

March 20, 2011

Willow Park Church
Small Group Questions

“The Experience”
Galatians 4:1-7

- Please read Galatians 4:1-7 together at the beginning of your meeting.

Exodus 3:1-5 tells the account of God speaking to Moses through the burning bush. Prior to this incident, Moses **knew** about God but through this encounter he **experienced** God personally and received his calling.

- What is the difference between *knowing* about God and *experiencing* Him?
- Can you remember when you first *experienced* God personally?
- How did experiencing God through the Gospel change the way you lived your life?

In a similar way that Moses had personally experienced God, Paul reminds the Galatians that as children of God, they too can personally know Him. But Paul assures the church that it is only through the redeeming power of Christ that we “receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:5; ESV).

- Why does Paul portray our experience with God as a child’s relationship with their father?
- How did Christ’s death reconcile our relationship with God the father?
 - **Romans 5:8-11** ESV *“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. [11] More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*

- **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** ESV *“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”*

Since we are children of God because of the saving work of Christ, Paul proclaims that *“God...sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”* (vs. 6; ESV).

- How does experiencing God rather than knowing about God create a deep love and passion for Him?
- Discuss how this verse (Galatians 4:6) alludes to an absolute dependence on God.
- Has experiencing God created an intimacy with God in your prayer life? Has it created an assurance of an eternal life?
 - **Philippians 1:6** *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Paul writes in Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV) *“[12] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

- If you haven't felt a true experience of God or know someone who hasn't, what can we do to “work out” our salvation and have that experience?
 - Do you pray and are you persistent?
 - Are you dedicated to knowing Christ?
 - Are you surrendered?
 - Ultimately, we need to know that it is God who works in us and through all of these things.