

GLC  ESSENTIALS

GALATIANS

Session 4

EXPLORE

“RULES FOR THE GAME”

(For small groups of 4-5 members each)

Children from different cultures have favorite childhood games. These games have their own set of rules—most are unwritten yet understood and followed by the kids who play them in different parts of the country.

On page 107 are common Filipino games and for each game, members of your small group will pick one randomly. Members will then write down what they know are the rules for playing and winning the game that they picked.

Give yourselves 3 minutes to write down the rules then for the next 7 minutes, take turns reading aloud what you wrote down. See if you all agree on what the rules are!

(If there are members in your group who are from a different culture, have them share a common childhood game in their country and explain the rules to the group. Let them share after the Filipino games rules have been explained by other members of the group).

ACTIVITY PROCESS GUIDE

Did everyone agree on what the rules of the games were? We follow unspoken or unwritten rules as we go about in our day-to-day living. From childhood games to grown-up relationships, to our religious activities, we often operate based on what we believe to be the correct “rules”.

In certain ways, this is fine but in some areas of life, practicing something based on our subjective understanding or beliefs of the rules will lead to dire consequences. For example, even if we unknowingly violate provisions in country’s laws and Constitution because of our ignorance of them, we will not be spared from the consequences for breaking the law.

In a similar manner, we practice certain religious beliefs that we understand to be in accordance to God’s laws but in reality, are actually in violation of His will. What do you think will be the consequences for these violations?

Our lesson today in Galatians chapter 4 will help us know what God’s true requirement for our salvation is. Our hope is that you will be guided accordingly as you progress in your spiritual journey.

1. Prepare 6 small pieces of paper on which traditional Filipino games are written down. (See example below)
2. Fold pieces of paper so that the contents are hidden from view.
3. Have each member randomly pick a folded piece of paper.
4. Proceed according to the instructions provided in this section.

PATINTERO	PIKO
TSATO	TUMBANG PRESO
AGAWAN BASE	GAME FROM ANOTHER CULTURE

Reference: (No author cited)
<http://larong-pinoy.weebly.com/all-traditional-filipino-gamescompilation.html>. 5/12/1

EXAMINE

In Galatians 4, Paul further distinguishes between those who pursue legalistic efforts towards salvation and those who are sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

SECTION	TOPIC
Verse 1 - 3	Understanding the Culture
Verses 4 - 5	The Significance and Benefits of Christ's Death for Man
Verses 6 - 7	The New Life as Sons of God by Faith
Verses 8 - 21	Paul's appeal to the Galatians
Verses 21 - 31	Application of Galatians

I. Understanding the Culture (*Galatians 4:1-3*)

Write down key words, ideas or phrases of Galatians 4:1-11.

1. Describe the Galatians' view on religious practices in verses 9-10. Read Colossians 2:16-17 for your additional reference.

Many people including the Jews teach that if you don't do certain practices such as observe certain days as holy, or adhere to a certain dietary system (what you should eat or not eat), you will go to hell.

For the Galatians, this kind of legalistic practice has become a **bondage** to them.

2. In verse 9, what did Paul say would be the result of the Galatians' legalistic practice such as observing certain days or seasons as sacred or holy?

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3. How did the Galatians' legalism regarding festivals or special days that they observed for religious purposes blind them to the truth about Jesus?

In the Old Testament, the festivals pointed to the coming of Christ. This is what Colossians 2:17 refers to as "the substance belongs to Christ."

But the Galatian Christians practiced the festivals without understanding their significance.

The problem of the Jews in Paul's time was that they observed the rituals without knowing what they meant.

**They had a tendency to be legalistic,
just like many of us today!**

**Many people are sincere in their religious practices.
They think that if they do that,
they will earn points with God.**

**That is legalism — when you do certain things
in order to earn merits with God
so you can go to heaven.**

ἐξαγοράζω

Greek word (ex-ag-or-ad'-zo)
"Redeem" used in Galatians 4:5

DEFINITION:

"To redeem by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off."

Metaphor of Christ freeing the elect from the dominion of the Mosaic Law at the price of his vicarious (substitutionary) death

"To buy up, to buy up for one's self, for one's use to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well doing are as it were the purchase money by which we make the time our own."

SOURCE:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/kjv/exagorazo.html>

God sent His Son to redeem us!

God sent Jesus not earlier, not later,
but at the RIGHT TIME.

When Jesus was born, there were certain characteristics of that period which made it conducive to spread the Gospel:

- For the first time in western civilization, there was a common language among the Roman conquered territories
- There was a common culture, which was that of Greece
- There was a road system which made travel faster and easier
- It was the time of “Pax Romana”, the peace that Rome maintained in order to rule its large empire
- The Jews have given up idolatry

God sent His Son at the right time!

SOCIALLY.
POLITICALLY.
ECONOMICALLY.

- What were the two conditions given in v. 4 under which our Savior was born?

Jesus was both human and divine.

“God sent forth His Son” means that Jesus was divine.

Jesus was “born of a woman” which means that Jesus was human.

Turn to Genesis 3:15

Jesus was born of a woman's seed.

God refers to Jesus as the “seed of the woman”, dealing Satan a fatal blow while Satan would only inflict on Him minor damage.

Jesus was born under the Law.

