

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Freedom From and Freedom Into
Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Bring pencils or pens for each class participant.

Beforehand, prepare copies for each participant of each of the two lists found on the final pages of this session: (**Fruits of the Lower Nature**) and (**Fruits of God's Spirit**). Don't forget to make copies of the special lists for preschoolers and children.

If practical, use a separate sheet for each list. During the session, you will ask the members to bracket certain items on the lists. Then they will label those groups. This activity will help them to more easily remember the items on the lists.

Include crayons for the small children. Even though some younger preschoolers may not fully understand the activity, they need to feel included. **Special lists have been prepared for preschoolers (ages five and younger) and for children (ages six to ten or so). These lists convey Paul's teachings on their levels without confusing the children with adult words and concepts that they cannot yet understand. Prepare sufficient copies of the appropriate lists for every child.**

If you have youth in your group, ask one of them to function as the leader for the "**Youth, Take Ten**" Bible study application. Provide nine pieces of cardboard (approximately 12 inches long and 4 inches wide) and a marker for the activity.

Worship Time Leader:

Prepare copies of the words to the hymn "**Free from the law, O happy condition**" for each participant. This song is given at the end of the Sharing Time materials.

Music Sources:

"**Spirit Song**" #287, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.

"**Behold, What Manner of Love**", #45, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.

"**Free from the Law, O Happy Condition**" #332, Baptist Hymnal, (1991).

"**Create In Me a Clean Heart**", #39, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Freedom From and Freedom Into*****Focal Text**

Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26

Background Text

Galatians 5

Main Idea

Christ frees us from slavery and sin and for loving service under the leadership of the Spirit.

Question to Explore

If I'm free in Christ, can I do anything I want?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to claim Christ's freedom in their lives.

Gathering together:

Sing "***Spirit Song***" #287, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.

First thoughts:**Staying on the track**

Living next to a railroad can be a noisy experience. Several trains pass by every day. Many of them pull over one hundred cars. Each train has three or four engines producing great power. The noise they produce as they rumble by can be heard over a mile away. Occasionally, trains derail. Do you suppose the lead engine says to itself, "Being stuck to these tracks is really boring. I want to be free. I think I can jump these tracks and show the world how a powerful train should live." Once off the track, the powerful train is completely helpless. All that power is wasted. Much less powerful machines must come to its rescue. How humiliating! You could surely hear the train say to itself, "I really thought I could, but I couldn't."

The Christian is set free. Just how free is he? Our Lord said, “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:36).” If “indeed” is the word, do I have any restrictions on my behaviour? I wonder if a question like that will have any resemblance to the train? Why do some Christians live their lives like a train wreck? Today we will study the Christian’s freedom. What are we free from and what are we free for?

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Freedom From and Freedom Into

Focal Text

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Background Text

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Introduction to your personal study:

Recently the outgoing governor of the U.S. State of Illinois gave a pardon to four individuals who had received the death sentence for crimes they had done. At one moment they were in cells awaiting death. The next moment they were free. They would be out of that ten by twelve foot cell. They could go anywhere they wanted.

While in prison, they had their schedules tightly controlled. They exercised at a certain time. They ate at a certain time. They had their lights on and off at certain times. Now as free men they could decide on all they do. What will they do with that freedom? Those who study such circumstances say that some people who find themselves released from prison seem to already understand the need to distance themselves from their past deeds and environment that led them to prison. They immediately move in a different direction, regardless of the difficulties or their sense of losing their past. Others

find the call to the security and familiarity of their past too tempting. They go back to the places, friends, family, and situation from which they came. Too often, those people repeat their sins and eventually return to prison.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Paul has argued for faith in Christ as the only way of salvation. He has combated salvation by works first through history. In chapters 1-4 he sets forth the case for faith from history. Here he uses the examples of Abraham and faith versus Moses and the law. Secondly he argues against salvation by works by using scripture. He destroys the teachings of the Judaizers by using the scripture. Now beginning in Chapter 5 he further teaches salvation through faith by using the moral argument. Here the pictures the total inward moral change in individuals who accept Christ through faith. This was a change that attempts to live by the Jewish law had not produced. As Paul speaks of the freedom that Christ gives believers, he also speaks in such a way as to teach that freedom does not mean license.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Freedom as a Christian (Galatians 5:1-6)

