

Freed for Slavery

Galatians 5:13-15

Introduction: In Galatians 5:13-15, Paul begins to turn more fully to ethical instruction in this letter: how does the doctrine he has taught translate into living? He began that transition in chapter 5. In the first 12 verses he was hitting one opponent of freedom: the legalists. Now he addresses those who might be taking freedom beyond its biblical bounds: those who would use freedom in such a way that it actually indulges the flesh. He spends many verses to address that issue, but he starts in these three verses with the basic foundation point, which is that:

“Take-home” truth: Believers were freed to become servants.

I. The purpose of freedom: Freedom is not self-focused. (5:13)

A. Freedom is not for the purpose of fleshliness.

1. The flesh cannot become the dominant factor in our lives.
2. Our personal freedom is not the issue—freedom from the Law is the issue.

B. Freedom is for the purpose of serving others.

1. We are free under God’s authority.

2. We are free to serve in love.

II. The principle of freedom: Freedom is not without law. (5:14)

A. The principle of loving your neighbor as yourself is crucial to understanding the ethic of a New Testament believer.

1. If you have love like this, then you will actually have done what is required by the Law.

2. You are not completely free from law as a principle.

B. The New Testament life is not a life free from commands and obligations.

III. The problem of freedom: Freedom wrongly pursued will destroy the church. (5:15)