

GAL. 4:21-31 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHILDREN OF FREEDOM - [\(SERMON MP3\)](#)

(1) **Paul uses an allegory drawn from Hagar and Sarah (Gal. 4:21-31)** to emphasize that we are children of God, heirs of the promise, and thus have all the rights and freedoms that this affords us. How does your position as a child of God grant you freedom?³

✳ *Note (v. 29) how Ishmael “persecuted” Isaac. What was the conflict between the two sons of Abraham?*

✳ *Why does conflict persist between followers of the old and new covenants? How does 2 Timothy 3:12 add to your understanding?*

✳ *What are some ways that religious legalists persecute those who have found freedom in Christ?⁴*

✳ *How can “free” Christians guard against their own kind of self-righteousness, feeling superior to legalists?*

(2) **In Galatians 4:23, Paul refers to the time Abraham decided to rely on himself to make God’s promises come to pass.** Have you ever done something similar? What were the results?

✳ *List some of the rules and regulations which Christians imagine will make them acceptable to God.*

✳ *Why do these “laws” have such a persistent appeal?*

(3) **How does Galatians 4:21-31 speak to the assertion that, “The Christian message is exclusive.”**

(4) **This passage speaks of heaven (that is, “the Jerusalem above”).** How does the hope of heaven change the way you live now?

(5) **Galatians 5:1 reminds us to stand fast in the liberty we have in Christ. What are some ways you can enjoy the freedom you have in Christ – in your relationships, in your attitudes, in your behavior?**

(6) Timothy Keller identifies four types of people in the world. After reading about them in the table below, look back over your past and trace your spiritual life in terms of the four categories.⁵

**Law-obeying,
law relying**

These people are under the law, and are usually smug, self-righteous, and act superior. Externally, they are very sure that they're right with God, but deep down, they have a lot of insecurity. This makes them touchy and sensitive to criticism. These people have a lot in common with the Pharisees.

**Law-disobeying,
law relying**

These people have a religious conscience of strong works-based righteousness, but they are not living consistently with it. As a result, they are more humble and more tolerant of others than the Pharisees, but they are also more guilt-ridden, subject to mood swings, and sometimes afraid of religious topics. These people may go to church but stay at a distance because of low spiritual self-esteem.

**Law-disobeying,
not law-relying**

These people have thrown off the concept of the law of God. They are intellectually secular or relativistic, or have a very vague spirituality. They choose their own moral standards and insist that they are meeting them. But Romans 1:18-20 says that they sub-consciously know there is a God who they should be obeying. These people are usually happier and more tolerant than either of the groups above. But usually there is a strong liberal self-righteousness. They are earning their own salvation and feel superior to others, but it's a less obvious form of self-righteousness.

**Law-obeying,
not law-relying**

These are Christians who understand the gospel and are living out of the freedom it brings. They obey the commands of God out of grateful joy that comes from the knowledge of their sonship. This however is very difficult for most Christians to abide in. But to the degree that they do, they experience spiritual vitality and liberty.

(7) Read Galatians 4:21-31 and list all the examples of symbolism that you can identify in the passage.

- ✦ *What are the contrasts between the two women?*

- ✦ *What are the contrasts between the two sons?*

- ✦ *How does Paul use the history of Abraham's two sons to illustrate the supremacy of promise over law?*

- ✦ *How does Paul demonstrate that physical descent from Abraham is not enough to make someone a child of God?*

PRAYER REQUESTS

DIGGING DEEPER

(8) Why do both non-religious and religious people need the gospel?

(9) What does it mean to you that Christ has made you "free?" What implications does that have for your life?

(10) How do you usually respond to legalism?