As a believer has gained freedom and liberty, Paul encourages them to be firm and not go back into slavery. Paul continues to say that if a person believes and then is circumcised that Christ cannot save them. The individual is seeking to obtain salvation through the keeping of the law. Those who turn to the law will discover that Christ is of no value to them. Those seeking to be justified by works are saying that Christ's death is not sufficient. Paul's admonition is to those considering circumcision. He is warning them about the consequences. If a person consented to circumcision, Paul says that Christ then will be no advantage, no value, no use, no good, and no benefit to them.

The one that is circumcised then must obey all the Jewish law or perish. Paul continues: If a person seeks to obtain salvation by obeying the law, then they have cut themselves away from Christ. The emphasis here is that obedience to the law and faith in Christ are separate. They are exclusive and cannot be joined.

Submission to the law's commandment of circumcision as a means of obtaining God's righteousness nullifies the grace of God. Obedience to the law to get a right standing with God is to say that Christ's death was insufficient to provide that relationship. Paul states that to submit to circumcision and the law means being as a branch severed from a tree.

The devastating loss of the advantage of Christ is what is spoken of here. It is not that a person can be a Christian and then, afterwards, lose that salvation. The discussion here is not that of losing salvation by committing sin. It is talking of substituting the law for grace as the way of salvation. The implication here is that, if a person believes that fulfilling the law (works, deeds, doing “things”) is necessary to gain salvation in Christ, then clearly that person has not committed himself or herself to Christ by faith and only faith. Therefore, that particular person is not in Christ and never will be until the idea of gaining salvation through works is abandoned and replaced by faith.

The conclusion to this passage states that believers wait for God’s righteousness through the Spirit’s working. If a person lives in union with Christ, circumcision or the lack of it makes no difference. Finally, faith that counts (faith that is valid) demonstrates God’s grace by expressing itself through love

Living in Love - Not Ethical License (Galatians 5:13-15)

Christians are called to be free from slavery. Here we are commanded however, to not use that freedom to engage in the desires of human nature. In 5:1, Paul uses Christian liberty as the basis of warning against legalism. Now he warns against libertinism or unrestrained behaviour, particularly in sexual matters.

This freedom is not for self-indulgence but to serve one another in love. We are to be servants to one another. The entire law can be boiled down to one command: to love your neighbour as yourself. This freedom in Christ is hindered when brethren fight with one another. This behaviour is similar to wild animals biting and destroying one another.

Living in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18)

A person guided by the Spirit of God will not be in danger of yielding to self-indulgence. Self-indulgence is the exact opposite of living in the Spirit. The lower nature pits its desires against God’s spirit. The Spirit is contrary to these desires of the human flesh. They fight against one another and prevent us from doing what we want. Those led by the Spirit are not under law. No believer is ever overwhelmed by the lower nature while living in the Spirit. When this walk in the Spirit becomes haphazard or ceases, almost anything can happen. However, if the Spirit leads you, then you are no longer subject to the law.

Results of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21)

Paul begins his contrast of living the sinful, natural nature and the living with the Spirit of God by listing the results of the undisciplined life. Some students list these qualities in several categories: sexual sins, ritual sins, social life, and drink. Another way of categorizing them are: immorality, idolatry, animosity, and intemperance. Whatever classification is given, these sins are fruits of self-indulgence. The sexual drive which men and women have is a good gift given to people in the Garden of Eden. When used

under the leadership of the Spirit the results are good. It leads to great love between husband and wife; it leads to the birth of children, and provides intimate sharing of all of life within in the family. The perversion of this drive leads to immorality, impurity, and licentiousness. Immorality is defined as promiscuous sexual activity, both physical and mental. Impurity is moral impurity. Debauchery, lasciviousness, or wantonness is all kinds of sexual vice relating to heathenism. Idolatry and witchcraft are worship perversions. The worship of idols instead of God is a result of fleshly living. Along with that is the practice of the occult; the engaging in use of secret or supernatural powers.