This simply means that Jesus complied with all the legal requirements found in the Scriptures. He came to live under the law, to obey all the requirements of the law so that He can redeem us from the bondage of the law.

Jesus also lived a perfect life...

**Jesus took
the form of a man,
suffered and died
on the cross
for our sins.**

III. The New Life as Sons of God by Faith

Write down Galatians 4:5-7 below:

5. What happens to you as you, by faith, accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? (See verse 5).

“By faith” simply means that you believe that Jesus died in your place to pay the penalty of your sins.

6. How do we know for sure that we are adopted as God’s children?

Two sources for our assurance:

Objective Truth:

God's Word is our source of confidence that we are God's children through faith in Christ. In other words, we can trust that what God says in His Word is true.

Experiential Truth:

God gives us the Holy Spirit (see verse 6), and we become intimate with God through the Spirit's work in our lives. We experience the reality of God in our day-to-day living.

Two benefits of our adoption:

Man has God as "Abba" which means "Daddy"

See Romans 8:15-16

Man becomes an heir of God

See Romans 8:17

IV. Paul Appeals to the Galatians

Read Galatians 4:8-31

7. According to Paul, what would be the result of the Galatian believers turning back to their former legalistic practices (“weak and worthless elemental things”)?

Paul appealed to the Galatians not to turn back to their former way of life in different ways:

- a. He tells them not to put back their chains of bondage based on legalism and rituals. (Verses 8-11)

At that time when they did not know God, they were slaves to their sin and to their legalistic attempts towards salvation.

Paul appeals by asking, “Why do you want to go back?”

- b. He reminds them of their past experiences together. (Verses 12-15)

Paul goes back to the time when he preached the Gospel to them despite of a bodily illness. Despite the sickness, he was able to preach the Gospel to the Galatians for the first time.

[Bible scholars do not know what exactly was wrong with Paul. Some people say he had malaria. Some people say his eyes were problematic. The Bible says he was just sick.]

Just like in Paul's situation...

**God will sometimes use problems
and place us in certain circumstances
to accomplish His purpose.**

- c. Paul asks why the Galatian believers turned against their spiritual parent (Paul) and attached themselves to false, legalizing teachers. (See verse 6).
- The Galatians grew up with a lot of beliefs: some right, others were wrong.
 - They were indoctrinated in certain ways.
 - They have gone through certain life experiences which influenced their way of thinking.

**They had to be reminded
to re-examine what they believe.
They had to go back to God's Word.**

- d. Paul uses the example of Abraham's two sons, to contrast legalism (man's work) and faith (in God's promise). See verses 21-31.
8. How does the story of the birth of Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac in Genesis 17 and following illustrate the difference between legalism and faith? Fill-in the missing letters for the answers:
- What is the result of legalism? ___ L ___ E ___ R ___
 - What is the result of faith? ___ R ___ E ___ O ___

Allegorically speaking, the two women who were mothers of Abraham's two sons represent two covenants. One proceeding from Mount Sinai (where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments), is Hagar bearing children who are to be slaves. Ishmael was the son of the slave woman.

What about the opposite side? We find Isaac, the son of the free woman, Sarah who was the real wife, bearing children who are free.

On one hand is slavery and bondage, represented by Hagar and Ishmael. Then there is freedom, represented by Sarah and Isaac.

The new covenant gives freedom, freedom in Christ.

Isaac represents God's people.

Paul asks us, how are we going to heaven? Is it by faith or is it by works? How did Abraham have his promised son, Isaac? Was it by faith in God's promise or by his own efforts?

It was by FAITH.

9. How then do we become part of God's family, adopted as His sons and daughters? Indicate your answer with a check mark.

___ "I become a child of God through my own efforts."

___ "I become a child of God by His grace through faith in what Christ has done for me on the cross."

*Being born again in God's family is God's work;
through God's power, by God's intervention.*

*The way of legalism is man's work;
man's efforts;
man's glory.*

becoming a child of God is the work of God's grace!

EXPRESS

Doodle/draw your thoughts or create a mind map on what you discovered from Galatians 4 about the true gospel. Share your output with a partner and/or to your entire small group.

Journal your thoughts on what you discovered from Galatians 4 about the true gospel. Share with your small group members a summary of what you wrote down.

What truth impacted you the most from our study?

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Read Galatians 4:8.

What would be some examples today of “those who by nature are no gods” that many people are enslaved to because they believe these things, practices or persons/beings can save them or earn them merits with God?

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Read Galatians 4:6-7, 9

Think about your own spiritual journey. How have you experienced the difference between being a slave to sin, and a child of God? What has changed in your life since you came to know Jesus as Savior and Lord?

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EXPERIENCE

Do one or do all of these action points for life transformation!

1. Identify one “favorite” sin that you have. If you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26), then you have been freed from the power of sin. Deal with this particular sin by applying God’s truth:
 - A. Confess** – Admit to God that you are still holding on to this sin even if you are already freed from its power.
 - B. Change** – Stop engaging in this sin. Replace wrong thinking, attitude or actions with what pleases God. What specific change will you make in your life to get rid of this particular sin?
 - C. Confide** – Find an accountability partner who will pray for you, check on your progress and like the apostle Paul to the Galatian Christians, remind you of God’s grace that saved you and redeemed you from the slavery of sin.
2. Read ahead Galatians 5 at least 3 times in the next 7 days in preparation for Session 5 of our study.

