

# JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: LIVING IN FREEDOM  
SERIES: GALATIANS

## BIG TRUTH: JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

1 Corinthians 9:19; 1 Peter 4:10; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; James 2:8

## BIBLE VERSE: GALATIANS 5:13

*"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another..."*

## BIG IDEAS

- Our freedom is not for our own sake.
- When we are free in Christ, we reject using our freedom for selfishness.
- When we are free in Christ, we love our neighbor as ourselves.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: GALATIANS 5:13-16

## UNITE: LIVING IN FREEDOM

The Unite year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are brought into the family of God- seen throughout the Old Testament as "God's People" and in the New Testament and today as the church (Exodus 6:7; Colossians 1:18). We are set free from our sin to walk in freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1) and use our influence to call others to do the same.

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know...

- True freedom is only found in being a servant of Jesus
- We are set free not to do whatever we want, but to live for Christ



### Every student should feel...

- Grateful for Christ who sets us free
- Convicted of the ways that they are ruled by the desires of their flesh
- Responsible to use their influence to make much of God alone



### Every student should strive to...

- Read through the book of Galatians each week
- Memorize the Bible verse each week
- Deny the desires of their flesh to walk in step with the Spirit



### Every student should want...

- See the ways that they are tempted to pursue self-salvation, and repent of these
- Live for the approval of God, not others
- Help others move out of slavery to sin toward freedom in Christ

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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JESUS SETS US FREE  
TO SERVE OTHERS**BIBLE VERSE: GALATIANS 5:13**

*"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another..."*

**Those who believe in Jesus are set free and called to walk in their freedom.**

*"For you were called to freedom, brothers."*

- Prior to saving faith in Jesus, every person is in bondage to his or her sin natures. This means that we are slaves to our flesh. We follow the desires of our hearts, which choose to fulfill our sin natures and reject God. We are all born this way, following the ruler of this world instead of following God.
- But when we are awakened to the truth of who Jesus is and our condition as sinners, we are ransomed from this bondage and set free. Our freedom comes with a price of Christ's very life, and we are called to walk in this freedom and not to return to following our sinful desires.

**Believers are set free to obey God and live for His glory, not their own.**

*"Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh..."*

- We are set free as followers of Christ to obey God and bring Him glory with our lives. This is our calling and purpose in life. We are not set free to continue living for ourselves.
- When we are set free from the bondage of our sin natures, we are to use our freedom for God's glory by obeying His commands and seeking His glory. Our lives are to be lived in pursuit of Him and making Him known in all the world as we fulfill His Great Commission.

**Believers are to use their freedom to serve one another in love.**

*"but through love serve one another..."*

- Believers can bring God glory by following in Christ's footsteps. When we follow the pattern of His life, we will serve one another in love. When Christ was on the earth, He served others in love. He provided an example for His people in His service to others.
- We are to use the freedom we have been given to serve one another in love. The greatest thing we can do is serve others. This is how we show our love for others. When we serve one another, we show that we love Christ and love people.

JESUS SETS US FREE  
TO SERVE OTHERS**BIG IDEA #1: OUR FREEDOM IS NOT FOR OUR OWN SAKE.<sup>1</sup>****[ THIS ]**

In Galatians 5:13-16, Paul teaches the Galatian believers the truth about what it means to be free in Christ. Freedom is a valuable thing in any culture, but especially in our culture that holds very tightly to independence. When we think of freedom, we think of the ability to live as we desire without being held back by anything or anyone. When Paul taught about Christian freedom, he taught a different way of viewing our freedom. Freedom for the believer comes at a high price. It cost Jesus His life and God the life of His only Son. This freedom is given to those who place their faith and trust in Jesus, yet it is not given for a person to live for themselves and their own pleasure. Freedom is not given so a person can have their “best life now” or so they can pursue wealth and prosperity. It’s given so believers can serve others and love one another as God has loved us. Galatians 5:14 shows us that we are first called to freedom, and we are to use our freedom for the sake of others. Our freedom is purposeful and intentional. It is a gift of grace from God, but not without purpose and intention for our lives.

**[ THEREFORE ]****What are wrong views of freedom that you have held in the past?**

Freedom is usually thought of as the ability to do as one pleases, which means we can satisfy our desires, do what makes us happy, and live to build ourselves up. God gives freedom to His people for higher purposes. Romans 13:14 reminds us to not satisfy the desires of our flesh and to make no provision for them. This is opposite of how freedom is typically understood.

**[ THIS ]**

In Galatians 5:14, Paul teaches that we fulfill the law by loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. This statement comes after he has taught that believers are called to freedom and are to love one another. Our freedom is for the sake of others and not ourselves. This means that our pursuit should be outward and not inward. Our focus should not be how to get whatever we want, but instead, we should seek ways to love others by serving them. When we serve others out of love for God and people, we will use our freedom as God has intended. We will live the lives that God has redeemed us to live. The truth is that no person who has been redeemed can truly find joy apart from fulfilling his or her godly purpose. This means that we must pursue loving and serving others for the glory of God in order to live the lives God has freed us to live.

**[ THEREFORE ]****What attitudes about freedom and how you use it do you need to adjust to align with the freedom you are called to?**

1 Peter 4:10 shows us that God has called His people to serve one another, and He has gifted them for this purpose. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 also reminds us that we are to love one another and to seek ways to show this love. Our freedom from sin is to be used to love one another in service to them.

**How does serving others bring us greater freedom?**

1 John 4:7 tells us that when we love, we are reflecting God. God loved us first, and it is his example of loving us that has given us freedom. It is this freedom that we use to love others by serving them. This brings us even greater freedom because we fulfill our godly purpose and grow up in Christlikeness, which is our calling.

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1. Galatians 5:14: God’s people are called to love one another and to use their freedom to love others as they love themselves.

