

Galatians 4:8 - 20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

1 **⁸ However at that time, when you did not know**
 2 **God, you were slaves to those which by nature**
 3 **are no gods. ⁹ But now that you have come to**
 4 **know God, or rather to be known by God, how**
 5 **is it that you turn back again to the weak and**
 6 **worthless elemental things, to which you desire**
 7 **to be enslaved all over again? ¹⁰ You observe**
 8 **days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I fear**
 9 **for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in**
 10 **vain.**

11 **¹² I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I**
 12 **also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me**
 13 **no wrong; ¹³ but you know that it was because of**
 14 **a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you**
 15 **the first time; ¹⁴ and that which was a trial to**
 16 **you in my bodily condition you did not despise**
 17 **or loathe, but you received me as an angel of**
 18 **God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*. ¹⁵ Where then is**
 19 **that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you**
 20 **witness that, if possible, you would have plucked**
 21 **out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ So have I**
 22 **become your enemy by telling you the truth?**

23 **¹⁷ They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but**
 24 **they wish to shut you out so that you will seek**
 25 **them. ¹⁸ But it is good always to be eagerly**
 26 **sought in a commendable manner, and not only**
 27 **when I am present with you. ¹⁹ My children, with**
 28 **whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed**
 29 **in you— ²⁰ but I could wish to be present with**
 30 **you now and to change my tone, for I am**
 31 **perplexed about you.**

Observation (What does it say?):*What do you notice in this passage?*

- *Facts Paul states*
- *Questions he asks*
- *Commands or exhortations he gives*
- *Requests he makes*
- *Emotions he expresses*
- *Any other observations you make?*

Interpretation (What does it mean?):*After observing the passage:*

- *What parts seem clear and straightforward?*
- *What parts seem unclear or confusing?*
- *What questions come to mind as you read?*
- *What do you think is Paul's main point?*
- *What do you learn about Paul and his relationship with the Galatians?*

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- *Who are the "perplexing" people (v. 20) in your life? What do you fear (v. 11) for them?*
- *How does your history with those people affect your relationship now?*
- *What does it look like for Christ to be formed in a person (v. 19)?*
- *What does it look like for you to "labor" over another person toward that goal of Christ formation in them?*

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

- How had Paul “become as” the Galatians (v.12)? In what way(s) did he want them to become like him?
- How does Paul characterize the motives of the ones disturbing the Galatians (v. 17)? What might that look like today?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)