

SERIES: WE ARE FREE (A Study of Galatians) x

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Scripture: Galatians 4:1-3

Wednesday, 11/04/20

TITLE: No Longer Enslaved

Do you remember the lost boys in the story of Peter Pan? These were boys who lived in Neverland. But they remained as children their whole life. They never got any older. There is something magical about this. Something appealing. That's why we yearn for the days of our youth. There was a sense of awe. A lack of responsibilities. But if we're honest, there are limitations and frustrations with being young as well.

The Apostle Paul saw the connection between the limitations of our youth and the limitations of religion.

Listen to Paul's words in Galatians 4:1-3:

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles^[b] of the world.

Paul says, look, a child, even if an heir to a fortune, is still a child. He's under the rules and limitations experienced in youth. But some day, a boy becomes a man. A girl becomes a woman. So too, the Israelites were living as children under the law. They were like slaves to the law.

The law was the strict set of guidelines passed down through the generations. But living by the law didn't save a person. It only revealed how sinful they were.

So Paul uses some familiar language and says that when we were under the law, we were like slaves or children under the expected limitations.

But then he says that the slavery came from the elementary principles of the world. What does that mean? Paul is likely referring to the same system he refers to in Colossians 2:8.

These elementary principles of the world represent the values system of the world. The pay-to-play mentality. The performance game trap. The game of religion.

Everyday people are looking at Instagram and are trying to up their value based on their clothing, their makeup, the size of their home, the car they're posing in.

Everyday people are on Facebook posting pictures, looking as happy as can be to cast a perception of happiness and perfection.

People are posting about how great their families are. How magnificent their jobs are. Why? It's all a game of performance. "Like" me for what I can do, but not for who I am.

Paul saw this problem in the game of religion. Do your prayers. Give your money. Look pious. Pet the dog. Whatever your game of religion prescribes you to do. The problem is, you're not free under that system. You're a slave to performance.

The whole book of Galatians focuses on the fact that your performance doesn't save you. God doesn't care if you have thousands of subscribers on Instagram or YouTube. God doesn't care if your kids are pastors or plumbers. God doesn't care if you gave a million dollars to charity or a single can of food.

None of those things gets you salvation. It's all slavery.

If this is you today, if you're a slave to performance, God says, give it up. Salvation is free. It's a gift from me through my Son Jesus Christ.

Does your behavior matter to God? Of course, but as His heir, you become His child as a gift. He loves you no matter what.

That's freedom. That's amazing grace. That's the life I choose.

Do you?