

LIVING IN FREEDOM

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What are some of your favorite things to do on a day off from work?
 - What's a bad habit you've had to break at some point in your life? How did you do it?
 - How would you define the word "freedom"?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

One of the great promises of Christianity is living in freedom. Very often, however, becoming a Christian is associated with giving up freedoms. This misunderstanding is caused by wrong views of freedom and wrong views of Christianity. When Paul wrote a letter to the Galatian church, he warned them that what they were doing was preventing them from living in freedom. If we want to embrace the promise of living in freedom, we need to understand what it means and how to avoid the traps that rob us of freedom.

THE PURPOSE OF FREEDOM

READ: Galatians 5:13-15

DISCUSS: What do you think it looks like to use "freedom as an opportunity for the flesh"?

Freedom isn't unlimited ability to do whatever we want. Even if we want to fly, gravity puts limits on us. Even if we want to rob a bank, the law puts limits on us. Paul says that freedom is the ability to "love your neighbor as yourself" and to leave out anything that stands in the way. God created human beings to exactly that: to love God and love others. When sin entered the picture, it robbed humans of their ability to do that. The freedom we have through Jesus restores what was lost in Eden, and that means it restores our ability to live as truly human.

THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

READ: Galatians 5:16-23

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from this passage? Why do you think it's important?

There's a battle in our bodies between the Spirit and the flesh. The Galatians were trying to win that battle through legalism, but legalism can't overcome sin because it relies on our own self-will. So Paul tells them that the way to live in freedom is by following the lead of the Holy Spirit. The way you know you're doing this is when your actions produce love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

THE POWER FOR FREEDOM

READ: Galatians 5:24-26

DISCUSS: How does the image of keeping “in step with the Spirit” help your understanding of what it means to live in freedom?

There may be a battle going on between the Spirit and the flesh, but for those who belong to Jesus, the flesh has already lost the war. When Jesus died on the cross, he defeated the power of the flesh. Also, for those who belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit doesn't just lead us, but he lives in us and is the power we need to live in freedom. Those who belong to Jesus already have the victory through Jesus's death, and already have the power to live in freedom because of the Holy Spirit.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- What have you learned from this discussion and how can you apply it to your life?
- Do you know what it feels like when you're keeping in step with the Spirit? How can you strengthen that practice in your life?
- What are you currently doing in your life that is producing the fruit of the Spirit?

PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Pray for a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for spiritual strength to live in freedom.

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?