



GOD OF FREEDOM

THE GOD OF GALATIANS

3



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. Some of the people sitting near me treat me like I don't know what I'm doing, and it drives me nuts!
2. People today seem to have arrested development, and probably could not handle true freedom, if you gave it to them.
3. God's Law drives people away from Him.
4. When the people in my neighborhood think about Christianity, they think of a group of people promoting total freedom.
5. There are multiple paths to salvation.

DIG DEEPER

◦ As an adult, has there ever been a time when you've been treated like--or you had to conform to the rules of--a child? What was that experience like?

➤ READ Galatians 5:1-15 (NLT)

1 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. 2 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. 3 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. 4 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.

5 But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. 6 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.

7 You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? 8 It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. 9 This false teaching is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough! 10 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.

11 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. 12 I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.

13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

NOTES

DIG DEEPER... CONTINUED

» **1 Tied up** - enecho (ἐνεχο), which means "to be held within, to be ensnared." It is used of those who are held in a physical (net or the like) or ethical (law, dogma, emotion) restriction upon their liberty, so that they are unable to free themselves.

« Paul in 4:1-7 had already told them of the fact that grace had placed them as adult sons in the family of God, and in 4:8-10 had asked them how it was that they were turning back to such an elementary method of living their lives. Now, in 5:1 he enforces his exhortation and launches out into a discussion of the Spirit-filled life.

° What is it about stressing God's Law that actually drives people away from Him?

» **4 Cut off (from Christ)** - katergeo (κατέργω), which means "to make ineffectual." If the Galatians accepted circumcision as necessary for salvation, they would be leaving the grace system for the Mosaic Law system.

« Is the same error repeated today when a believer leaves a church that emphasizes salvation by grace through faith and joins one which teaches that salvation depends on repentance, confession, faith, baptism, and church membership? What remains non-negotiable?

» **12 Mutilate themselves** - (apokoptō): The Greek verb used here is apokoptō, which literally means "to cut off" or "to mutilate/emasculate". The Play on Words: Paul mocks their obsession with circumcision. Circumcision is the partial cutting off of the foreskin. Paul essentially tells them: if cutting off a piece of skin is such a great spiritual badge of honor, why stop there? Why not go all the way and castrate themselves entirely?

» **What Does God Want?** - Does this emphasis on faith in Christ mean that we can live and act as we please? Is the Christian life so completely a life of faith that good works and obedience to the law simply do not matter?

« How does God call us to live in freedom, and what does that expose about His character?



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MY PRAYER...

1. How much of my faith in my salvation is tied up in my observance of God's law?
2. What is keeping me from fully expressing my faith in love?
3. What new aspect of God's character does He want me to know?