

A wide-angle photograph of a desert canyon landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by layered, reddish-brown rock formations, likely sandstone, showing signs of erosion. In the background, more distant canyon walls and mesas are visible under a bright sky with scattered white clouds. The overall color palette is warm, with various shades of red, orange, and brown, contrasted against the blue and white of the sky.

**GALATIANS:**

**YOU CAN HANDLE  
THE TRUTH**

# Punchline

**You don't have to be a free spirit to have  
freedom in the Spirit of God**





# Recap

- ❖ **Paul wrote to the Galatians**
- ❖ **He taught them the truth but they are turning from it**
- ❖ **He implores them to get back to the truth**

# Recap

- ❖ **Found in the eyes of God**
- ❖ **Stands on its own**
- ❖ **Truth to have faith in**
- ❖ **Truth that makes us children of God**

**It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

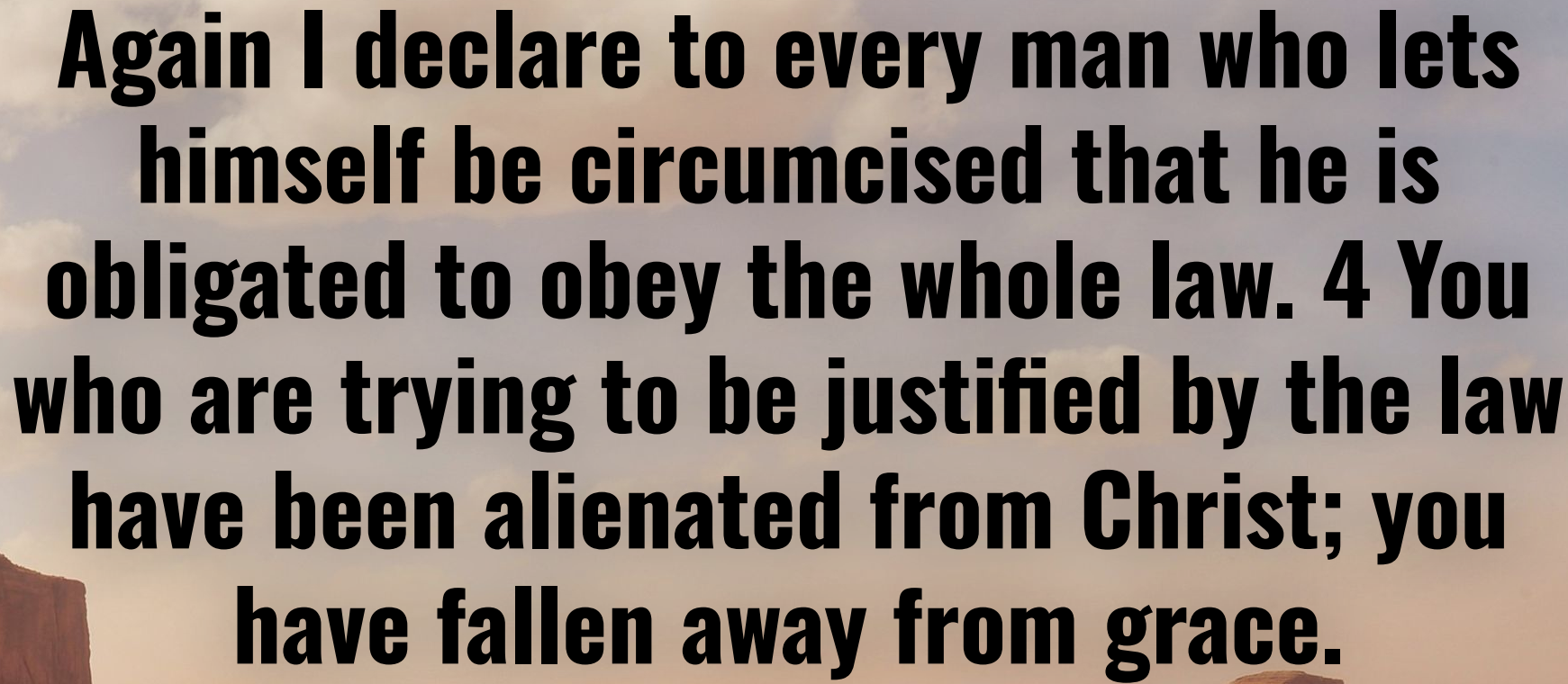
Galatians 5: 1 NIV





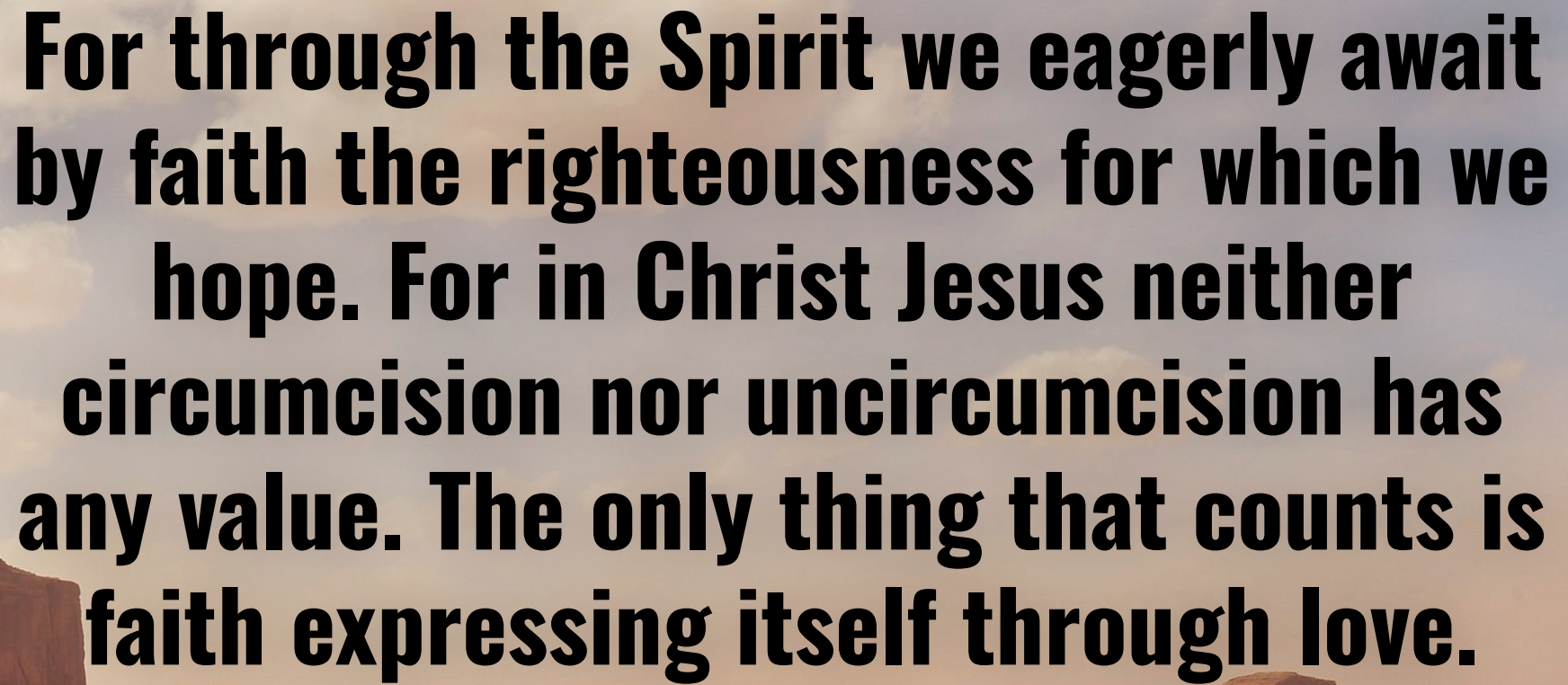
**Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if  
you let yourselves be circumcised,  
Christ will be of no value to you at all.**

Galatians 5: 2 NIV

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape, likely Monument Valley, featuring prominent red sandstone buttes and mesas under a hazy, overcast sky. The foreground shows a flat, reddish-brown plain with sparse vegetation.

**Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.**

Galatians 5: 3-4 NIV

