

PASSAGE – Galatians 5:1-14

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

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. **3** Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. **4** You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. **5** For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. **6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? **8** That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. **9** "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." **10** I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. **11** Brothers and sisters, if I am preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offence of the cross has been abolished. **12** As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

13 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. **14** For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

OUTLINE:

Two enemies of Christian freedom are **legalism** (working to gain God's favor) and **license** (living however we want in light of God's favor on us through Christ). In Galatians 5, Paul uses the Jewish rite of circumcision as an example of legalism with which the churches in Galatia were struggling. He uses that action that had defined the Jewish people as being right with God. The fact of our salvation is that there is nothing we can do to appease God's righteousness.

Icebreaker Question / Start the Group:

If you could own any magical creature as a pet, what would you have?

Follow up with your group regarding their applications from last week. Ask them how they did in applying last week's text.

STUDY (the passage):

Have everyone look back over the text. (Encourage everyone to be looking for something that sticks out to them, something they have a question about, and something God may be telling them to do.)

Ask questions about the text:

1. What sticks out to you from the passage? (Everyone answer)
2. What questions do you have from the text?
3. How does legalism have a contaminating effect in our life?
4. Why is it difficult for many to accept that our standing with God is always based on our faith?
5. Have someone read Galatians 3:5. By what means does Christ unite us with His power and presence? What is our responsibility in being united with Christ?
6. What are some goals that Christians set for themselves? What should be the vision or goal for a Christ-follower's life?

APPLY:

7. What is one thing God is asking you to do in response to this passage? (One measurable goal)
8. How can you protect against legalism?

PRAY AS A GROUP

Extra Material

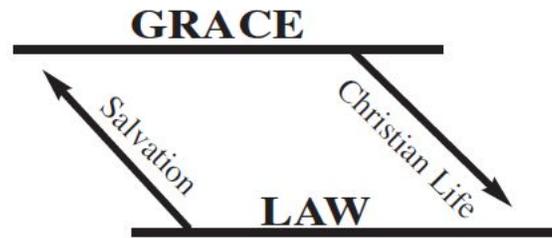
v. 1 — Paul challenges the believer to stand first of all in the liberty of grace before beginning to walk by faith in the power of the Spirit. The Law is not the rule of faith for the believer.

v. 2 — This is one of the most startling verses in the Scripture. Paul is not saying that to trust something other than Christ means you are not saved — he has said that before. He is saying that if you trust Christ and also trust something else, you are not saved.

v. 3 — Even to put on the badge of the Law, which is circumcision, means that you are indebted to do the whole Law. James gave the negative side: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

It is faith plus nothing that saves the sinner. God will not let salvation become a complicated matter. Nothing can enter in to rob Christ of His glory. Imagine a person sending in a testimonial about Geritol saying, “After taking 254 bottles, I feel good. I also made up my own formula, and I have been taking it along with Geritol.” You can see that such a testimonial would be of no value. The home remedy might have been the cure.

v. 4 — “Fallen from grace” does not mean to fall out of salvation or lose it. It means to try to be saved by some other means. You fall from the high plane of grace down to the low level of legality. To be saved by grace and then to try to live the Christian life by law is to fall from grace.



v. 5 — “Hope of righteousness” is the only prophetic reference in the entire epistle. The only hope is the blessed hope. Christ is made unto us “righteousness” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

v. 6 — No legal apparatus will produce a Christian life. The formula is a simple simile: “faith which worketh by love.”

v. 7 — Paul chides the Galatians. They were doing excellently until the Judaizers came along.

v. 9 — In Scripture, leaven is always used as a principle of evil.

v. 10 — Paul believed that the Galatians would ultimately reject the teaching of the Judaizers.