

“Free to Love”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a **flexible guide** that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

Message Summary

False teachers went to the Galatian churches shortly after Paul planted them and taught that they must practice the Mosaic Law and believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life. In other words, they taught works-righteousness rather than Christ’s-righteousness. So Paul wrote to these confused Galatian believers in order to correct this false teaching and help the churches live in the freedom they found in Jesus.

Paul’s argument against these false teachers included the example of Abraham, who “believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.” He also compared the difference between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants and the purpose of the Law and God’s eternal promise to redeem a people by faith. In chapter 4, Paul explained that their faith in Christ which liberated them from their slavery to sin now afforded them the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to identify with Jesus, the True Son and Heir of God.

Paul demonstrated his concern for the Galatians by appealing to them to “*become as I am, for I also have become as you are.*” Paul who was a Jew, because of Christ, no longer was bound to Judaism and therefore appealed to the Galatians that there was no need for them to become Jews. They were free in Christ. Further, Paul’s words were an appeal for them to imitate him, rather than imitate the false teachers.

Chapter 5 began with Paul’s great exclamation, “*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*” As a result, he warned them of the consequences of going under the knife and accepting circumcision. They would be cut off from Christ and fall away from grace because they were trusting in their own achievements rather than Jesus. However, if they were truly born again, the Holy Spirit would compel them to continue trusting Jesus until the final day of redemption. Paul also gave a warning to those who had, “*hindered them from obeying the truth*” (5:7). These false teachers who brought with them a false Gospel; another Gospel would face judgment from God.

A call to return to circumcision was a call to return to bondage. However, Paul began in Galatians 5:13 with a profound statement, “*For you were called to freedom.*” In other words, as Paul goes on to say, their freedom in Christ was given to them, not for themselves, but to love others. They were set free to love. This happens through serving others, meeting their needs, and obeying Jesus’ commands to fulfill the law of neighbor love. Here Paul is making a transition to the practical implications of what it means to be saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Just as Christ loved us, we love others. Just as Christ served us, we serve others. Just as Christ was led by the Spirit, so we are led by the Spirit.

As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community think about your freedom in Christ. How are you serving others? In what ways can you show love toward others by meeting their needs? How are you being led by the Spirit of God to obey Christ? Remember you were set free in Christ, not to serve yourself. You were set free to love!

Message Outline

You were set free in Christ so you will love others.

Freedom in Christ is...

1. Not about self...
 - Indulgence.
 - Service.
 - Promotion.
2. For the purpose of sacrificially...
 - Serving others.
 - Loving others.
 - Obeying Jesus.
3. The result of Spirit-work.

Therefore, you are free to...

1. Love others.
2. Serve others.
3. Walk by the Spirit.

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Galatians 5:13-15:

1. What does this passage teach about God? (God’s Identity; Theology)
2. What does this passage teach about what God has done? (God’s Action; Christology)
3. What does this passage teach about man/me? (Old & New Creation Identity; Ecclesiology)
4. What does this passage teach about what I should do? (Reveals what I really believe about Questions 1-3; Missional Ecclesiology)
5. What does this passage teach about how I do it uniquely in my context? (personal action steps of obedience)

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**

- Pray that all who have believed the Gospel will obey Jesus in believer’s baptism.
- Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
- Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
- Pray for the Missional Communities to impact their communities with the Gospel.
- Pray for Missional Communities to multiply into new neighborhoods.
- Pray for new DNA groups to start.

- **Local:**

- Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
- Pray for Farm Day, November 5, 2016 – Pray that “the world may know Jesus.”
- Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.

- **Global:**

- Pray for J & A and their children as they prepare for the mission field.
- Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
- Pray for the team working in SEA, the new believers, for those who have heard the Gospel, and the church planting movement among the unreached.
- Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries and Bill & Sandy Younger.
- Pray for Servants Hearts Ministries and Bob & Georgette Kornegay.
- Pray for Pastor Abraham and his church in Guatemala.
- Pray for the work of Paul & Sarah Young and Dakota Baptist Church in North Dakota.