

## **Set Free**

### **Galatians 5:1-12**

***1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.***

***Phillips Paraphrase - Do not lose your freedom by giving into those who urge circumcision. Plant your feet firmly therefore within the freedom that Christ has won for us, and do not let yourselves be caught again in the shackles of slavery.***

The yoke or shackles of slavery is to law for righteousness—false teachers promote & promise to bring into greater life w/ God--In reality is a do-it-yourself religion, so-called Christian life which isn't Christian at all.

Faith in the finished work in Christ brings freedom of mind & a conscience free of guilt—there's no joy in living w/ a guilty conscience because of past sins--laws for righteousness only remind us of our failure & kills freedom.

Surf culture of past—fun but tense & intense, bad vibes, aggression, anger, dominate, outperform, egotistical, glory in self---As a believer fun again—no ego trips—like a new beginner--free to enjoy the waves.

Judaizers followed Paul imposing laws on new converts—if surf police imposed **surf laws of waxing board, wave size, how far you can ride wave, take turns to ride wave, number of paddle strokes to catch wave, no peeing in water must get out use outhouse on beach.** *Surf marshals to impose laws*

***Matt 11:29,30 "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30" "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light." Peter Acts 15:10,11 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."***

Peter could say address our government w/ these words, who make laws for the people but they themselves don't keep—they're like **political Judaizers**

Some will ask; freedom from what? All of us have been in bondage to something. ***Ps 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.*** We all have a sin nature ***all of us like sheep have gone astray***—And w/ it have been in bondage.

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**Swindoll** We might translate this opening phrase this way: "To liberty Christ has liberated us." You see, Christ didn't set us free w/o purpose or to no end. Nor did He set us free so we could enslave ourselves to the nearest legalist or embark on a wild frenzy of immorality. Christ set us free so we could bask in the benefits of His salvation, living out our freedom in Christ w/o guilt or condemnation. This freedom offers us a new lifestyle. Now we have the ability to live by the Spirit's power. We're free to obey God & do His will joyfully. We can love & serve others. We're able to enter into the Lord's presence thru prayer, experiencing a close, personal relationship w/ Him. Before salvation, we couldn't take advantage of any of these benefits. We were penniless, pathetic slaves to sin. But now, as wealthy freedmen & women, we can enjoy them to the fullest. Christ has set us free so that we may enjoy our freedom.

**2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.**

You have salvation & are made complete in Christ by faith—you are right w/ God because of faith--you can't get any more right but now you want extra guarantees by circumcision & the law—If you do you've erased Christ work on the cross for your salvation—you're on your own-**do-it-yourself religion**

**Boice** "What Paul is condemning is the theology of circumcision—namely, the theology that makes works necessary for salvation and seeks to establish conformity to some external standards of behavior as a mark of spirituality."

**3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.**

Circumcision is not just a ritual but an acknowledgment that I'm coming to God on my own merit by keeping all the commands of the whole law-- understanding that God requires perfection in keeping His law.

**Spurgeon** "The Galatians wanted to be more sure than faith could make them, & so they ran off to getting circumcised & observing days and weeks & months & all sort of carnal ordinances."

**John Stott** the Judaizers "were thus declaring that faith in Christ was insufficient for salvation. Circumcision & law-obedience must be added to it. This was tantamount to saying that Moses must be allowed to finish what Christ had begun

**4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

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*Severed from Christ* --You've transferred allegiance from God's grace in Christ to your own efforts by law keeping. *Severed-to lose the grip*-- **2Tim 1:13** *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.* They had lost their grip.

Leaving Christ for legalism asks the question was it genuine faith in the first place? If they are no longer holding onto what saved them at the start— grace alone-in Christ alone-thru faith alone.

*5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.*

Those of faith '*waiting for the hope of righteousness*' – **Titus 2:13** *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 1Jn 3:2* *Beloved, now we are children of God, & it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is. Col 3:4 NKJ* *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

There will be a finished work of righteousness when Jesus returns for us. Judaizers taught that by the law, righteousness can be perfected. We are now positionally righteous in God's eyes yet we live in a sinful body. But when face to face, we will be complete—Righteous Christ-like for we will see Him as He is.

No outward alteration of the body such as circumcision will do anything--no external ceremony like washings, holy days, laws, etc – amount to nothing. Genuine faith produces genuine love which external religious duties & ceremonies cannot, they only frustrate & makes us hard to live with.

