

LESSON 1

RUNNING FROM FREEDOM

GALATIANS 1:1–10



1 Finish this sentence: “Freedom is _____

2 People talk a lot about freedom, but when can freedom be frightening?



Read the two-page introduction to Galatians, the chart “The Marks of the True Gospel and of False Gospels,” Galatians 1:1–10, and the following notes:

☐ 1:1 ☐ 1:2 ☐ 1:3–5 ☐ 1:6 ☐ 1:7 ☐ 1:10

3 Who were the Galatians? Who were the Judaizers?

4 For what reasons did Paul write this book? What is the central message of Galatians?

5 What was the problem that Paul was confronting? Why did he react so harshly to this particular problem?

6 In what ways were the Judaizers also guilty of distorting the nature and purpose of the law?

7 According to the opening verses, what are the essential elements of the gospel?

8 What might have motivated the Judaizers to teach what they did?



9 What danger is there in trying to combine the law and the gospel in this way?

10 Why would the Galatian believers, many of whom were Gentiles, be willing to live by the restrictions of the law when their salvation had come solely by grace?

The gospel gives us freedom on two levels: (1) We are free from sin's hold on us and its eternal consequences in our lives; and (2) we are free to serve God and others out of gratitude for God's grace. But sometimes our freedom makes us feel uncomfortable. Freedom can be frightening if it seems that we no longer have firm boundaries for our actions. And freedom to serve is of little comfort if we don't feel confident that we are doing what God wants. In the face of such uncertainties, we may be tempted to trade away our Christ-bought freedom for a set of rules and regulations. We should be on guard against those who would have us live according to a checklist of dos and don'ts.

11 Why is it so difficult for us to remember that we have freedom in Christ?



12 Today, what rules have Christians tried to add to the gospel? What is dangerous about these rules?

13 How might these rules pervert the true message of the gospel?

14 Look at the chart "The Marks of the True Gospel and of False Gospels." In what ways does your church exemplify the marks of the true gospel?

15 If new believers or non-Christians visited your church, what rules would they think a person has to obey in order to be a good Christian?

16 If non-Christians heard *you* talk about the Christian life, what rules might they conclude that you have to keep to be a Christian?

17 In what ways do you tend to run away from freedom in Christ?



18 To use your freedom to serve Christ boldly, think of some ways that you could serve God and others. What could you do this week?

A How does Satan do his destructive work among God's people? How can you identify a "work" of Satan?

B Paul's critics charged that he was diluting the gospel in order to make it more attractive to unbelievers. How can we avoid this danger without sliding into legalism?

C Paul accused the Judaizers of trying to win the approval of men. How do we sometimes act to secure the approval of others rather than God? Why is it difficult for us to seek God's approval above the approval of others?

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