



## Pray Together

**Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.**

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

## Read Together

Warren Wiersbe, in his book on Galatians entitled, *Be Free*, contrasts liberty and legalism by saying:

“We are prone to go to extremes. One believer interprets *liberty* as *license* and thinks he can do whatever he wants to do. Another believer, seeing this error, goes to an opposite extreme and imposes law on everybody. Somewhere between *license* on the one hand and *legalism* on the other hand is true Christian liberty.”

So, what is a believer to do with these two extremes? How is one to reconcile these differences between the Law and grace? How does a Christian determine his or her *way of life* with regard to license and liberty? Paul addresses these extremes in chapter 5 of Galatians, admonishing believers to *stand firm and not submit again to a yoke of slavery*. The legalistic *way of life* will require stressing and striving for perfection in one's own strength. The liberating *way of life* will require trust and surrender to the Holy Spirit's working and leading. In this week's lesson, we will explore God's *way of life* for us and discover that the *law of love* is not only the linchpin that unites grace with freedom, but is also the golden rule of faith and practice in everyday life.

## Discuss Together

**Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.**

- Read Galatians 5:1-15. What “yoke of slavery” was Paul referring to in verse 1, and why was it burdensome? In verse 3 what does Paul say about keeping the whole law? Is it possible for a person to keep the whole law?
- In verse 4-6 Paul says that if one attempts to be justified by the Law (and in this case, the law of circumcision), he or she has “fallen away from grace.” Paul is not referring to a person losing their salvation in this verse. (See Ephesians 2:8-9) What is he saying about the believer and grace in this context?
- If a person is living by the Law, he or she is attempting a *way of life* independent of God and completely dependent on their own strength. What does this *way of life* look like? In what areas of your life might you be striving in your own strength—the flesh—and living under a yoke of slavery rather than depending on God's grace to supply your every need?
- Read Matthew 11:28-30. What does this verse say about Christ's yoke? Compare His yoke to a yoke of slavery.
- God's grace is the difference between liberty and the Law, but how does a person live under grace without having a “license to sin” mentality? Give a personal example of this in your own life.



- Reread Galatians 5:13-15. This is the “golden rule of faith.” How does love for others help believers exercise their freedom in Christ rather than satisfy the desires of the flesh, giving them license to sin? (See also Colossians 3:12-14)
- Read Romans 13:8-14. How does genuine love through the Holy Spirit solve relational issues and fulfill the Law according to these verses?
- Read Galatians 5:16-25. The Holy Spirit and His work of grace in our lives enables believers to live free from the Law, yet not succumb to our fleshly nature. We cannot simply will our flesh to yield to the Spirit of God; this is a work of the Spirit. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit”? How is walking in the Spirit accomplished? Give an example of this in your own life.

(Note: The Greek word for walk in verse 16 is *peripateo*, which means *to make one’s way, to progress, to regulate or live one’s life*. It refers to our *way of life*.)

- Because God has written His Law on our hearts and because we love Him, we desire to obey Him. (See Hebrews 10:14-25) Yielding to the Spirit of God is the opposite of yielding to our flesh. Practically speaking, however, what can believers do daily to help the flesh remain in submission to the Spirit? What spiritual disciplines do you practice that feed the Spirit rather than the flesh? (See Romans 12:1-2, Romans 13:13-14, Colossians 3:16-17)
- Read Philippians 2:5-11. Christ Jesus is our ultimate example of the “golden rule of faith.” He loved, served, and gave His life for others. Though He had license and freedom to do whatever He chose, He surrendered Himself to the Father and hung on the Cross for you and for me. How does His unconditional example of love compel you to live in the freedom of His grace, yet fulfill the law of love? How will this impact your life this week?

## How I must obey Christ...

- Examine yourself. As a result of this study, identify a specific area in which you need to obey Christ this week.
- How do you specifically need to obey Christ in this area this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has He proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

## Pray Together

Ask God to visually manifest the Fruit of Spirit that Paul spoke about in Galatians 5:23 in your life this week. Ask Him to give you opportunities to others, in thought word and deed God’s love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

