

There is more here than you could possibly use – choose what is best for your group. The **first section** is based on what Mark (actually) said Sunday am. The **second section's** study and questions cover the verses from the section of Galatians at the top of the Sunday Talk Notes ( Gal 3:26-4:9) At the very end I copied the Sunday **Talk Notes handout**. (PS I printed **paper copies** of this and left them on the info center counter is you are dropping kids off and want some.)

### **Section 1** Based on what Mark said

Song by - Judah – titled Just Because contains the lyrics:

**“I can’t do anything To gain what He’s done. He just loves me  
‘Cause He loves me ‘Cause He loves me, Just because He does”**

1. How does understanding that God loves you 'just because He does' rather than 'in spite of you' change the way you approach your relationship with Him?
2. In what ways have you been tempted to add rules or requirements to the gospel of grace, making it 'Jesus plus' something else?
3. What does it mean practically in your daily life to live as an adopted child of God with full rights as an heir, rather than as a slave or spiritual orphan?
4. How might your spiritual life change if you truly believed that rules and religious performance cannot change your heart, but only God's love can?
5. When you come to church feeling ashamed of your past week, do you tend to withdraw from God or run to Him, and what does that reveal about your understanding of His love?
6. What false gods or 'useless principles of the world' are you tempted to build your life upon instead of trusting fully in Christ?
7. How does the permanence and irrevocability of spiritual adoption (like the Roman legal process Paul describes) affect your sense of security in your relationship with God?
8. Why do you think many Christians understand the objective reality of salvation but struggle to experience the subjective reality of intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit?
9. In what ways does living with a scarcity mindset or spiritual orphan mentality prevent you from enjoying the abundance and freedom that comes with being God's child?

10. How can you cultivate a heart that cries out 'Abba, Father' in genuine intimacy rather than just maintaining religious duty or obligation?

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## Section 2. Small Group Study / Discussion based on Galatians 3:26–4:9

### Read Galatians 3:26–4:9.

#### Icebreaker Questions (Optional)

- **Identity T-Shirt:** *If you had to wear a T-shirt with one word or phrase that describes an important part of your identity (other than “Christian”), what would it say, and why? This could be a role (like Mom, Teacher), a passion (Traveler, Artist), or a personal trait (Listener, Adventurous). It’s a playful way to start thinking about what defines us.*

#### Discussion Questions

1. **Children of God – Our Core Identity: Galatians 3:26** declares that “**in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.**” One commentator calls this our “*basic identity*” as believers. → *What does it mean to you to have your identity rooted in being a child of God? → How is this identity different from other labels (job, ethnicity, family roles) that people use to define themselves, and how might it affect the way you view yourself or handle everyday situations?*
2. **Unity in Christ: Read Galatians 3:28.** Paul says that in Christ, “**there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**” This idea of all believers being one was **radical in Paul’s time.** → *What are some differences or social barriers that tend to divide people in our world (or even in churches) today? → How does the gospel help overcome those barriers and create unity? → Can you share an example of unity among believers that you’ve seen or experienced, despite differences in background, age, or status?*
3. **Heirs to God’s Promise: Read Galatians 3:29 and 4:7,** Paul emphasizes that if we belong to Christ, we are Abraham’s offspring and **heirs according to God’s promise.** → *What do you think it means to be an “heir” of God? How does knowing that you have an inheritance in God’s family (something given by grace, not earned) encourage you about your future or give you hope during difficult times?*
4. **Adopted into God’s Family: Read Galatians 4:4–7** describes how God sent His Son to redeem us so that we might receive **adoption to sonship**, making us His children who can cry out “Abba, Father.” In the ancient world, it was unheard of for a master to **adopt a former slave and make that slave his heir**, yet God did exactly that for us. → *How would you explain the concept of being **adopted by God** to someone? → What does it mean to you personally that God has made you His son or daughter – with all the rights and love that entails? → How does seeing God as*

your loving “**Abba**” (**Father**) affect the way you relate to Him – for example, in prayer or when you need comfort?

