



## **Childhood to Maturity in Christ**

**From Boy Child to Manhood...Girl Child to Womanhood...**

**Elementary Knowledge to Godly Wisdom...Slavery to Freedom!**

*Galatians 4:1-7, This is what I mean--so long as the heir is an infant there is no difference between him and a slave, although he is owner of everything, but he is under the control of stewards and overseers until the day which his father has fixed arrives. It is just the same with us. When we were infants we were in subjection to the elementary knowledge which this world can supply. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order that he might redeem those who were subject to the law; so that we might be adopted as sons. Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" The consequence is that you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, an heir because God made you so."*

*NOTE: When a boy was an infant in the eyes of the law, he might be the owner of a vast property but he could take no legal decision; he was not in control of his own life; everything was done and directed for him; and, therefore, for all practical purposes he had no more freedom than if he were a slave; but when he became a man he entered into his full inheritance.*

**Therefore Paul argues--in the childhood of the world, the law held sway. But the law was only elementary knowledge.**

- ✓ Paul says that when the Galatians--and indeed all men--were mere children, they were under the tyranny of the law;
- ✓ Then, when everything was ready, Christ came and released men from that tyranny.
- ✓ So now men are no longer slaves of the law; they have become sons and have entered into their inheritance. The childhood which belonged to the law should be past; the freedom of manhood has come.

**The proof that we are sons comes from the instinctive cry of the heart.**

- ✓ *In man's deepest need he cries, "Father!" to God. Paul uses the double phrase, "Abba! Father!" Abba is the Aramaic word for Father. It must have been often on Jesus' lips, and its sound was so sacred that men kept it in the original tongue.*
- ✓ *This instinctive cry of man's heart Paul believes to be the work of the Holy Spirit. If our hearts so cry, we know that we are sons, and all the inheritance of grace is ours.*

***For Paul, he who governed his life by slavery to the law was still a child; he who had learned the way of grace had become a mature man in the Christian faith.***

***What about us today?*** *Our slavery is when we are in our own sin, listening to the wrong voices, learning from the wrong sources, and never realizing that we need someone to get us out of this agonizing slavery and chains holding and keeping us under the control of the enemy, Satan. There will have to be a time when we look for a way to break the chains that hold us.*

***Our **pride** sometimes keeps us from yielding to the Holy Spirit's way out.***

***Yet, in breaking away, we must yield to the pulling, the tugging of our heart to repent. This is the only way to the Father...Repentance through the blood of Jesus.***

***We, as Christians, must come to realize that it is continued yielding to the Holy Spirit's nudge. Seeking the better relationship with God, ourselves and others.***

***When we do that, we become free to do the work the Lord has for us!***



**WHAT ABOUT ADOPTION? DO WE WHO ARE ADOPTED INTO A FAMILY HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS CHILDREN BORN IN THE FAMILY?**

*“But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order that he might redeem those who were subject to the law; so that we might be adopted as sons.”*

This factsheet (facts according to the state) discusses the right of an adopted child to inherit from his or her adoptive parents, whether or not the parent has written a will. Upon the entry of the final adoption decree, the adopted child is treated by law as if he or she had been born to the adopting parents and thereby gains the right to inherit from the adoptive parents and adoptive parents' relatives. Generally, adopted individuals are included in class gifts and other terms of relationship in accordance with the rules for intestate succession. The term “class” refers to all those persons in the same category or level of rights, such as heirs of a deceased person who are related by the same degree. For example, if a will stipulates that all children of the deceased parent are entitled to an equal share, the adopted person is included whether or not he or she is specifically named.

***Our inheritance is assured when we are adopted into the family of God! Spiritually speaking, when we are “born again” we become children of the King of glory with the same rights as His own Son. Heaven is our inheritance!***

## **PROGRESS IN REVERSE**

*Galatians 4:8-11, “There was a time when you did not know God, and when you were slaves to gods who are no gods at all; but now that you know God or rather now that God knows you-- how can you turn back again to the weak and poverty-stricken elementary things, for it is to them that you wish to be enslaved all over again? You meticulously observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest all the labor I spent on you is to go for nothing.”*

***What do we see in these verses?***

- 1. Paul is still basing on the conception that the law is an elementary stage in religion, and that the mature man is he who takes his stand on grace.*** Man cannot by his own efforts know God; God of his grace reveals himself to man (listen to the Holy Spirit). We can never seek God unless he has already found us.
- 2. He calls the elementary things, the religion based on law, weak and poverty-stricken.***
  - ✓ It is weak because it is helpless. It can define sin; it can help in convicting a man of sin (information and our model); but it can neither find for him forgiveness for past sin nor strength to conquer future sin.

- ✓ It is poverty-stricken in comparison with the splendor of grace. There is no possible situation in life which grace cannot match; it is sufficient for all things.

***One of the features of Jewish law was its observance of special times. In this passage the days are the Sabbaths of each week; the months are the new moons; the seasons are the great annual feasts like the Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles; the years are the Sabbatic years, that is, every seventh.***

***To the Jew, he or she thinks he has discharged his duty to God when he meticulously observes these special times.***

**The Jewish religion of legalism was very far from being the prophetic religion Jesus spoke about.**

***Jesus Christ did not say, 'I am come that they may have religion,' but, 'I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'"***

**To make religion a thing of special times is to make it an external thing. For the real Christian every day is God's day.**

***It was Paul's fear that men who had once known the splendor of grace would slip back to legalism, and that men who had once lived in the presence of God would shut him up to special days.***

***However, Jesus himself said, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it."***

**It would be well for the Christian who lives by God's grace to understand the satisfaction of living by faith that our founding fathers did. They obeyed God and tried to live as God instructed.**

***Question for Us: Do we obey God's commandments and live as so instructed by the Word of God...or do we claim adoption rights just because we walked the aisle and have based our salvation on a one-time call of God?***

***If we are one of God's Children, we need to act like God's children!***

