

THE POWER OF GOD ENABLES YOU TO BE FREE TO BE FRUITFUL

JULY 31, 2016

INTRODUCTION

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul begs the believers in Galatia to cling to the freedom Christ gave rather than submitting to the slavery of the law. His letter builds up to Galatians 5:1, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” The rest of the chapter continues this discourse, comparing what it is like to walk in the flesh and what it is like to walk in the Spirit. On Sunday, David encouraged us to serve rather than sin, to step out in the struggle, and to be Spirit-led for success. Let’s investigate how this is accomplished through the Fruit of the Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you define ‘freedom’? Describe to your group a time you experienced the joy of freedom.
2. Read Galatians 5:13-26. Most people want to be free so they can do whatever they want. However, Paul looks at freedom differently. What does he say we are to do with our freedom?
3. Read Galatians 5:14-15 and Matthew 7:16-20. What relationship do you see between these two passages?
4. Read Galatians 5:19-21 and list the acts of the flesh. What warning does Paul give about those who live like this?
5. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the Fruit of the Spirit. Do you think this is the full list? Why or why not?
6. Do you see any significance in the fact that they are called ‘fruit’ (singular), not ‘fruits’ (plural)?
7. Do Christians automatically grow this fruit? If not, how can we cultivate the fruit? (Hint – see John 15:1-8)
8. The first fruit listed is love, which is the Greek word ‘agape’, translated in Strong’s Concordance as ‘love, benevolence, good will, esteem’. The type of love that comes from God is considered ‘agape’ – it involves faithfulness, commitment, and an act of the will – and is beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13. Why do you believe ‘love’ is listed first?
9. Do you show love as Christ loved you, or do you show love in order to receive something in return?

Study Questions for Community Groups

10. What comes to your mind when you hear the word, 'joy'? Is there a difference between the joy that comes from God and happiness that comes from your circumstances?
11. Are you experiencing joy on a regular basis? Or is your joy dependent on your situation?
12. How would you define peace?
13. John MacArthur states that "the biblical concept of peace does not focus on the absence of trouble. Biblical peace is unrelated to circumstances; it is a goodness of life that is not touched by what happens on the outside." Does this definition change the way you view 'peace'?
14. Isaiah 26:3 states that, "*He will keep in perfect peace all those who trust in Him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord*" (NKJV). How does/should God's Word influence our peace?
15. What does/could God's perfect peace look like in your life?

APPLICATION

Spend time in prayer asking the Spirit to give you opportunities to cultivate His Fruit in your life. Boldly take advantage of opportunities as they come, and share the results with your group next week.

SCRIPTURE

¹³You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. ¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Galatians 5:13-26