

WEEK 4 || *GALATIANS 3:1-4:7*

## FREE TO BE GROWNUPS

These days, we're told, there's a crisis of 'manolescence' - men who never quite grow up. Whether it's long nights with the X-Box, or 'failure to launch' (living with your parents into your 30s), there's certainly a trend - so now there's a trend in 'adulting courses.' In this passage Paul looks back to a time when the Israelites were still kids with a babysitter... and says, now that we're grownups, we shouldn't go back.





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## FREEDOM TODAY

The Old Testament Law told Israel not to sin, and threatened to curse or punish them if they broke it - which is fair. But it gave them no power to curb their natural sinfulness, so ultimately all it really did was curse them. The blessing promised to Abraham could never become reality while that curse of the law was in place. It was like a heavy handed guardian or babysitter stopping them from having a party!

But now, through the curse-bearing death of Jesus, the blessing has finally arrived. He has taken the curse of the law on himself. At the same time, that made it possible for **anyone** (even us!) to get into Abraham's family of blessing - Jew and Gentile alike. The law that made Israel distinctive and different has been taken away. Being part of Abraham's family doesn't depend on keeping laws not even Israel could obey - it's based simply on trusting in Jesus, which Gentiles can do just as well as Jews. Looking back, Paul can see that the babysitting law made sure the party didn't start without the Gentiles! Now both Jews and Gentiles have the blessing of intimate relationship with God which was promised to Abraham: the Spirit of Jesus in our hearts (3:5,14, 4:4-6). So why listen to anyone who wants to call back the babysitter? Well, the funny thing is, even today, some people would...

5. Why might some people actually want a rigid set of laws everyone has to follow?

What can be scary about someone saying "We don't have laws, we just let the Spirit of Jesus change our behaviour from the heart"?

6. Paul says, in reality, the law was actually imprisoning (3:23) and enslaving (4:3). What is it about laws or rules in general that can make them enslaving?
7. Paul says that the Spirit of Jesus is radically different to any kind of law. He actually works miracles in you (3:5), getting you to obey God from the heart as the heavenly father you now genuinely love (4:6-7). Is that more liberating than laws, or less? How so?
8. Do you personally feel ready to 'grow up' into being led by the Spirit? Or do you wish you had more rigid laws? Why?