



Free to Love

Galatians 5:1, 13-25 | Session 8.26

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Listen to the song referenced in the Closure section
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Begin by asking questions like:

- In just a few days, many people in the U.S. will celebrate Independence Day. Why is freedom such an important American value?
- What are the disadvantages or dangers inherent in freedom?
- In what ways does religious freedom differ from other freedoms?

Content

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Then ask questions like these:

- Explain what you think Paul means in verse 1: “For freedom Christ has set us free.” What else might we think freedom is for?
- Why does Paul say the Galatian Christians should not use their freedom to return to following The Law?
- What do you think Paul means by “faith working through love?”
- In what ways could we use our freedom in Christ to go back to sinful things?
- Rather than go back to those old ways of life, Paul urges us to “walk in the Spirit.” What do you think this phrase means?
- In what sense has Christ freed us from the urges of our human nature?
- Compare Paul’s lists in verses 19–21 and 22–23. What is the difference, not only in the actions, but in the outcome and the orientation of these things?
- Why would Paul use the image of “fruit” here?
- Summarize Paul’s argument – what is the best way to use this freedom we’ve been given?

Closure

Listen together to Derek Webb’s [“A New Law”](#), then ask:

- It is often said that freedom has two meanings – to be “free from” something, and to be “free to” do something. In what ways do we enjoy these freedoms as Christians?
- When is complete freedom more harmful than good?
- In the context of this passage, how do you interpret the idea that organized religions seem insistent upon making laws that they expect people to follow?
- What religions “rules” or expectations placed upon you are the most difficult to understand or keep and why?
- Why do you think Derek ends his song by singing “do not be afraid?”
- How might we reach people who have turned their back on faith, and people of faith, because they either refuse to be governed by religious rules or they feel that religious people try to stress such rules for others while not keeping them for themselves?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Free to Love

Galatians 1:1-12 | Session 8.22

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Share this trending [video of a parrot](#) and ask:

- When have you have felt exactly like this parrot?
- Fill in the blank: "If I had the freedom to do it, I would ____."
- How do you feel about the comments that go with this video and why?
- What do you think is the difference between being free and having the ability to indulge yourself?
- What does this kind of refusal to leave what is comfortable look like when it comes to someone's spiritual life?

Content

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- In what ways does the idea of being “called” to liberty sound like being awakened?
- Nikki suggests that self-indulgence is not the point of freedom in this scripture. In what ways does Paul express this thought?
- If all you had to go on was this passage, what do you think happens in the process of becoming awakened to the Spirit?
- In what ways does love set the parameters of the freedom we are talking about here?

Closure

Share this [video of people making eye contact](#) and remind the group that

This video “evolves around a simple but poignant theory, developed by psychologist Arthur Aron in 1997: that four minutes of uninterrupted eye contact brings people closer to each other better than everything else.”

Ask:

- What did you see happening in this video?
- Why do you think people were so emotional in this video?
- How did you see people becoming awake and knowing another person in these images?
- What would it be like for a Church to take on an experiment like this?
- Where or how might we start with such a project?

Share this [quote from C.S. Lewis](#)

We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with God. God walks everywhere incognito. And the incognito is not always hard to penetrate. The real labor is to remember, to attend. In fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake.

Pray together to end the session, praying for vision to see the experiences of all those we are called to love.

Writer: Erin Hall



MYSTIC

session page

Free to Love

Galatians 1:1-12 | Session 8.22

Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Materials needed – pen and pencils

Context

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Reflection Activity

Be sure to create a confidential space for people to share. Ask group members to refrain from giving advice, fixing or sharing the content of people's reflections outside of this group time and space.

Invite people to choose one or more fruits of the spirit to focus on for this activity. Tell them to write the words on their paper, and leave blank space around each word.

Invite people to a time of reflection where they consider all the things that "imprison" these fruits and hinder their expression in their lives. i.e. For example, *What are the external and internal things that keep kindness from*

being a part of your living? Write down these “imprisoning” things all around each pertinent fruit so that they surround it.

Invite people to share their papers with the group

Invite people to look at their own papers and silently pray and ask God to free them from the things that imprison the Spirit’s fruit in their lives. Tell them to simply let the prayer be in two parts (note to leader: give people at least 5–7 minutes for this portion of the reflection):

- Ask God to free you from the imprisoning things.
- Pay attention to the thoughts and feelings that God might bring to your awareness.
- Write the words of the fruit you have focused on, on the back of your paper, leaving space around each word. Close your prayer time by simply resting and looking at this fruit, in that space of “freedom.”

