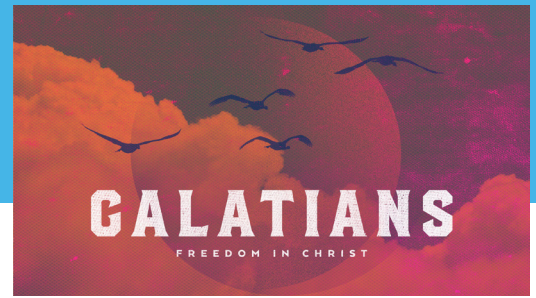


Discussion Questions

July 12, 2026



Title: Galatians 5:1–12 - Who Cut In On You?

Paul opens Galatians 5 with the verse the whole letter has been building toward: "Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free." Freedom is a finished fact, accomplished at the cross, but staying free is a daily posture. Like a pinch of sourdough starter working silently through a whole batch of dough, legalism spreads quietly. One small "just add this rule" and the whole loaf changes. Paul warns that adding anything to Jesus leaves you with less than Jesus. Shockingly, it's the law-keeper, not the struggling sinner, who is in danger of "falling from grace." The alternative isn't trying harder. It's living through the Spirit, waiting on tiptoe for the righteousness faith has already made ours, and letting that faith express itself in love. Two voices compete for every believer: the one that cuts in and says "do more," and the One who called us and says "it is finished."

1. Read Galatians 5:1, then Matthew 11:28–30. Paul warns against a "yoke of slavery," while Jesus invites us to take his yoke. The sermon said the question was never yoke or no yoke, because everyone is harnessed to something. What's the difference between these two yokes, and how can you tell which one you're actually wearing?
2. Read Galatians 5:2–4. We usually use "fallen from grace" for someone caught in a scandal. But according to Paul, who has actually fallen from grace here, and why is this warning aimed at the confident rule-keeper rather than the trembling heart? Are you personally more prone to fear you've failed God, or to quietly rely on your own performance to feel right with Him?
3. Read Galatians 5:5. The sermon described legalism as "unplugging the engine of the car and then getting out and pushing it." Paul says instead: through the Spirit, by faith, we wait. What's the difference between waiting in fear or dread ("did I do enough?") and waiting with eager anticipation like this passage is referring to?
4. Read Galatians 5:6, then think about the story of the woman and the list. She did the same tasks first for a harsh husband out of obligation, and later for a loving husband out of love. Where in your spiritual life are you doing the right things on the wrong fuel? What would it take for that same work to become "faith expressing itself in love"?
5. Paul says uncircumcision counts for nothing either. Throwing off the rules can become its own yoke, worn backwards. Have you ever found yourself, or seen others, become just as defined by the religion they left as by the one they kept? What are some modern versions of "good Christians must..." that quietly cut into people's lanes today?
6. Read Galatians 5:7–8. Paul says there are two voices: the one that cuts in ("do more") and the One who calls ("it is finished"). Where in your typical week, a relationship, a workplace, your own head, is the cutting voice loudest? What's one practical step you can take this week to answer that voice with truth instead of striving?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you that you have truly set us free. Help us recognize every voice that adds requirements to your finished work or drives us through fear and shame. Teach us to live through the Spirit, receive your grace by faith, and wait with confidence for the day we experience your righteousness in full. Let our faith become visible through self-giving love, so our lives and our community reflect who you are. Amen.

Galatians 5:1–12 (NLT)

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough! I am trusting the Lord to keep you from believing false teachings. God will judge that person, whoever he is, who has been confusing you.

Dear brothers and sisters, if I were still preaching that you must be circumcised - as some say I do - why am I still being persecuted? If I were no longer preaching salvation through the cross of Christ, no one would be offended. I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

Galatians 5:1 (NLT)

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law [yoke of slavery].

Matthew 11:29-30 (NIV)

Take MY yoke upon you... for my yoke is EASY and my burden is LIGHT

Galatians 5:2-3 (NLT)

If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses.

Galatians 5:4 (NLT)

For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace.

Here it is the law keeper who has fallen from grace, not the sinner

Repenting sinners fall into grace not out of it

Galatians 5:5 (NASB 2020)

For we, through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Paul's Order:

Through the Spirit

By Faith

Wait

The false teachers' order:

I work

I earn

I arrive

Legalism is not first a thinking problem, it is a Spirit problem.

It is what happens when people who have been given the Spirit, start trying to produce Spirit-life by flesh-effort

Legalism unplugs the engine of the car and then gets out and pushes it

Galatians 5:5 (NLT)

But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.

Galatians 5:6a (NLT)

..there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised.

Galatians 5:6b (NLT)

What is important is faith expressing itself in LOVE

NT. Wright - Galatians Commentary

..faith working through love makes us "small working models of... messiahness"

Galatians 2:20

..the Son of God... who LOVED me and GAVE himself for me

We are to be a "faith-through-love" people who reproduce the pattern of Jesus' own faithful, self-giving love

Galatians 5:7 (NIV)

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?

Galatians 5:8 (NIV)

That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.

Two voices in this passage:

the voice that cuts in: saying "Do more"

the voice that calls: saying "It is Finished"

Galatians 5:9 (NLT)

This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough!

Galatians 5:10 (NIV)

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.

Galatians 5:12 (NLT)

I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

Who cut in on you?

Martin Luther's 1520 treatise The Freedom of a Christian

A Christian is the most free lord of all, subject to none, and a Christian is the most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

"I am already His."

"I am walking out my faith."

"And one day... I will see it in full."

Jesus' love is not dependent on you winning your battles