

Galatians 5:1-12

Study Guide

1. Freedom. Read verse 1.

What is freedom to you? Share a time when you freely followed your passions and desires and found yourself becoming 'enslaved'. How can we be tricked by our idea of freedom?

Paul is actually talking about freedom from sin!

Discuss these two definitions:

Sin (at its core) = Not trusting God.

Freedom= to live in God's love, fully relying on Him.

Now, what do you think Paul means by freedom? How does this kind of freedom change the way you live? Discuss.

2. Unbending. Read v. 2-4.

Paul is unbending when it comes to adding laws as a prerequisite for salvation. Discuss the following four descriptors he uses of those who accept 'circumcision' (laws):

- a. Christ is of no advantage-
- b. you are obligated to keep the whole law-
- c. You are severed (Gr. kakourgos)- to render ineffective-
- d. You fall away from grace-

Notice that you can't mix grace and works for salvation. Do you ever see subtle nuances of 'works'-based attitudes infiltrating our own church and lives? What would be some examples of that? Discuss.

3. The Life of Love. Read v. 5-6.

Here we are introduced to the Spirit of God, who enters our hearts when we put our faith in Jesus. How have you experienced a shift from law to love? How has your love relationship with Jesus began to change some of your desires? Discuss.

4. Those Who Unsettle. Read v. 7-12.

Discuss a scenario when you walked away from Christian fellowship completely discouraged because you are not as 'good' as someone else? Share how 'leaven' can permeate and puff up Christian communities, and what it does.

Big Idea: Freedom is to fully rely on God.

Take a few minutes to quietly pray and thank God for His love in your life. Ask Him to reveal areas where you are not relying on Him. Consider sharing these with the group.

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Message Outline

Big Idea: Freedom is Fully Relying on God.

A. Freedom (v. 1)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Henri Nouwen, Life of the Beloved

"Brokenness makes us more aware of how deep the wounds are, and how unrealistic it is to expect them to vanish."

"...the anguish of always needing help even in the most 'normal' things such as dressing, eating, walking, taking a bus, buying a gift, paying a bill—...and still, embracing it and bringing it under the blessing..."

"I was able to live [brokenness] as an urgent invitation to claim God's unconditional love for myself, a love I can depend on without any fear."

Matthew 11:28-30 MSG

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

B. Unbending (v. 2-4)

2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. 3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. 4 You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

Hebrews 6:7-8

"For the land that has drunk the rain...produces a crop useful...but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless...Though we speak this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation."

C. The Life of Love (v. 5-6)

5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

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D. The Sudden Unsettling (v. 7-9)

7 You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion is not from him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Luke 12:1- "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy!"

Pretending that all is well, while your heart is be filled with greed, fear, lust, bitterness...

Matt. 16:6 "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Pretending you can live life without the supernatural rescue of the Savior.

Mark 8:15- "Beware of the leaven of Pharisees and leaven of Herod."

Big Idea: Freedom is Fully Relying on God.

1 Cor. 5:8

"Let us celebrate with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

E. Confidence (v.10-12)

10 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. 11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. 12 I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

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