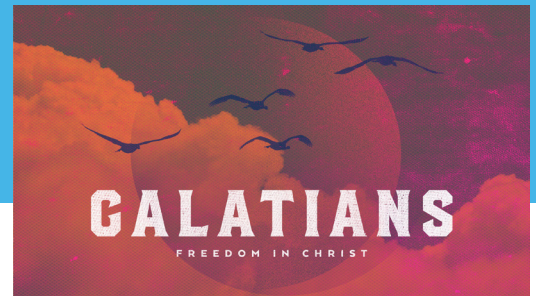


Discussion Questions

July 19, 2026



Galatians 5:13-18 - What Freedom Is For

This week we finished the question sitting under the whole series: if we are saved completely by grace, with no fine print and no asterisk, does it matter how we live? Why not just do whatever we want? Paul answers in Galatians 5:13-15 by showing that Christian freedom is never directionless. We are called into freedom entirely as a gift, but Paul immediately adds a guardrail with the little word "only." Freedom always has a direction, and it goes one of two ways. It can become a beachhead for the flesh, the self turned inward to protect, prove, and indulge itself, or it can become the arena where love turns outward. Legalism and license look like opposites, but both put the self back on the throne. Real freedom flows from being adopted and secure in Christ, and it takes the shape of joyful, love-shaped servanthood, the kind Jesus modeled when he knew exactly who he was and still knelt to wash feet. Grace does not just open the prison door and leave us blinking in the light. It opens the door and puts a towel in our hands. Paul then says love fulfills the whole law, not to earn our standing but as what freedom looks like once grace has been received. The alternative is a community that bites, devours, and consumes one another. Abbie's testimony showed us Galatians 5 lived out, someone moving from surviving, to becoming rooted and finally having something to pour out. It closed with one question: whose actual feet are in front of you?

1. Read Galatians 5:13-15 slowly, out loud, maybe twice. What words, contrasts, or images stand out? And why do you think Paul puts a guardrail on freedom so fast, before the ink is even dry on the word?
2. The sermon described the flesh as the self turned inward, and argued that legalism (proving yourself) and license (doing whatever you want) are two versions of the same problem, because one promotes the self and the other indulges it. Discuss this idea and share which one you are more prone to.
3. Read John 13:3-5. Why do you think John ties Jesus' secure identity and authority to his willingness to do the work of a servant? How does security in the Father free a person to serve, and how do shame or insecurity get in the way and turn service into one more way of proving ourselves?
4. How do you tell the difference between love-shaped servanthood and simply being controlled by someone or being unhealthy, while still remembering that Christ alone is our Lord?
5. Read verses 14 and 15 again. After five chapters warning them off the law, Paul suddenly says the whole law is fulfilled in one command, love your neighbor. How is loving others as a response to grace different from loving others to earn God's approval?
6. After vs 14, Paul flips straight to the opposite, a community that bites and devours. Where are you most tempted to turn truth into teeth, especially with someone who is wrong about something you care about? Does it change anything to remember that the "neighbors" in Galatia included the very people most wrong about the gospel Paul loved?
7. Abbie shared her own testimony of being loved well by this body and the central role it played in her finding freedom in Christ. What does it look like for us to keep doing that for others? Then prayerfully consider: is there a specific neighbor in your life you need to love?"

Galatians 5:13–15 (NLT)

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. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

**If we are saved by grace with no fine print, no asterisk, does it actually matter how we live?
If I can not earn my way in or behave my way out, then why not just do whatever I want?**

Galatians 5:13 (NIV)

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. **But [Only] do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh..**

Galatians 5:13 (NIV)

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. **But [Only] do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather serve one another humbly in love."**

Galatians 5:13

Only, do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

The flesh, for Paul, is "the self" turned inward.

"Do not let freedom become a beachhead that your flesh can exploit."

Cheap grace does not take grace too far, it stops grace too soon.

Grace that removes the guilt but leaves the old master on the throne is not freedom

It's just guilt-free slavery

Legalism and license [self-indulgence] are both the same wrong direction

- License says "I will do what I want."
- Legalism says "I will prove I am better than you."

both of them put the SELF right back up on the throne.

Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

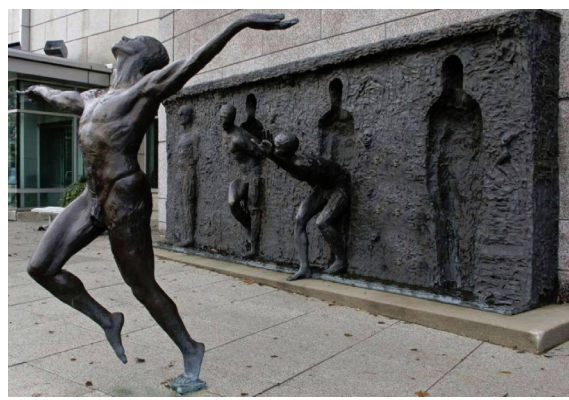
Serve = Slave or BondServant

This is a joyful, love-shaped servanthood that flows out of deep security in Christ.

We do not serve to secure our place. Christ has already secured us, so we are free to serve.

John 13:3–5 (NLT)

"Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet,"



Charles Wesley hymn "And Can It Be"

My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed thee

Galatians 5:14 (NLT)

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

Every command God ever gave was pointing in a direction, love.

So love does not earn your freedom.

Love is what freedom looks like once grace has been received.

Grace turns beloved people into available people.

Galatians 5:15 (CSB)

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed [destroyed] by one another.

The test of this is not whether we ever disagree, but whether the person who disagrees with you is still your neighbor you love

Paul's whole argument in three verses.

- **You were called to freedom.**
- **That freedom is for love that serves. Because love is what the whole law was reaching for all along.**
- **And the only alternative to serving one another is slowly consuming one another.**