



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a situation in life where you felt torn between two options? If so, share it with the group and the difficulty of being in that position.

2. What insight can we gain from attempting to empathize with the Galatians and the difficulty they faced in having to choose between Paul's presentation of the gospel and the conflicting message of the Judaizers?

- 3a. Read Gal. 4:12-20. What is the power of Scripture preserving the real emotions of real people, rather than just being a "book dropped from the sky?"

- 3b. What can we learn from Paul being so passionate about the Galatians and their understanding of Christ and the gospel?

4. We typically define sin as missing the mark, but Paul most often portrays it as a power or master (Romans 6). What perspective can we gain from not only seeing sin as "missing the mark," but as a power or master that we are, without Christ, are enslaved to?



5. Paul presents the account of Hagar and Sarah in Gal. 4:21-27. In verse 28, however, he flips the story on its head by identifying the Judaizers with Hagar (slavery) instead of Sarah (freedom), which would have been startling. In our context, even though we may understand that sin is slavery, what are some reasons that we continue to choose to subject ourselves to sin or to think that we must fix ourselves?

6a. When we feel torn to return to sin or even feel the pull to performing for God, what are some truths that we can remind ourselves of?

6b. What are some practical ways we can remind ourselves of the gospel?



Leader's Guide

FREE 6: Torn. Galatians 4:12-31

12 I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, 14 and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15 Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. 18 It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. 19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. 24 These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: "Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." 28 Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30 But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." 31 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

OVERVIEW

In Galatians 4:12-31, Paul temporarily sidesteps from his argument to make an impassioned and personal appeal to the Galatians. He has them reflect on the history of his relationship with them, citing an illness or hardship that was the impetus for him unexpectedly traveling to their region (4:12). It was then, he reminds them, that they welcomed him so hospitably (4:13), which ultimately opened the door for him to share the gospel message to their community. The angst and frustration we sense



from Paul's words thereafter make perfect sense. He is expressing fear that all of the time, energy, and effort spent helping the Galatians understand the good news of Christ is being stripped away from them and being replaced with counterfeit truth in his absence. While he knows they feel torn between his message and that which is being presented by the Judaizers, he wants them to see how all of this is personally tearing him apart. In other words, this is worth fighting for.

Concluding this section and beginning in verse 21, Paul returns to his argument by taking another angle to explain why it would be so ludicrous for the Galatians to revert to living under the law and its stipulations. He does so by cleverly alluding to the historical account of Hagar and Sarah, in it taking a subtle stab at his opponents by arguing from within the law to discredit their usage of the law. His twist, however, is in inviting the Galatians to see how an allegorical interpretation of the text reveals the ironic and persecuting nature of the Judaizers: God grants us freedom in, through, and by Christ, so why permit anyone to purport the idea of going back into slavery?

OUTLINE & SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

FREE 6: Torn. Galatians 4:12-31

I. Remember (4:12-15). Paul makes a personal appeal, citing how his relationship with the Galatians began in the first place.

II. Recognize (4:16-20) Gen. 16-21. Paul challenges the churches in Galatia to see that what is taking place is hardly innocent.

III. Reiterate (4:21-31). Paul returns to his argument, but rather than emphasizing Abraham (as he does in 3:15-18), this time he focuses on Sarah/Isaac and Hagar/Ishmael.