

# Galatians

Lesson 9

Chapter 5:1-15

## Participant Guide

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## Lesson 9

### Freedom in Christ

### Galatians 5:1-15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. *Galatians 5:6*

#### Prayers

#### Introduction

Paul delivers the central message of Christianity to believers in Galatians 5:6; the only thing that matters is faith and love. All of our actions flow from these two qualities, faith and love. God gives us both these gifts! He gives us faith to believe in Jesus as God's Son and our Savior. He gives his Spirit so that we love him and others. Paul used slightly different language in his letter to the Corinthian church, "if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" 1 Corinthians 13:2.

#### Read Galatians 5:1-15

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Gal 5:2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

Gal 5:3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Gal 5:5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Gal 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

Gal 5:8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.

Gal 5:9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."

Gal 5:10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.

Gal 5:11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.

Gal 5:12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Gal 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Gal 5:14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Gal 5:15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

### **Discuss**

1. In chapter 5, Paul begins contrasting slavery with freedom. In the previous chapters, Paul writes about being slaves with no spiritual inheritance, slaves to Jewish laws and sacrifices, slavery to false teachers, and slavery to sin. Now Paul declares believers have freedom! What is the freedom he is referring to?
  
2. What are the Gentile Galatians thinking of doing that indicates they think they need to be Jewish as well as Christian?
  
3. How did this indicate a lack of faith?
  
4. What did Paul say was the consequence of being circumcised (Galatians 5:3-4)?
  
5. We do not struggle with the issue of circumcision or living by Jewish ceremonial laws, but legalism still subtly permeates our thinking. Discuss how living in God's grace with faith and love is different from a legalistic view of the following topics:
  - a. Viewing prayer, bible study, or church attendance as something you should do rather than as something you enjoy doing.
  
  - b. Doing good works to be loved by God.

- c. Striving to give 10% to church because you should rather than giving because you enjoy seeing your gifts used to help others.
  - d. Dwelling on your own sin rather than dwelling on God's forgiveness.
  - e. Always feeling the need to do better and more rather than feeling God's peace and joy.
  - f. Feeling God loves you because you have faith in Jesus rather than feeling God loves you for you.
6. Does freedom from the law mean that Christians are free to indulge their sinful natures (verse 13)?
7. Paul crystalizes Christian doctrine in a single sentence in verse 5:6, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love," and repeats the same point in verse 5:14; the entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Read Christ's address to the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7 and discuss why the only thing that counts is faith and love.

Rev 2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:

Rev 2:2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.

Rev 2:3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Rev 2:4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.

Rev 2:5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Rev 2:6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans [sexual immorality], which I also hate.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

- a. What things did the Ephesus church do that were commendable?
  - a. Verse
  - b. Verse 3
  - c. Verse 6 (the Nicolaitans practiced sexual immorality)
- b. With all the good things the church of Ephesus had done, why was Christ displeased with them?
- c. Do you think it is possible to serve Christ without loving him?
- d. What three things did Jesus say to do to rekindle a love for him, verse 5?

### **Closing Prayer**

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul