

MESSAGE

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

FREE: A STUDY ON GALATIANS | JANUARY 31/FEBRUARY 1, 2015 |

PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | GALATIANS 5:1-26

"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." (Galatians 5:13)

Spiritual Freedom and Religious Slavery (Galatians 5:1, 13)

- "Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (5:1)
- "You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ" (5:4)

Spiritual Freedom as Loving Service (Galatians 5:6, 13; 2:20)

- "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love" (5:6)
- "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (2:20)
- "Rather serve one another humbly in love" (5:13)

Spiritual Freedom as Walking with the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-26)

- Facing internal conflict (5:16-18)
- Turning from the flesh (5:19-21)
- Walking with the Spirit (5:22-26)

STUDY GUIDE

1. We continue our series on freedom in Christ this weekend as we make our way into Galatians, chapter 5. Before you begin, pray that God would speak to you through your study of the Scripture. Next, read Galatians 5 out loud.
2. Galatians 5 is built around two major declarations by Paul related to our freedom, found in verses 1 and 13. Verses 1-12 carry forward themes Paul has discussed throughout the letter so far. What would you say is Paul's main point or points in this first section of Galatians 5?
3. Once again, Paul makes some fairly dramatic statements about those who rely on legalism or religious performance to make themselves right with God, particularly in verses 4 and 12. Why do you think Paul get so upset by this situation?
4. With verse 13, Paul begins talking about the everyday way we relate to others as Christians, commonly called ethics. In verses 13-18, Paul contrasts the way of the flesh with the way of freedom. What characterizes the way of the flesh and what characterizes the way of freedom?
5. Do you resonate with Paul's description of the conflict between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit? How do you deal with that conflict in your own life?
6. Paul outlines the 'acts of the flesh' in verses 19-21, saying "those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." How do you think this relates to Paul's strong words that "a person is not justified by the works of the law" (2:16)?
7. Paul's words on the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-26 are well-known. Look over chapter 5 and see how Paul talks about the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. What does it mean to truly be led by, walk with, and live by the Spirit?
8. What is one practical way you need to surrender more to the influence of the Holy Spirit and less to the acts of the flesh this week? If you are with a small group, take some time to discuss these things with one another. If you are alone, share that with someone this week. Close in prayer.

[Next week: We conclude the "Free" series by looking at Galatians, chapter 6. Prepare by reading this passage ahead of time.]