GALATIANS 5:1-15

1.	What would you list as the most basic, deep, crucial human needs we all share in common?
* <u>P</u>	Review memory verses: try one you've found most challenging to learn! (1:3-5, 2:15-16, 20) (ray, for He is with you: "God is exalted in His power! Who is a teacher like Him?" Job 36:22 Read Galatians 5:1-15.
	Anding Firm: the inside story Galatians 5:1-6. Note the many times Paul refers to Christ. Christ wants people to truly experience (verse 1a). Jot down a few ways you would define this term (words, emotions, mental images).
	typical person might have a hard time believing this is Christ's desire for them. Yet He's the ry One who "set us free"—at the cost of His own death in our place, on the Cross.
3.	These verses give some basic truths that form our freedom in Christ. Comment <u>briefly:</u> Romans 8:1-3
	Romans 5:5b
	Ephesians 2:10
	Philippians 4:19

Perfect, unchangeable love, security, meaning: we're *given* all our hearts yearn for (all we were made for) <u>in Christ Jesus</u>. We're freed *from* our own futile attempts to find life, and freed *to* live each day as we were created to live—with, through and for the One "who loves us so."

4. Yet—what surprising tendency do we have, revealed by Paul's words in Galatians 5:1b?

It's a struggle—both to accept Christ and then to live in His freedom—because there's a battle going on inside between the enslaving "ordinary way" of the flesh and the freeing truth of the gospel. In verses 2-4 Paul lays out the situation: first, for those who <u>always</u> reject Christ and His grace, who <u>always</u> insist on earning salvation through what they can do—their flesh has won, but they are lost! All Christ is, all He died to provide, is of no benefit to them.

For all who <u>do</u> come to Christ by faith, there is no way to ever lose Him. Paul constantly calls the struggling Galatians *brothers*: their salvation was forever guaranteed when they believed and received the Spirit. But the apostle's message for believers is, we <u>can and do slip back into</u> the old "fleshly" ways of self-dependence and self-rule. When that happens, we can't and don't lose our Savior, but we do miss out on <u>experiencing</u> the great freedom He intends for all His own.

So, we can expect a fight! But these verses suggest ways to stand firm in our precious freedom.

- 5. <u>Don't forget!</u> If we're lured into trying to find security in keeping the law, it's because:
 - a. We've forgotten lessons learned in past attempts to measure up to the Law. <u>In a few</u> words:

Can we pick and choose what we'll obey? (5:3)

What does it feel like, trying to keep it? (5:1b)

What is inevitable, success or failure? (3:10-11a)

b. Most of all, *whenever* we believers take back on our shoulders the futile, heavy burden of securing righteousness and "making life work" ourselves, *we've turned our eyes and hearts away from our true need and true answer*: Christ and His (5:4).

Grace is Christ's limitless, merciful, undeserved loving-kindness and help, for all, in every need.

- 6. Did you need to be reminded today to return your focus to Christ and his wonderful grace? Explain.
- 7. What added insight for your life do you find in II Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul's own testimony?
- 8. In contrast to our old life under the yoke of exhausting self-effort, verses 5-6 show our new life of grace and freedom in Christ. <u>Underline</u> what stands out to you, <u>share</u> in class if you wish
- 5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.
- 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value (counts for anything). The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (NIV, ESV)

Standing Firm: the outer assaults Galatians 5:7-12.

Note in verse 7, the Galatians were *running well* in their faith when they encountered this challenge.

- 9. What does Paul reveal concerning the religious-sounding, flesh-appealing new teaching they'd been hearing? (5:8, also II Corinthians 11:13-15)
- 10. What further danger does he warn of in Galatians 5:9?

There's a lot for us to learn from the apostle's example in this situation.

- 11. He <u>tells the loving truth</u>. But in the final analysis, concerning these fellow believers: a. where is his and our *ultimate* confidence, in 5:10a? (Is it in them/himself/etc?)
 - b. What is he also trusting the Lord to righteously handle? (5:10b)

Note verse 11: the Judaizers claimed Paul really agreed circumcision was necessary for salvation. In fact, he disagreed strongly and was in actual danger for his stance of preaching the Cross alone.

12. The world and the flesh find the Cross of Christ an offensive "stumbling block." Why do you think that is so?

The net <u>effect</u> of the false teachers (those being used by the enemy) was to deflect seekers and believers away from the treasures of love, grace and rescue provided for them at infinite cost on the Cross. To Paul, this was to grind underfoot the sacrifice of the Son and put God's beloved children in harm's way. This explains his blunt, shocking outburst in verse 12 (he refers to a well-known pagan practice in Galatia). He isn't speaking from personal resentment, but from deepest concern, reflecting in a human way the passion of God's heart. (Remember Christ, Matthew 18:6.)

It's good to recall that even as Paul writes concerning the false teachers, he's already openly told his own story of being guilty of the same and worse (Galatians 1:13, 23). He'd gladly share with anyone, whatever their sin, how God personally chased down "the likes of him," overwhelmed him with lavish mercy and grace, and made him a son. And God could do the same for them.

<u>Sta</u>	nding Firm: the choice to love Galatians 5:13-15.
13.	What does Paul call believers to do in verses 13-14?
14.	What do you think our human flesh will tend to do instead?
15.	Optional question: We aren't asked to keep the Law to find God's acceptance. Why might a believer desire to obey His command, to love our neighbor as ourself? (e.g., Galatians 1:3-5 3:26)
loo!	e world looks a lot like verse 15 (please read). It's the last way God's beloved family should k, but as we act in our flesh, it can and does happen. As Paul points us down a <i>new</i> road vard loving servanthood, we suspect (know!) it's a lifestyle that's beyond us, even as we truly ire it. We might easily be tempted to form a <u>new</u> yoke of bondage, trying to "make it happen!
16.	Is this God's desire? No: Paul would point us back to a centering truth in the heart of this passage: "the only thing that counts is expressing itself through love." (5:6)
17.	As you finish up your study, scan back over your lesson. If you wish, share one or two things the Lord brought to light for you that you want to "stand fast in" in the days ahead.
	bassages to come, we'll learn more about our whole new way of life in Christ Jesus. Now in sing, rejoice in the One Who <u>has</u> set you free—and Who <u>continues</u> to set you free.
	I am loved, I am loved; I can risk loving you, For the One who knows me best, loves me most

For the One who knows me best, loves me most. I am loved, you are loved—won't you please take my hand; We are free to love each other: we are loved. Bill and Gloria Gaither