JESUS SETS US FREE  
TO SERVE OTHERS**BIG IDEA #2: WHEN WE ARE FREE IN CHRIST, WE REJECT USING OUR FREEDOM FOR SELFISHNESS.<sup>2</sup>****[ THIS ]**

In Galatians 5:15, Paul continues his teaching on freedom. Those who use the freedom they have for themselves will end up living self-centered lives. A work of the flesh is biting and devouring one another and even in our freedom, we will be tempted to return to our fleshly ways. Paul warns against giving into this desire and temptation. In order to not live for ourselves, we must reject our flesh. This is what we're called to do daily. Jesus followers are called to die to themselves and to live for Christ. Dying to ourselves means refusing to give into ourselves and walking in humility, putting others first and being obedient to Christ. This is how we can love our neighbors as Paul states in Galatians 5:14. This freedom we've been given allows us to willingly lay down our fleshly desires and choose the commands of God instead.

**[ THEREFORE ]****What fleshly desires are the hardest for you to lay down each day?**

Galatians 5:16 teaches us to walk by the Spirit, and the result is that we will not gratify-- or reward-- the flesh. The things in our lives that we feed will thrive, while the things that we starve will die. When we practice an awareness of the presence of God's Spirit in us, we can more easily starve the desires of our flesh and feed habits that edify. The habitual things that we have done are often the most challenging to let go of, but true freedom is found in dying to them.

**[ THIS ]**

When we reject using our freedom for selfishness, we live for Christ. Our pursuit is knowing and obeying Jesus. This looks like putting others first, loving God with all of our being, which will result in loving our neighbors as ourselves. In Galatians 5:14, Paul states that the law is fulfilled in our loving our neighbor as ourselves. This is because we are naturally lovers of ourselves. Our tendency is to be selfish, yet God redeems us and sets us free from that selfishness. Because we are set free from the hold our sin nature has over us, we are free to love God and others as He commands. We also have the Holy Spirit to help us. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit living in us that we can love our neighbors like we love ourselves. We can reject selfishness and choose selflessness. We will serve others and put their needs ahead of our own. We will sacrifice our time and resources for others. We will willingly put up with people who annoy us or bother us because we love God and love people. God both enables and equips us to do this in the freedom He has given us.

**[ THEREFORE ]****Why is it challenging to die to our selfishness?**

Galatians 5:13-16 shows us that we are selfish by nature, and it is out of this selfishness that we live for ourselves. We reject God and choose ourselves. It's hard to die to this because we love ourselves above all while we are still sinners. God sets us free from this compulsion.

**How does rejecting selfishness bring joy in your daily life?**

Hebrews 13:16 tells us that when we do what is good and share what we have, we do what is pleasing to God. We will have joy when we are pleasing God daily. Rejecting selfishness will please God.

2. *Philippians 2:3: Because God loves us, we can love others and reject selfishness.*

JESUS SETS US FREE  
TO SERVE OTHERS**BIG IDEA #3: WHEN WE ARE FREE IN CHRIST, WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES.<sup>3</sup>****[ THIS ]**

By nature, we are self-loving creatures. We naturally choose to protect ourselves, provide for ourselves, promote ourselves, and love ourselves above all else. Any form of love or selflessness we show is a reflection of God in us. When we are redeemed and walking in the Spirit, we are free to love as God has loved us. This freedom we have in Christ enables us to love differently, think differently, act differently, and pursue different things. Our desires begin to change as we become more and more like Christ, because we grow in our understanding of Him. As we grow spiritually, we are sanctified, and this sanctification makes us less selfish. We can reject our selfish desires and instead choose to obey God out of delight for Him. This leads us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This means we consider them valuable and worthy of our love and sacrifice. We look at them and see someone who is part of us and worthy our sacrifice of time and resources. We are concerned with their needs and even their wants. We are invested in their lives.

**[ THEREFORE ]****Why is it challenging to be invested in other people's lives?**

We are by nature self-focused people, and even as followers of Christ, we can easily focus on our own lives and our own pursuit of Christ. This can lead us to neglect others and their pursuit of Christ. Romans 14:19 reminds us that we are to pursue what brings peace and mutual growth to our fellow believers, not just our own growth.

**[ THIS ]**

The two greatest commandments in Scripture are to love God with all of our being and to love others as we love ourselves. We show that we love God by loving others. In 1 John, this truth is taught as the disciple of Jesus says again and again that if we love God, we will love others. Here in Paul's letter to the Galatian believers, he reminds them that they were called to love their neighbors using the freedom from their sin natures to do so. When we walk in the Spirit, we will love our neighbors. We will sacrifice our time to know them, to help them, and to invest in their lives. We will give of our resources to supply their needs, putting their desires and their lives above our own. We will think of others instead of just thinking of ourselves. This type of living is contrary to living in the flesh and following the ruler of this world. Paul teaches the difference in Galatians 5:13-16 when he points out that walking in our flesh leads to our devouring one another. Walking in the Spirit leads to our loving one another.

**[ THEREFORE ]****How can you give of your time and resources to love your neighbors?**

Romans 13:8-10 unpacks what it means to love our neighbors. We do no wrong to them and we meet their needs. We make sure they have what they need, and this requires that we give our time and resources. To do this, we must think of our time and resources as not our own, but as belonging to God and therefore, belonging to our neighbors.

**How should we identify who our neighbors are? Why does this matter?**

Luke 10:25-37 helps us understand how to identify who our neighbors are. As we understand Jesus' teaching in this parable, we understand that our neighbors are all people. We should love everyone we encounter with the love that God has shown us. We should especially love those who are our fellow believers and consider their needs above our own.

3. Galatians 5:14: God's people are commanded to love their neighbors as they love themselves.