

Galatians 5:1-16

Freed to Love

Scripture: Galatians 5:1-16

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:13 *"For you brethren, have been called to liberty (freedom); only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."*

Lesson Focus: In this passage, Paul reminds believers of their gospel freedom in Christ. Kids should understand freedom, but what they might not understand is how Jesus frees us for a purpose: to become His loving disciples and followers.

Activities and Crafts: Word Search and Bring It Home Discussion Qs for 3rd - 5th. Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Freed to Love Hands

Starter Activity: Free the Prisoners Game

Consider starting with a game that involves kids being "rescued" from prison.

1st-2nd Grade Teachers: I recommend doing a simple relay race. Divide the class into two teams. Each team will have half of its team in "jail" waiting to be rescued by someone from their team. Have one side of the room be the jail and have those prisoners stand or sit along the wall pretending to have their hands and feet tied up. Have the "rescuers" on the opposite side of the room lined up in two lines. Each rescuer will run across the room, tag someone from their team in jail, and then help them "hop" to freedom back to the other side (remember their hands and feet are tied up!). Modify as you like to make it fun!

3rd-5th Grade Teachers: We will take several volunteers from each class to play a game using the AWANA square and some foam balls. One group of volunteers will be in the middle representing the "prisoners", another group will be the rescuers trying to get the foam balls to the prisoners, and another group will try to stop the rescuers. See a quick video describing the game [here](#). *

Afterwards, have some discussion to transition into the lesson:

In this game, we had several prisoners who were being set free. *

Q: What does freedom mean? A: No longer imprisoned or under bondage.

In the book of Galatians, Paul has made his case that only the true gospel sets people free from sin and bondage to the law. Christians are set free! But what does that freedom actually look like? Our text today will show us. Let's take a look!

Bible Study:

Galatians 5:1a: Paul couldn't be more emphatic. You have been set free! Stand firm and hold onto that freedom by faith!

Q: Who has made them free? A: Jesus! Jesus's entire mission was (and still is today) a rescue operation! *

So far in this book Paul has been repeatedly emphasizing how freedom is an effect of our faith and trust in Jesus's finished work on the cross: Freedom from sin, freedom from fear of the punishment we deserve for our sin, and freedom from trying to be good enough to earn or keep God's favor! *

Galatians 5:1b: Yet these Galatians were in danger of letting their freedom slip right out of their grasp! (**Teachers:** We will leave you with one of those water wiggler snake toys that slip through your hands. Demonstrate it slipping through your hands and consider passing it around for some silly fun) *

This precious freedom they have in Jesus Christ would be lost if they did not "hold on" to the gospel and continue to walk by faith!

Galatians 5:2: Remember, the bad guys were telling them instead to "hold on" to the Jewish laws, like circumcision, to truly be God's people. * To continue in this would make Jesus's death on the cross useless to them. Paul said something very similar to this already in **Galatians 2:21**. So he is sort of repeating himself here.

Q: Why do you think people repeat themselves? A: Because sometimes we don't hear it or understand it the first time! Paul really wants them (and us) to get this!

Galatians 5:3-4: If you try and add just a little bit of "good works" onto God's grace for salvation, you lose grace completely. * Grace vanishes and you are only left with your own performance before God which will never be good enough since no one can keep the whole law perfectly! Everyone must choose either grace or works...not both, because they don't mix!! *

Galatians 5:5: And in choosing grace, there is a sense in which you will be at rest "waiting". Waiting is not easy, especially if you are waiting for something good!

Q: What was something good that you had to wait a long time for? Well, Christians are waiting for the best thing ever: Jesus's return and final fulfillment of all of His promises. It is only by faith in God's grace that we hold onto those promises! *

Galatians 5:6: But while we are waiting, we're not just twiddling our thumbs. * True faith works or takes action! Again, not to be saved or to stay saved, but BECAUSE we are saved. Faith in Jesus produces love: love for God and love for others! *

Galatians 5:7-8: Yes, instead of just twiddling their thumbs, Christians are running this race of faith. And in faith, we keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and **finisher** of our faith! (**Hebrews 12:1-2**)

Q: What happens if you are running a race and you get distracted? * A: You will trip and fall! The bad guys were telling the Galatians to take their eyes off of Jesus and onto their own good works which was only going to trip them up!

Galatians 5:9-10a: Paul has confidence in them that they will correct their course, but is also warning them that just a little bit of this false teaching will spread and ruin them all! (**Teachers:** Consider bringing in some brownies or other baked goods to class. But before serving them, ask the class if they would still want some if you told them you sprinkled in just a little bit of doggie-doo-doo (or something else gross) to show how just a little bit of something bad can ruin the whole thing!) *

Galatians 5:10b-12: You can sense how frustrated Paul is with these bad guys who are leading the Galatians astray. Remember that Paul gave his ALL to these people * when he first brought the gospel to them on his first missionary journey. (**Acts 14**) So he is going to fight for their faith!

Galatians 5:13: Paul repeats the call to gospel freedom! So far in this chapter he's been urging them not to "lose" this gospel freedom. But now, he's urging them not to "abuse" the same gospel freedom either! * For Christians are not free to just do whatever THEY want *, but rather freed to do what our loving Savior wants: LOVE. We love, because He first loved us! (**1 John 4:19**)

Galatians 5:14: Indeed, love fulfills the law. Let's put this to the test by applying some of the 10 commandments:

- If you love your neighbor, will you steal from him? NO!
- If you love your neighbor, will you lie to him? NO!
- If you love God, will you use His name in vain? NO!

Love is the governing principle for our walk of faith. * We are freed to love!

Galatians 5:15-16: No, instead of biting and devouring one another *, we are freed to love one another. And the Holy Spirit is the One Whom God gives us to help us continue running the race of faith! We're going to learn more about Him next week!

Key Point: Jesus wants you to run well this week! If you are a believer, show your faith in Jesus by your love for Him and others. Remember Jesus freed you from sin and bondage! Don't lose that gospel freedom and don't abuse it either!

If you are not a believer, you need to be set free (**John 8:34**)! Talk to your leader today and begin your race with Jesus!

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Galatians 5:1. Do you feel free through faith in Christ? Why or why not?

Second

Read Galatians 5:13. What are some ways that we might be tempted to use our freedom as an "opportunity for the flesh?"

Parent Challenge

Does Christian freedom mean Christians can now just do whatever they want? Why or why not?

By His Grace,

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