What did the man need?

Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Just like Jesus took time to personally learn the story of the invalid, take the time this week as a family to learn the story of some special orphans. Visit www.drawnfromwater.org to see and hear their story. Share the website with five other families.

Kids K through fourth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.



Family completes **Experience It** _____
 Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** _____
 Family participates in **Live It** _____ and **Pray It** _____
 Child memorizes **Memory Verse** _____

Child's name _____

Parent's signature _____

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.