Paul lists eight characteristics (15 specific misdeeds) of social behaviour and personal relationships. These include

Hatred: enmity and or feuds, discord, strife, wrangling, or bitterness.

Jealousy: resentment of what someone else has, envious.

Fits of rage: bad temper or anger.

Selfish ambition: rivalry, getting the best for yourself.

Dissensions: quarrelling or criticizing.

Factions: taking sides, divisive talk or actions.

Envy: resentment, discontent, begrudging admiration, covetousness.

Drunkenness and wild parties: relating to the use of alcoholic drink and implying the misuse of anything that lowers our reliance on conscience and self-control for right behaviour.

Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Paul has just listed fifteen misdeeds of the work of the flesh. He now proceeds to share nine qualities of the Spirit controlled life. "Fruit of the Spirit" describes the product of God working in a life. The dynamic results of the Spirit working in a believer comprise these "fruits". These attributes do not easily divide into categories. They are applicable in all areas of life: worship, sexual, social, commerce, congregational, etc. Love is the first trait listed. Love is not simply the first among equals. Love provides the source from which all the other qualities flow. Love is not simply sentiment nor returned good will. In 1 Corinthians 13, we are given the best description of love. Read the chapter as a reminder of the characteristics of love.

The list continues. "Joy" comes from the word grace. Even the most difficult situation cannot hinder it. Peace cannot be described as just the absence of conflict and fighting. It is an inward attitude reflecting a proper relationship to God and accord with others. Patience is the opposite of short tempered or having a short fuse. One describes it as being "long tempered." It is patience to put off anger and to be content to bear insults. Kindness is treatment of others in a giving manner, yet is not so amiable that no wrong can offend. Goodness is generosity, upright and righteous. Faithfulness carries with it the quality of trustworthiness or fidelity. Gentleness is gentle strength and includes a

sweetness of temper especially toward those who might be considered inferior. It means a submissive spirit toward God which reflects in consideration of others. Self-control speaks of an inner strength, the ability to command oneself against outside pressures. No rules or regulations exist against the qualities of the fruit of the spirit. Society needs to be protected only from the acts of sinful nature.

Challenge Concerning Christian Living (Galatians 5:24-26)

In the dynamic relationship through faith in Christ, the old sinful nature has been put to death in the life of the believer. Paul concludes that since believers live by the spirit we should conduct our lives in concert with the Spirit. As we live this resurrected life we are not to become proud or conceited about the quality of that life. We are not to revert to the results of fleshly living, of provoking and envying one another.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Freedom from and freedom into will take on meaning for your church only when you, as the leader of this study, are able to help them:

1. Define freedom in both directions (from and toward or into).
2. See this freedom as total for all aspects of our personality – physical; emotional and mental; relational; and spiritual.
3. Understand the terms of both the bad and the good lists that Paul gives us.
4. Lead each person to determine (in their personal devotional and prayer time), what they need to move from and what they need to move into.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Freedom From and Freedom Into

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26

Background Text

Galatians 5

Main Idea

Christ frees us from slavery and sin and for loving service under the leadership of the Spirit.

Question to Explore

If I'm free in Christ, can I do anything I want?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to claim Christ's freedom in their lives.

Connect with Life:

Open with these thoughts: If you plan to buy a vehicle, how do you want to decide what type you will have? Do you want your neighbour to decide whether you will purchase a bicycle, motorbike, or a car? Do want the vendor to decide which model you will pay for? Do you want the government to decide?

Add: Each of us want to make such decisions ourselves. We value our freedom to make judgments that affect us personally. Some of us enjoy more freedom than others

in making personal decisions. Today we look at the freedoms we each have as Christians.

Guide the Study:

Read Galatians 5:1-6.

Say: Imagine a person held as a slave, then somehow he is freed from his captors. He can make his own decisions. Is he going to choose to go back into slavery and captivity? Paul tells us that Christ has set us free.

