

November 2/3, 2002

Study Questions

Free Indeed: A Study in the Epistle of Galatians

Standing Firm

Galatians 5:1-12

Opening Discussion

1. Do differences of opinion necessarily mean someone is being legalistic? Why or why not?
2. Are all standards and guidelines a form of legalism? Why or why not?
3. In a pagan culture, which is the better route to holiness, grace or law? Why? Do we believe this in practice? How so?
4. Is a little law acceptable just to be on the safe side as in “better safe than sorry”? Is law erring on the safe side or flirting with disaster?

Bible Study

1. What did it cost Jesus to set us free? In other words, what was the redemption price?

Why did Jesus set us free according to Galatians 5:1? What does this mean? Free from what?

2. The command in 5:1 is to “keep standing firm.” What are we to stand firm against?

Why, according to 5:2b?

3. Given what it cost God to set us free, how must He feel when we willfully choose to enslave ourselves again?

4. What does Paul mean when he says Christ is of no benefit if we revert to law, as the Galatians were considering doing? (3:3, 5:2)

Compare with his statement in 2:21. If in our heart of hearts we believe law can make us more righteous, then why do we need Jesus?

5. In a culture that is morally declining, which approach will make us more holy—law or grace? Why? Do we live consistent with this belief?

6. What is the alternative to law according to Paul in 5:5?

This verse is built from 2:20 and 4:6. Compare this with Phil. 1:6. Once you come to Christ, who is going to “perfect” your righteousness, you or Christ? In what way does legalism demonstrate a lack of belief in this promise?

7. Is grace a license to sin according to 5:6?

What does grace produce?

8. According to 5:7, legalism is a failure to obey the truth. What does Paul mean by that?

9. Where does legalism come from, according to 5:8?

Many people seem to think a little legalism can't hurt. "Better safe than sorry." Given what Paul has said, is this true? Is legalism safe at all? Will legalism protect us from the culture or make us more like the culture? Why?

Application

1. If it was for freedom that Christ has set you free, what must you do to stand firm and not be subject again to the yoke of slavery? List 3 practical things you can do.

2. Suppose that your teenage son (or a friend) is involved in sinful behaviors. Describe the difference between responding with grace versus responding according to law.

What are the core beliefs that define the two different approaches?

According to Paul, which approach is going to produce long-term holiness?

3. Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas of legalism in your heart that need to change.