

True Freedom in Grace:
A Study in Paul's Letter to the Galatians
Session 12: Good News Relationships
July 25, 2022 • Monday Night Bible Study



I. Introductions and Prayer

- a. Teaser: When you were a teen, what was one of your favorite musical groups or bands? What was one of your favorite songs? As you are remembering that song, what feelings go with it?
- b. Prayer

II. Recap: Knowing the Galatians & Greeting

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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. The second part of Chapter 5 talks about how to live by the Spirit, and how God blesses that way of life. In tonight's passage, Paul talks about the freedom knowing Jesus gives us to create and sustain healthy relationships.
- d. Watch for how the individual parts are tied together. This theme is the focus of the passage!

III. Words to watch for

- a. conceited (Gr. *kenodoxos*) lit. vain glory; hollow or empty reputation. Keller says, "empty of honor. So conceit is a deep insecurity, a perceived absence of honor and glory, leading to a need to prove our worth to ourselves and others."(p. 159)
- b. provoke (Gr. *prokaleo*) lit. call someone out; competitive and challenging in tone. Keller: "Provoking is the stance of someone who is sure of his or her superiority, looking down on someone perceived to be weaker."(p. 160)
- c. envy (Gr. *phthoneo*) can be wanting something someone else legitimately has, and also not wanting them to have it. Keller: "Envy is the stance of someone who is conscious of inferiority, looking 'up' at someone they feel is above them."(p. 160)
- d. 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.
- e. Spirit (Gr. *pneuma*) also breath and wind. Fruit of the Spirit...against such things there is no law.

IV. Reading Galatians 5:26–6:6

V. Questions for Reflection

Keller asks:

- a. How does your conceit [provoking and envying] show itself in your relationships?

- b. How will having a self-image based on the gospel change the way you see yourself and see others? When do you particularly need to preach the gospel to yourself?
- c. Is there a habitual sin you need to gently restore a brother [or sister] from? Are you willing to listen to others who seek to restore you?
- d. What opportunities has God given you to carry another's burdens?
- e. How is it liberating to know that you will only answer for your own load, and not how you lived compared to others?
- f. And then I add: Keller talks about how living for Jesus—playing life before an audience of One—allows us to live both boldly and humbly. Isn't that how Jesus lived? Can you think of times when Jesus lived boldly? Can you think of times when Jesus lived humbly? How did Jesus navigate the different approaches?

VI. Why does this matter?

- a. This passage takes the sometimes abstract ideas around freedom in Christ, and really brings them home to our relationship with ourselves. Are we listening to what Jesus has to say to us, letting Christ's voice come first? Or is some other voice/recording sneaking in ahead of Jesus' voice?
- b. At the same time, this passage holds our feet to the fire about how we relate to others. Are we looking down on others? Perhaps we need to hear Jesus say, "You don't have to always be better than others. I made you you...and that's good enough!" Do we think others are better than we are? "Other people are not actually better than you. I made you you...and that's good enough!"
- c. Imagine a world in which no one looked down on or put down anyone else. What would be missing? That's God's plan for the world!
- d. Imagine a world in which everyone knew they were loved by God and had value just for who they are. What realities would be possible? That's God's plan for the world!

Justify/Right/Righteousness

Usual English	Better English	Part of Speech	Greek
Justify	make right	verb	<i>Dikaio</i>
righteousness, justice	right relationship with God	noun	<i>dikaiosune</i>
right, just	right (in God's eyes)	adjective	<i>Dikaios</i>

Faith/Trust/Believe

Usual English	Better English	Part of Speech	Greek
Faith	trust or belief	noun	<i>pistis</i>
Faith	trust or believe	verb	<i>pisteuo</i>
faithful	objectively, trustworthy, subjectively, trustful	adjective	<i>pistos</i>