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Description automatically generated**True Freedom in Grace:**

**A Study in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians**

**Session 11: Building Good News Character**

July 18, 2022 • Monday Night Bible Study

1. **Introductions and Prayer**
   1. Teaser: On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate how much you “sowed your wild oats” as a younger person?
   2. Prayer
2. **Recap: Knowing the Galatians & Greeting**
   1. Galatians — Galatia is a mountainous region in Turkey. The Galatians are mostly Gentiles, wanting to be hard-core for God. Paul was the founder of some churches in Galatia. This letter would have been read aloud in worship at one house-church, then passed to another. Probably written in 50–56 AD.
   2. Themes to watch for — Some Jewish-Christian missionaries are telling the Christians in Galatia that they have to keep all the Jewish Law to be saved. Paul wants to be clear that grace is what matters. Watch for Paul’s distinction between what “keeping the rules” (living by the flesh) can get you, and what following Christ (living by the Spirit) can do for us.
   3. Context — The first part of Chapter 5 talks about the wonderful freedom we have from following Jesus. Now moves to talk about what living the life can look like and how we do it. Chapter 5 is the grand, soaring summary of the letter, bringing everything to a head!
   4. Don’t get overwhelmed by the lists in this chapter! See how the different words group together to see what Paul is after here.
3. **Words to watch for**
   1. Flesh (Gr. *sarx*) the sinful nature, or human frailty. The needs and appetites of the flesh are physical or natural ones—hunger, thirst, sex, ambition, pride. Acts of the *sarx*…will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
   2. Spirit (Gr. *pneuma*) also breath and wind. Fruit of the Spirit…against such things there is no law.
   3. Desires (Gr. *epithumia*) longing, craving. Keller says it literally means “over-desire.” As a verb, longing seems better. Keller adds, “The main problem our heart has is not so much desires for bad things, but our over-desires for good things.”(p. 146)
   4. Gratify (Gr. *teleo*) — to cause to happen for some end result; to fulfill or bring to fruit. Could this sentence be translated, “So I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not make your human appetites and desires the point of your life”?
   5. Passions (Gr. *pathema*) suffering; strong physical desires, passions, feelings or interests!! Appears 16 times in NT, but only 2x is it passions/feelings.
   6. “Live by the Spirit…led by the Spirit.” We know what is right because of the Spirit. We live right by following right.
   7. “Gratify the over-desires of the sinful nature…under the Law.” We need the Law to show us what is wrong.
4. **Reading Galatians 5:16–25**
5. **Questions for Reflection**

Keller asks:

* 1. Which of the works of the sinful nature do you see in your life?
  2. What are the over-desires that cause you to think or behave in these ways?
  3. How will you preach the gospel of grace and acceptance to yourself to undermine these over-desires?
  4. Have we so internalized the grace of Jesus Christ, that our lives are Good News to the people around us?
  5. How can you see the fruit of the Spirit growing in your life?
  6. Do you have natural characteristics which could be confused with the fruit of the Spirit?
  7. What are the idols which need identifying and dismantling in your life? How can you replace them with Christ?

1. **Why does this matter?**
   1. The critical importance of living by the Spirit. Paul writes about the paralysis of the battle in us—will we be dominated by the concerns of the flesh or the freedom of the Spirit?—and how that can lead us to default to our natural selves.
   2. Defining our lives by Christ’s character opens the doors to real freedom, but also constrain us from just acting to please ourselves. In a society that focuses on self-gratification, this can create some cognitive dissonance in us.

**Justify/Right/Righteousness**

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| **Usual English** | **Better English** | **Part of Speech** | **Greek** |
| justify | make right | verb | *dikaio* |
| righteousness, justice | right relationship with God | noun | *dikaiosune* |
| right, just | right (in God’s eyes) | adjective | *dikaios* |

Faith/Trust/Believe

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Usual English** | **Better English** | **Part of Speech** | **Greek** |
| Faith | trust or belief | noun | *pistis* |
| Faith | trust or believe | verb | *pisteuo* |
| faithful | objectively, trustworthy, subjectively, trustful | adjective | *pistos* |