

FINDING FREEDOM - GALATIANS PART VI

“JOURNEYING INTO FREEDOM”

March 1-2, 2008

Ice Breaker

When you were growing up, do you feel that your parents gave you too much freedom - or not enough freedom?

Introduction

Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about learning to walk in the Spirit by not giving in to the flesh. In Galatians 5, we began looking at how not to walk in the flesh. Today we shall be talking about how we can train ourselves to walk in the Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit is not something that just happens automatically in our lives, but rather it is something that we learn to do. It is a constant battle for each one of us. Once we begin to learn how to walk in the Spirit, we gain the freedom and empowerment to serve one another.

Worship Thought

Read Ephesians 1:15-23 together and focus on God's provision of power to live the Christian life. Worship God for sending His Son, Jesus and for the Holy Spirit, our teacher, helper, counselor and guide.

This Week's Memory Verse

Galatians 5:16, "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

Life Example

One night when I was 18, a few friends stopped by the house a couple of us guys were renting. They were planning on going to some parties and a club that night and stopped by to say hi. One of the girls still very much enjoyed the wild side of living and was constantly talking her friends into partying with her. The other girl, Heather, was much more refined. She was a nice girl who had held tightly to her morals and truly tried to live a Christ honoring life. When they arrived, I noticed Heather was dressed a little more provocatively than I had seen her before. I could tell she was uncomfortable and embarrassed, so I asked her if we could go outside and talk.

When I made mention of her apparel, I could see that I struck a nerve. Suddenly her eyes filled with tears and she opened up to me. She said she wanted a boyfriend so badly, and had become so lonely she was at a point where she was willing to do anything to have a relationship, even compromising her decision to remain pure until marriage. As we talked, I realized that here was a dear friend of mine, a sister in Christ, who was willing to sacrifice the very gift that God had asked her to present to her husband on the first night of their marriage. We talked for over an hour. As our time came to an end, I could see that she was seriously listening to my warnings, but at the same time she was so taken by the hope of a relationship that she was still contemplating the world's poor imitation of what God had for her.

Whether we like it or not, God has given everyone of us freedom of choice. We can choose our own way and what seems right at the time, doing what we think will satisfy our "needs." Or, we can choose God's ways, which often are more difficult and sometimes even hard to understand. The more we can "walk in the Spirit," however, the more we can see that God's ways are for our own protection and in our best interest.

Key Passages

Galatians 5:16-26

Discussion Questions

➤ **FINDING FREEDOM – WALKING IN THE SPIRIT**

What does it mean to "walk in the Spirit"? Why is it so difficult to do on a daily basis? How does being free in Christ help you walk in the Spirit?

➤ **FINDING FREEDOM – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

As Spirit-filled Christians, we are supposed to bear fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). What kind of fruit are you producing? How can you nourish your spirit to bear more fruit?

➤ **FINDING FREEDOM – FREE TO SERVE OTHERS**

How has God gifted and called you to serve Him and others? In what ways can you develop your gifts for service?

Prayer/Ministry

Invite the Holy Spirit to show you any aspect of the fruit that still needs to grow. Share with the group which characteristic of the "Fruit of the Spirit" you would like to see more evident in your life. Allow group members to pray for one another, to ask that it be developed in their lives. (Depending upon your group size, it may be best to break into smaller groups of 2-4 to pray).

Going Deeper

I. Read Galatians 5:19-21 and list the examples of the "works of the flesh" according to these three categories:

Sexual Sins:

Sins of Idolatry (Putting anything before God):

Personal Relationships:

Examine yourself honestly on the "works or deeds of the flesh" in your own life. Surrender these areas to God and ask the Holy Spirit to begin the healing process.

II. Study Galatians 5:22-23 (See also 1 Corinthians 13 and Romans 5:8). List the fruit of the Spirit according to these categories:

Agape Love:

Interaction with others:

Allegiance to God:

Examine yourself honestly on the fruit of the Spirit in your own life. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to fill your life, to enable you to win the battle against the flesh.

Next Week's Memory Verse

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."