*7You were running well; who hindered (cut into-impede) you from obeying the truth?*

Paul often used athletic metaphors, he was a sports fan-running, boxing, wrestling & winning at the games—**Christians** are to have an active faith, combative in nature, aggressive when competing. It calls for stamina, vigor, discipline to stay in the race to finish the course when things go wrong, when others cut you off.

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**Paul likely uses 'hindered' in a race he saw at the Roman games in his day.** At the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles 18 year old So African Zola Budd raced against her idol—and rival—American world champion Mary Decker . [video](#) Earlier that year Budd had broken Decker's world record in the 5,000 meters, setting up a much-anticipated showdown in the 3,000-metre race at the Olympics. In the final three laps of the race the two runners vied for the lead, Decker on the inside line, her right foot collided w/ Budd's left foot & Decker stumbled & while attempting to right herself, she reached out, tearing number 151 off Budd's back as she fell to the ground. Decker in pain was sprawled out on the track in tears. A tearful Budd, bleeding from her ankle, continued the race, but the crash had clearly affected her as well. Budd faded during the final lap & came in seventh. In interviews following the race, Decker blamed Budd for the collision, but later Decker stated that she was convinced it was an accident.

You were running the race & enduring the trials, what happened? Who tripped you up, threw the obstacle in your way to impede your progress?

Legalism kills grace as law kills faith-can't have both. Cults have their own books and literature to steer their people into error. If you just read the bible you'd never come to their conclusions. Paul questions them who cut you off from obeying the truth?

**Spurgeon on obeying the truth**-Some pilgrims faint because the way is so very long. We can do a great deal at a spurt, but we are not able to keep it up. There are a great many people who enter the church & are splendid fellows for a short time. If they could get to heaven in a one-mile race, they would surely win the prize; but they have no staying power in them. What is needed is perseverance in well doing; perseverance under slights, misrepresentations, & slanders; perseverance when it means tugging & toiling at the oars; perseverance when there is no smile of recognition, but when there is many a frown from those who misjudge your work. It is under such difficulties that men are apt to faint.

**8 This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.**

False teachers *persuaded*-changed the minds of the Galatians to their way of thinking by teaching what Paul calls **leaven**. *Did not come from the Lord*

**Spurgeon** Somebody else has called you aside, some false shepherd, who is but a wolf in sheep's clothing, and who would destroy you if he could."

**One commentator** "It is amazing how often disobedient Christians will claim that "The Lord led me" to do something that is so contrary to Scripture. The Galatians seemed to fall back to this line of defense against Paul- "The Lord led us to do it!" (How many times have you heard that?) No He did not. Paul asserted. The Lord gets blamed for a lot of things that He did not do.

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Jesus warned of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy—yeast in dough makes it rise—metaphor for sin, a corrupting influence as it permeates by the processes of rotting--fermentation. A little error today spreads thru the body & leads to full blown apostasy later.

Benjamin Franklin put it this way: For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the rider was lost; for want of a rider, the battle was lost; and for want of a battle, the kingdom was lost. All this for want of horseshoe nail.

*10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*

Paul is encouraged & has faith in God & the ability of Holy Spirit to bring them around to the truth & abandon error & come again faith alone for salvation.

*11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.*

These false teachers were saying that Paul has come around & agreed w/ their teaching. Paul says if that were so why are these Judaizers still persecuting me & not commending me.

The cross offends because it hurts our pride of man & destroys any attempt to come to God on our own—coming requires humility, surrender and admitting we're lost, unable to save himself. *Stumbling skandalon*, scandal

September 22, 1862 President Abraham Lincoln presented a document ending human slavery called the **Emancipation Proclamation**. It declared slavery completely against human dignity & officially abolishing slavery in the US on that day. Although the law was in effect very little had changed in daily life even tho slaves were officially declared free. Why? Because no mass media to broadcast this event & slave owners never informed their slaves. December 18, 1865 months after Lincoln's assassination & more than three years after the release of Lincoln's proclamation, word spread and the declaration was officially enacted. ***Those officially emancipated people, thinking slavery was the way they were condemned to exist, continued to live in bondage tho they had been declared free men & women since fall of 1862.***

*12 Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.*

Grk '*castrate*' in Asia Minor cult of **Cybele** where priest self imposed castration – **Eunuchs**—since Judaizers were so intent on circumcision to please God why not go as far as cults in their devotion—proving the point that extreme legalism has no value in bringing a person to the true & living God. Cults more devoted than Judaizers but in wrong way. Sincere but sincerely wrong

**MacArthur** If, like the pagans, they believe human achievement can earn divine favor, why don't they go to the pagan extremes of self-mutilation, like the Cybelene priests?"