Invite people to share with the group any insights they received during the prayer time.

Close with group prayer.

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA

session page

Free to Love

Galatians 1:1-12 | Session 8.22

Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Read aloud [Galatians 5:1](#) then play the [YOUnted States video clip](#) and ask:

- What do you think of the John Adams quote that was being used here and why?
- How do you think our "spiritual experiment in freedom" is going and why?
- When freedoms conflict, who do you think should get to be "right" and why?
- Why do you think we depend on laws to solve things?

Content

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- How do you define "freedom" as Paul may see it, and why?

- What does it mean to be “slaves to the law?”
- What does it mean to be called to freedom?
- If everyone could show love for God by loving people, why would we need laws?
- Why do you think Paul contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit?
- By what means does walking by the Spirit bring us true freedom?

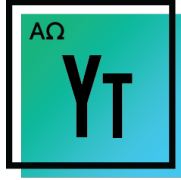
Closure

Listen together to [“A New Law”](#) and ask questions like:

- If a person not a part of church culture asked you to explain what makes your faith different and meaningful, what would you say?
- In what ways might today’s passage been used to either promote or inhibit our freedom as believers and why?
- What does it mean to you to live and be guided by The Spirit?
- How might this scripture serve to guide us in reaching others for whom faith has been stereotyped as “following rules?”

Close with a prayer. If you have time, close with a silent prayer while listening to [“More Like falling in Love”](#).

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH

session page

Free to Love

Galatians 1:1-12 | Session 8.22

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Prepare in advance some index cards labeled with the "Fruits of The Spirit" (see Closure activity).
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.

Intro

Play the [Pharrell Williams Video](#) and ask:

- What images did you like from this video and why?
- What immediately comes to your mind when you hear the word "freedom" and why?

Context

Have everyone stand in the middle of the room and ask them to move to the left or the right depending on their preference, as you read from a list. Give people time to move and share their reasoning for their preference as you read the following list (or a preferences list of your own):

- Coke vs. Pepsi
- Hamburgers vs. Chicken
- Star Wars vs. Avengers
- Nike vs. Under Armor
- Fruit vs. Vegetables
- Flip Flops vs Open Toed Sandals
- Early Bird vs. Sleeping In
- History vs. Science
- iPhone vs. Android
- Brownies vs Cookies

After the activity, ask the group:

- How did you determine what your preference for each would be?
- Which choices were toughest and why?
- When you need to make an important decision, what do you usually do and why?
- How do you feel when someone else makes a decision for you and why?
- What role do you think God has in your freedom?

Content

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- Describe the freedom verse one is talking about: What “slavery” is that verse referring to as the other option?
- In what ways are living by the Spirit and living by your own human desires at war with each other?
- At what points do you think that one wins over the other and why?
- What do you think that it means to be “guided by The Spirit” and why?

Closure

On index cards, list each of the fruits of the spirit (one per card) and lay them out in front of your group. (Optional: Get 9 pieces of fruit and label each one

of the fruits of the Spirit, listed here.) If you have a large group, you may need several sets.

Tell the group:

I am going to read a list of scenarios, after each one, as a group you must decide which fruit best describes the way you should handle the scenario.

Have someone hold up your fruit and explain how it is used. Use scenarios like these or some of your own:

- Someone says something bad about you behind your back.
- A family member passes away.
- Someone wants you to help them cheat on a test.
- You don't want to read your Bible anymore.
- Someone else needs your help.
- You get into a heated argument.
- You don't know what decision to make about your future.
- You know you are in an unhealthy dating relationship.
- You have hurt someone else's feelings.
- You catch yourself in the middle of a bad attitude.

Ask:

- What happens to your relationships when you choose to live this way and why?
- In what ways does living like this help you not to be worried about any law?
- What things make it most difficult for you to exhibit the best fruit when it would be most helpful?
- How might you respond to people who feel that faith requires people to follow too many impossible rules and that many people who claim to follow such rules overlook their own failures to do so?

Close with a prayer. If you have time, close with a silent prayer while playing ["More Like falling in Love"](#).

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX

session page

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Context (From the Youth Session Page)

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Content (From the Mind Session Page)

Read [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

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Closure (From the Current Session Page)

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