Search out answers from the group:

What is the challenge Paul gives us in Galatians 5:2? (Not to be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.)

What does he tell the Galatians will happen if they are circumcised? (Christ will be of no value to them.)

Under what obligation is that person? (They are obligated to obey the whole law.)

Using the **Teacher Preparation** section, explain Galatians 5:4.

Encourage a response to this: In Galatians 5:5-6 what does Paul say is important? (It is faith expressing itself through love.)

State: Some of us have heard a person say, "Christ has made me free. I'm not bound by the law. I can do anything I want to do." Then he or she willingly participates in all kinds of sin. That person lives as if he or she has a license to sin.

Now comment: Paul speaks to freedom in our study today.

Read Galatians 5:13-15.

Inquire: What did Paul say we were called to? (Freedom).

Add: What warnings does Paul give in this passage—vv. 13-15?

Allow for participation. Agree with the answers that seem correct.

Then say: Let's summarize the warnings with a simple list. First, we are not to use our freedom in Christ to engage in sinful behaviour. Second, we are to serve one another in love. The law can be compressed into one attitude and action—that of love. And third, fighting among brethren will destroy their zeal for Christ, their fellowship among themselves, and their testimony in their community.

Read Galatians 5:16-18.

Add: Several statements about how we will live free in the Spirit are given in this passage.

(1) A person living by the Spirit will not fulfill the desires of his lower nature. Living in the Spirit will keep an individual from gratifying the desires of his fleshly nature.

(2) The sinful nature of man is totally opposite of the Spirit's desires. What human nature wants is self-indulgence while the Spirit desires a pure life.

(3) Human nature and the Spirit are in conflict so that we do not always carry out our good intentions.

(4) If you are living by the Spirit no law can affect you. You are not subject to the Old Testament law.

Read Galatians 5:19-21.

(Leader: This is where you will lead the activity for which you prepared copies of the two lists. Make sure that everyone has a copy of the lists and a pen or pencil. Give crayons to the preschoolers).

Tell the group: Results of living in the lower nature are listed on the first list.

Ask someone to read the first list: (Fornication; impurity and debauchery; idolatry; witchcraft; hatred; discord; jealousy; fits of rage; selfish ambition; dissensions; factions; envy; drunkenness; orgies.)

Say: Let's see how these relate to each other.

Ask the group to use their pencil or pen to draw a bracket joining fornication, impurity and debauchery into a single group.

Proceed with the activity by giving the following instructions:

On the margin of your list and beside the bracket, write "Sexual sins."

Next, bracket idolatry and witchcraft and label these "Worship sins"

Now bracket hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy. Label these "Sins regarding relationships"

Finally, bracket drunkenness and orgies and label this category "Sins of self-indulgence."

Remind the class: The four categories of sins which you have written on your list of sins of the old self or nature should be these: Sins of a sexual nature, worship sins, relational sins, and self-gratification (or self-indulgence).

Using the “**Teacher Preparation**”, comment, briefly on the various results of living in the lower nature. **Please don’t try to discuss each sin. Such a discussion would take all day!** Simply and briefly explain the consequences (results) of living in the power of such sins.

Ask the group to turn over their paper and see if they can remember the four categories of the list of sins that Paul mentioned. They will use various headings—but these should imply sex, worship, relations with others, and self-gratification.

Continue: Now let’s examine what happens when a person is living in the Spirit.

Request a person to read Galatians 5:22-23.

Identify this list by writing it on the board (or asking a person to do so): Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Lead class in comparing the items in the two lists.

Leader: If time permits, ask one or two in the group to think how they might organize the list of the fruits of the Spirit into three or four groups or categories.

If pressed for time, suggest that each person take home the two lists. During the week, for a personal or family devotional time, determine how they would organize the list of the fruits of the Spirit into three or four groups or categories.

Have someone read Galatians 5:24-26.

Say: Paul ends this section of his letter to the Galatians by summarizing the things that he has tried to teach them in the passage.

Ask the group: What are the summary statements listed here?

Listen to your group first. Then, if they do not see the following, help them to recognize Paul’s outline or summary of his teachings.

