

Study 13
Galatians 5:7-15

1. When Paul writes about the “little leaven leavens the whole lump” what was he referring to and why did he write to the Galatians about this

2. a) Why was Paul persecuted in the Galatian regions for “circumcision”?

b) Why is the cross the polar opposites of circumcision and all it represents?

c) Why is the cross always offensive to people even today?

3. a) What are the common ways in which we can be tempted to mitigate or lessen the offense of the cross when we interact with others in evangelism?

b) In *Galatians 5:4* *You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.* He seems to be saying we are either in Christ with grace totally and against the law. In *Galatians 3:11* *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Yet he writes the opposite about fulfilling the law in *Galatians 5:14 (ESV)* *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Is Paul contradicting himself in this letter? Please explain.

4. The common secular understanding of freedom is based on the concept that we are completely free to do as we please. It is a cherished right enshrined in the constitution of many countries.

a) However, based on this passage is this true?

b) What is true freedom for creatures created in the image of God?

c) How can embracing the concept of grace be distorted as a license to sin?

Case 1

Scott and Diane recently started attending a church that had recently started in their neighborhood which had many of her friends excited for the first time about any church. The lead pastor there preached a refreshing message about the beauty of grace and declared that believers were free from sin. The cross pays for all our sins past present and future hence we are no longer bound by the Law. We do not need to confess our sins anymore. There is no need to feel and grief about our sins. There is no more need for discipleship because when God looks at us He sees the righteousness of His Son. We are destined to reign and if we exercise faith He will grant us all the covenant promises of Abraham and grant us our hearts desires.

So many of their friends burdened by years of guilt were now happily attending church and some were prospering in their jobs and business. They are no longer fussing about their sins or looking toward righteousness because they are done with the Law. It is a curse that is lifted. On the other hand, the pastor had recently become obsessed with the Lord's supper and advocated for it to be done as often as possible as it conveys grace and blessings even good health and success in the job. Some of Diane's friends were doing it several times a day and they testified that it kept their looks fresh and some even claimed to look actually younger.

- a) Discussion Question. What do you think about the teachings of this church? Is it biblical? Can you critique it based on what you have learned so far in the book of Galatians? Why is such a church so popular?

- b) Discussion Question. Many of the couple's friends have felt a burden being lifted and live joyous lives now that they don't have to worry about sin. For the first time they feel free from guilt and their burdens lifted. They condemn the traditional church which had been for years been making them feel bad. Some of them are now more active in church and evangelizing. What do you think about this? Do their stories confirm the truth about this pastor's teachings?

- c) Discussion Question. What do you think about the practice of doing the Lord's supper and repeating the benefits of good looks and health and blessings? In what way is this practice undermining the pastor's preaching on grace? Ref Gal 5:6.

- d) Reflection Question. How do you currently approach God in repentance? How often do you do it? Is it detailed or specific? Do you pray for God to change your ways?

Takeaway

True freedom in Christ liberates believers from legalism and the sinful desires of the flesh, enabling Christians to live out their faith through love and service to others. Salvation is assured by faith in the finished work of Christ, not by human effort or adherence to the law.