

Not Just Children, But Sons

Ponder: Aren't sons children?

Scripture: "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Galatians 3:26, ESV).

Our treatment of Galatians 3:26, 27, began with the question "Who?" Who can have fellowship with God? Verse 26 informs us that "all" who are in Christ are accepted, not only Jews and proselytes as the Judaizers claimed.

Now let's deal with the second question: "What?" What are we in Christ? Paul says we are "sons of God." From this verse until 4:7, Paul draws a sharp contrast between "children" (as in 4:3) and "sons." One might ask, "aren't sons children?" Yes, in the sense of "offspring," but that is not Paul's concern here. The way he uses the terms, "children" are minors in need of supervision, while "sons" are full-grown offspring with all the privileges and advantages of adulthood.

Virtually every culture recognizes some point at which a minor child becomes an adult with additional privileges and responsibilities. In the USA that is generally age 18, when one can vote, join the military, and get married without parental permission. Paul used the change from minor to adult to illustrate the transition from the Law of Moses to the Gospel of Christ. He referred to the Law as the guardian ("pedagogue"), a trusted slave assigned to supervise a boy until he reached manhood (Galatians 3:24, 25). The pedagogue was neither a schoolmaster nor a tutor; his function pertained to supervision, not education.

Aren't you glad you don't have a guardian any more telling you when to get up, when to go to bed, what to wear, what to eat, etc.? As an adult, you know to do these things because they are right, not because someone is continually prodding you. In like manner, rejoice that as a Christian, God treats you as an adult. That doesn't mean you know everything or even that you are fully spiritually mature the instant you are baptized into Christ. But your status is that of an adult. Though they didn't realize it, by returning to the Law the Judaizers were reverting back to the status of toddlers and adolescents!

Adults serve God out of love and devotion, not mere rote obligation. Let's do that!

Song: "All To Jesus I Surrender"

Prayer: Gracious Father, we thank You for blessing us with the status of adults in Christ. Help us, we pray, to serve You willingly from loving hearts, and not from grudging obligation. In Jesus' name, Amen.