Emphasize these to the church:

One: Believers have crucified their evil desires on the cross.

Two: Since we live by the Holy Spirit’s power, we are to follow His leading in all areas of life.

Three: We are not to become conceited, envious, or provoking.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Conclude with this statement: We have seen what results from satisfying the desires of human nature. We have seen what are the results of living in the Spirit of Jesus. We have seen how we wander between the two lists. Today, let's commit ourselves to be led by the Spirit by maintaining a daily devotion of prayer and Bible reading so we can be directed by Him.

Ask a Christian participant to lead in prayer. Ask him or her to commit the church to reject any evidence of the old life of sin and to live completely in demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit of Christ.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Freedom From and Freedom Into **Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Quality of Life, God's Way

How do you feel about the list of qualities given in Galatians 5:22-23? Are these qualities usually admired by teens? Take the last one given—self-control. Is this an issue for any of the teens you know?

Write the names of the various qualities on the pieces of cardboard which are available. Give each participant the opportunity to arrange these in a hierarchical order. That is, which one would you like to achieve first, second, third etc?

If participants get frustrated as they attempt to arrange these in order, intervene—explaining that these are qualities which we should all desire at all times. It is difficult to have just one or two or to obtain them according to our wants and circumstances. We need to ask God's Spirit to give these to us – all of them.

How is the Spirit able to give us these qualities? Do we get them once and then not have to worry about it again? How can we keep on living out all of these qualities?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Freedom From and Freedom Into***
Galatians 5:1-6, 13-26**Beginning the Service:**

An old hymn written by a well known hymn writer expresses well the meaning of today's Bible study and worship time. Let us read it together.

Free from the Law, O Happy Condition

Men:

Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Women:

Now we are free, there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
"Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all.

Men:

"Children of God." O glorious calling,
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
Passing from death to life at His call,
Blessed salvation once for all.

Women:

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,
Once for all, O friend, now believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

Philip P. Bliss, 1838-1876

Sing “**Behold, What Manner of Love**”, #45, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.
“**Create In Me a Clean Heart**”, #39, *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition.

Offering:

Praying for the World:

The country of Turkey is predominantly Muslim, and the majority of Turks have never heard the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Most cities and villages of this land of 70 million have no resident Christian witness. Some missiologists classify Turkey as the world’s largest unevangelized nation. Pray today that the message of salvation will be brought to this nation in spite of many barriers.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

The Christian and His Freedom **Galatians 5:1-5**

Introduction:

A loving family had a small dog that desired to be free. He devised unique ways of escaping his pen. The four-foot fence around the yard was three times taller than he was. He would get a running start and climb the fence. The family had to put him on a chain. One day he got free from the chain and the fence. He made sure no one could get close to him. He was free! He disappeared for several days. He did return. He was very hungry and looked like some big dogs had put him in his place. He couldn’t wait to get back in his pen and seemed to want the chain attached quickly. What a change of attitude! His story sounds like the Prodigal Son in Luke 15.

Paul discusses the Christian and his freedom in Galatians 5. The Galatians were tempted to enter the world of Judaism by receiving circumcision to complete the work of Christ. He warns that anyone who does so will turn from the benefits of Christ, must keep the whole law and will reject Christianity to choose Judaism. They would be stepping into a world full of disappointment. No one can keep the whole law. The law taught us that we needed God’s grace instead of his justice. Jesus provided God’s

grace. The Christian has been set free to let God's love flow through him. Notice that our freedom carries a privilege, a duty and a danger.

I. The Christian's Freedom is a Privilege.

Our text begins with the statement "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Without Christ we were in bondage to flesh and sin. The Galatians wanted to subject themselves to the legalism of the law. Such an alliance would be a denial of freedom. Paul told them that they would be required to keep the entire law, which would be impossible. They had to believe the law was the only way to please God. God is not pleased if we reject his provision of Grace in Christ.

