

Galatians Study 6

Read Galatians 5:1-15

Life of the Gospel: New Freedom!

Summary: The gospel is not a form of “divine manipulation” in order to get us to do things for God, but an expression of genuine love and acceptance...through the gospel we delight in God and others for themselves.

What does freedom mean to you (free to do or not to do what)? Think about your freshman year...

Tim Keller: A new quality of life results as a Christian loses the old motivation of selfish fear (“slave” mentality) and becomes empowered by the new dynamic of grateful love (“child of God” mentality). Without an experience of grace, all our good deeds are essentially self-interested, impersonal, and conditional. We do “the right thing” in order to get into heaven, or in order to better our self-esteem (etc.). But people who know they are totally accepted already, do “the right thing” out of grateful love. “Neither circumcision (religion) or uncircumcision (irreligion) has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love” (Gal. 5:6). Only in the gospel do you obey God for God’s sake and not for what God may give. Therefore, only in the gospel can a person love others for their sake and do good for its own sake, and obey God for His sake. Only the gospel makes “doing the right thing” a joy and delight, not a burden or a means to an end.

Read Galatians 5:1-15

1. Observations? What does Paul say about love? (vs 6, 13, 14)

2. What do you think it means that Christ has liberated us into freedom (vs 1)?

3. Why does Paul make such a big deal about circumcision? What do you think of Paul's denunciation of those who preach circumcision (vs 12)? What rituals or traditions in the church today might be similar to circumcision back then?

4. When or in what ways have you gotten off the track in the "good race" of the Christian life? What are you relying on besides Christ (John Eldridge calls them "lesser lovers")?

5. In verses 13-15 Paul is clarifying what gospel freedom does NOT mean. What misconception is he addressing? In what way are Christians free from the law and in what way are they not?

6. The gospel says that we are accepted totally by God through the work of Jesus. It has nothing to do with our own performance! When acceptance/love is so complete that it makes our performance invisible, how is that an incentive to you for holy living?