

Galatians and Philippians Hagar and Sarah

Interpreting the Text:

1. Paul is using a lot of language in chapter 4 to emphasize our parent-child relationship with God. How might this have been received by the first-century Galatians? In what ways might parent-child relationships (both adopted and biological) be different from our world today?
2. Paul's emphasis on our relationship to God, and inheritance through God, is turned to remind us that we are all empowered by this relationship to live into this faith. Paul even refers to himself as the mother of this congregation, still feeling "labor pains" while they continue to understand these teachings. How does this family imagery portray Paul's relationship to the church? How would you have reacted as a recipient of this letter?
3. The same Greek word can be translated as "belief" or as "faith." In what ways might each of these terms be fitting to the claims Paul wants to make, and to our own communities?

Applying the Text:

1. How might we take Paul's teachings about our unique relationship with God and interpret them in our own faith practice?
2. What kind of language do you use in prayer? Is father/mother or other familial language common or unfamiliar for you?