Some people desire to ignore God. They feel license is the way to live. They prefer to pervert their freedom rather than deny it. Their motto could be, "I'll do it my way and let God make the best of it." Such a person is described in Luke 12. He had many barns. A bumper crop required he build larger barns. He saw his future cared for. He said to himself, ***"You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry"*** To which God added, ***"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"*** (Luke 12:19-20)

Love is the fruit of freedom. In verses 13-14, Paul writes, ***"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge your sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"*** Law leads to pride and despair. License leads to boredom and frustration.

II. The Christian's Freedom Presents a Duty.

In verse 1, Paul commands us to "Stand firm" or "keep on standing firm." The command is a present active form which means we are to continue standing firm. In verse 6 Paul says, "Neither circumcision nor un-circumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Then he asks in verse 7, "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?" It is God's will that we live by faith. He can not do any good thing in our lives if we do not express our faith in his will.

If we are living by faith, the devil will tear up the road in front of us to direct us away from a faith-walk. The author of our study worked late one night and tried to slip into the house without waking anyone. He did not know his wife had moved the furniture. Needless to say, he did wake the family when he crashed into a rocking chair. Don't let Satan move things you cannot see to distract your walk by faith.

III. The Christian's freedom involves a danger.

Paul concludes verse 1 with: "Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Trusting the law cuts us off from faith in Christ. We must trust Christ completely for our new life. If we rely on our goodness, we have changed the way we wish to relate to God. We can never earn eternal life. It is a gift from God. We have no right to boast in our goodness. We must boast in our Saviour.

Call to Commitment:

Expressing our faith in Christ is an all or nothing choice. We either trust him or we don't. You can't travel two directions at the same time. You can't cross over a bridge by keeping one foot on the bank. What good is a raft if one keeps clinging to a sinking ship? Good works do not offer any advantage to the work of Christ. Let us be people of faith and experience the freedom Christ gives us.

Concluding the Service:

Ask the church to stand with heads bowed and listen to the Word of God.

Read the following:

***Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.***

***Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.***

***For the Lord is the great God,
The great King above all gods.***

Psalms 95:1-3

Dismiss the congregation.

Free from the Law, O Happy Condition

Men:

Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Women:

Now we are free, there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
"Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
Come, and He saves us once for all.

Men:

"Children of God." O glorious calling,
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
Passing from death to life at His call,
Blessed salvation once for all.

Women:

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,
Once for all, O friend, now believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

Philip P. Bliss, 1838-1876

List for youth and adults:

Fruits of the Flesh (The Old Life without Christ)

Fornication

Impurity

Debauchery

Idolatry

Witchcraft

Hatred

Discord

Jealousy

Fits of rage

Selfish ambition

Dissensions

Factions

Envy

Drunkenness

Orgies

List for youth and adults:

Fruit(s) of the Spirit of God

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

Lists for preschool children under age six:

Things That We Should Not Think or Do

Be mean to someone.

Quarrel with my sister or brother.

Want what my friend has.

Be angry.

Think that I am more important than someone else.

Want too many gifts or treats.

Things That Make Us Happy and Make God Happy for Us

Love each other.

Be happy.

Don't get upset.

Wait for my turn.

Do kind things for others.

Follow rules.

Obey my parents.

Finish jobs that I start.

Clean up my playthings and help others to clean up their things.

Think about how things I do or say makes someone else feel.

Think about the things that I am about to do. Will it be good or bad?

Lists for children ages six to ten:

Things That We Should Not Think or Do

Use ugly words in conversation.

Want something so much that it becomes the most important thing in my life.

Think that witches can help me.

Hate others.

Fight or quarrel with others.

Want what other kids have.

Get angry when I don't get my way.

Get angry when someone else wins.

Always want to be the best at everything.

Argue with others.

Bully another person. Be mean to someone different or smaller than me.

Eat or drink too much. Eat or drink things that are not good for me.

Want more and more toys, games, clothes, and other things.

Things that Make Us Happy and Make God Happy for Us

Love each other.

Be happy even when things are not just perfect.

Don't try to change things without good reasons.

Do good things for others without expecting something in return.

Do what is expected of me.

Be obedient.

Be content with what I already have.

Finish what I start.

Defend others who are being bullied. Never be bossy.

Let others have their way.