5. **Slave or Child? – Living Out Our Status:** Paul contrasts living under the law (like slaves) with living as God’s children. For instance, a child of God obeys **out of love**, whereas a slave obeys **out of fear**. → *In what ways might Christians today sometimes relate to God more like fearful servants than like beloved sons and daughters? → Have you ever found yourself serving God out of duty, fear, or trying to earn His approval, rather than from a place of love and security? → What are some signs of a “slave” mindset, and how can understanding God’s grace and our adoption help us shift toward a “child” mindset?*
6. **No Turning Back:** In **Galatians 4:8–9**, Paul expresses astonishment that the Galatians, after knowing God, were **turning back to weak and enslaving principles**. He saw it as trading their newfound freedom for old bondage. [studyscriptureonline.com](http://studyscriptureonline.com). *What are some “old habits,” legalistic attitudes, or spiritual traps that people (even believers) tend to fall back into after coming to Christ? Why do you think we might be drawn back to **old ways of thinking or living** (such as rule-keeping to earn favor, former lifestyles, or sins) even after experiencing God’s grace? Share any personal examples you’re comfortable with. How can we guard against returning to spiritual slavery and instead continue living in the freedom of being God’s children?*
7. **Grace vs. Performance:** Galatians teaches that we become God’s children **by God’s grace through faith**, not by our own effort. → *How does this truth encourage you when you feel you’ve failed or don’t measure up? → On the flip side, how might it humble you when you’re feeling proud of your spiritual performance or good works? → In what ways should **God’s grace** influence the way you approach practices like prayer, Bible reading, or serving others – not as ways to earn love, but as a response to the love you already have?*
8. **Impact on Daily Life:** Our identity as God’s children and heirs can transform how we approach daily life – from our **relationships** and **work** to our personal **struggles** and spiritual **rhythms**. → *Can you think of a specific area in your life where remembering that you are a beloved child of God makes a practical difference? (For example, in how you handle stress at work, how you resolve family conflicts, how you deal with personal insecurities or habits, or how you find time for prayer and worship.) → Share about that area and how the truth of God’s fatherly love and your spiritual inheritance might shape your attitude or actions there.*
9. **Living in Light of Our Identity:** Paul essentially urges believers to “**live like what we are**” – no longer slaves, but sons and daughters of God. → *What do you think it looks like to “live like” a child of God in everyday life? → How should our thoughts, behaviors, or priorities reflect the fact that we belong to God’s family now? → Are there changes you feel prompted to make so that your daily life aligns more with the freedom and confidence of being God’s son or daughter?*

10. **Personal Reflection:** → Of all the truths and themes we've discussed from **Galatians 3:26–4:9** (such as being God's child by faith, unity in Christ, being an heir of God's promise, receiving grace, or being set free from spiritual slavery), *which truth is most meaningful to you right now, and why?* → How can you carry that truth into the coming week to encourage you or change your perspective?

**The Father's Kiss**  
**11-16-25** – Mark McCartin  
**Gal 3:26-4:9**

**I. Experiencing Adoption**

**Gal 4:4-5** *But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
<sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.*

The Father sends the Son (Where?) into the WORLD  
(Why?) to REDEEM us (For what Purpose?) to ADOPT us His very own children (i.e. to receive the full rights of "sonship").

"The profound truth of Roman adoption was that the adoptee was taken out of his previous state and placed in a new relationship of son to his new father. All his old debts were instantly canceled. And in effect, the adoptee started a new life as part of this new family. On the one hand, the new father owned all the new offspring's property and controlled his personal relationships and had the rights of discipline. But on the other hand, the father was liable for the actions of the adoptee, and each owed the other reciprocal duties of support and maintenance. **Francis Lyall**, in *"Slaves, Citizen, and Sons"*

**John 1:12** *"Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in his name, He gave the right (power / authority / permission) to become children of God..."*

**2 Cor 5:27** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

**II. Experiencing the Father's Heart**

**Gal 4:6** *Because you are his sons (children), God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

The Father sends the Spirit (Where?) into our HEARTS

(Why?) To CRY OUT (For what Purpose?) Cry out “Abba Father” (i.e. to experience the heart of the Father).