

Study Guide: From Slaves to Sons

Text: Galatians 4:4–7

1. Lesson Summary and Objective

This lesson explores Paul's teaching in Galatians 4:4–7 that believers in Christ have been moved from slavery under the law into full sonship through adoption. Using the historical context of Roman adoption, Paul explains the believer's new identity, inheritance, and relationship with God as Father.

Objective: To understand the meaning of spiritual adoption, embrace our identity as sons and daughters of God, and live confidently in the assurance of our inheritance.

2. Key Scriptures

- Galatians 4:4–7
- Romans 8:14–17
- Ephesians 1:5
- John 1:12–13
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- John 8:34–36
- 1 John 3:1–2

3. Lesson Points and Discussion Questions

I. Historical Background — Adoption in the Ancient World

In the Roman world, adoption granted full legal rights, inheritance, and family identity. Old debts were canceled and a new identity was established (Romans 8:15–17; Ephesians 1:5).

1. Biblical Fact: According to Romans 8:15–17, what does the Spirit of adoption replace?
2. Application: How does knowing your spiritual debts are canceled change how you live?
3. Lesson Insight: What does it mean that adoption is a complete transfer of identity?

II. The Divine Initiative — God Sent Forth His Son

Adoption begins with God's initiative. In the fullness of time, He sent His Son to redeem those under the law (Romans 5:6–8; John 3:16–17; Titus 3:4–7). Redemption frees us; adoption restores us.

4. Biblical Fact: According to Galatians 4:4–5, why was the Son sent?
5. Application: How does God's initiative strengthen your assurance of salvation?
6. Lesson Insight: What is the difference between redemption and adoption?

III. The Inner Witness — The Spirit in Our Hearts

God confirms our adoption inwardly by sending the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Romans 8:14–16; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22). The Spirit assures us that we belong to the Father.

7. Biblical Fact: What does Romans 8:16 say the Spirit testifies?
8. Application: When have you experienced the Spirit's assurance?
9. Lesson Insight: Why is inward assurance important for spiritual maturity?

IV. The New Identity — No Longer a Slave, But a Son

Believers are transferred from bondage to belonging (John 8:34–36; Colossians 1:13–14). Our identity is now defined by sonship and inheritance (1 Peter 1:3–4).

10. Biblical Fact: According to John 8:36, who makes us free?
11. Application: What areas of your life still reflect a 'slave' mindset?
12. Lesson Insight: How does understanding your inheritance affect your hope?

V. Living as Adopted Children

Adopted children live from acceptance, walk in assurance, reflect the Father's character, and celebrate their inheritance (Romans 8:31–32; Ephesians 5:1–2; Revelation 21:7).

13. Biblical Fact: According to Ephesians 5:1–2, how should beloved children live?
14. Application: What practical step can you take this week to reflect the Father's character?
15. Lesson Insight: How does living from acceptance change your relationship with God and others?

Conclusion

Through Christ, God has taken us from the courtroom of condemnation into His household. We are no longer slaves but sons and daughters — heirs of God through Christ. Our adoption is secured by Christ's work and sealed by the Spirit's witness.