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape. The foreground is a flat, reddish-brown plain. In the middle ground, there are several large, flat-topped rock formations (mesas) and smaller rock pillars. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

**For through the Spirit we eagerly await  
by faith the righteousness for which we  
hope. For in Christ Jesus neither  
circumcision nor uncircumcision has  
any value. The only thing that counts is  
faith expressing itself through love.**

Galatians 5: 5-6 NIV



# Freedom From Obligations

- ❖ **Christ gave freedom**
  - **Not license to do whatever they please, but to fully focus on Christ**



# Freedom From Obligations

- ❖ **The law was full of obligations**
- ❖ **Makes someone devoted to the law**
- ❖ **God wanted their devotion**



# Freedom From Obligations

- ❖ From the outside the law looked attractive
- ❖ The way of Christ might have looked less attractive
- ❖ The way of Christ is WAITING not WORKING



# 75 HARD CHALLENGE

- 45 MINUTE EXERCISE (X2)
- FOLLOW A DIET
- DRINK 1 GALLON WATER
- NO ALCOHOL/CHEAT MEALS
- READ 10 PAGES
- TAKE A PROGRESS PHOTO



# Freedom From Obligation

- ❖ **Free from the obligation to earn salvation**
- ❖ **Free from having to show that we're “good Christians”**



# Freedom To Have Grace

- ❖ **Free to fall INTO grace**
- ❖ **Grace erases the need and reality of perfection**
- ❖ **Don't fall back into obligation, fall INTO the grace of God**

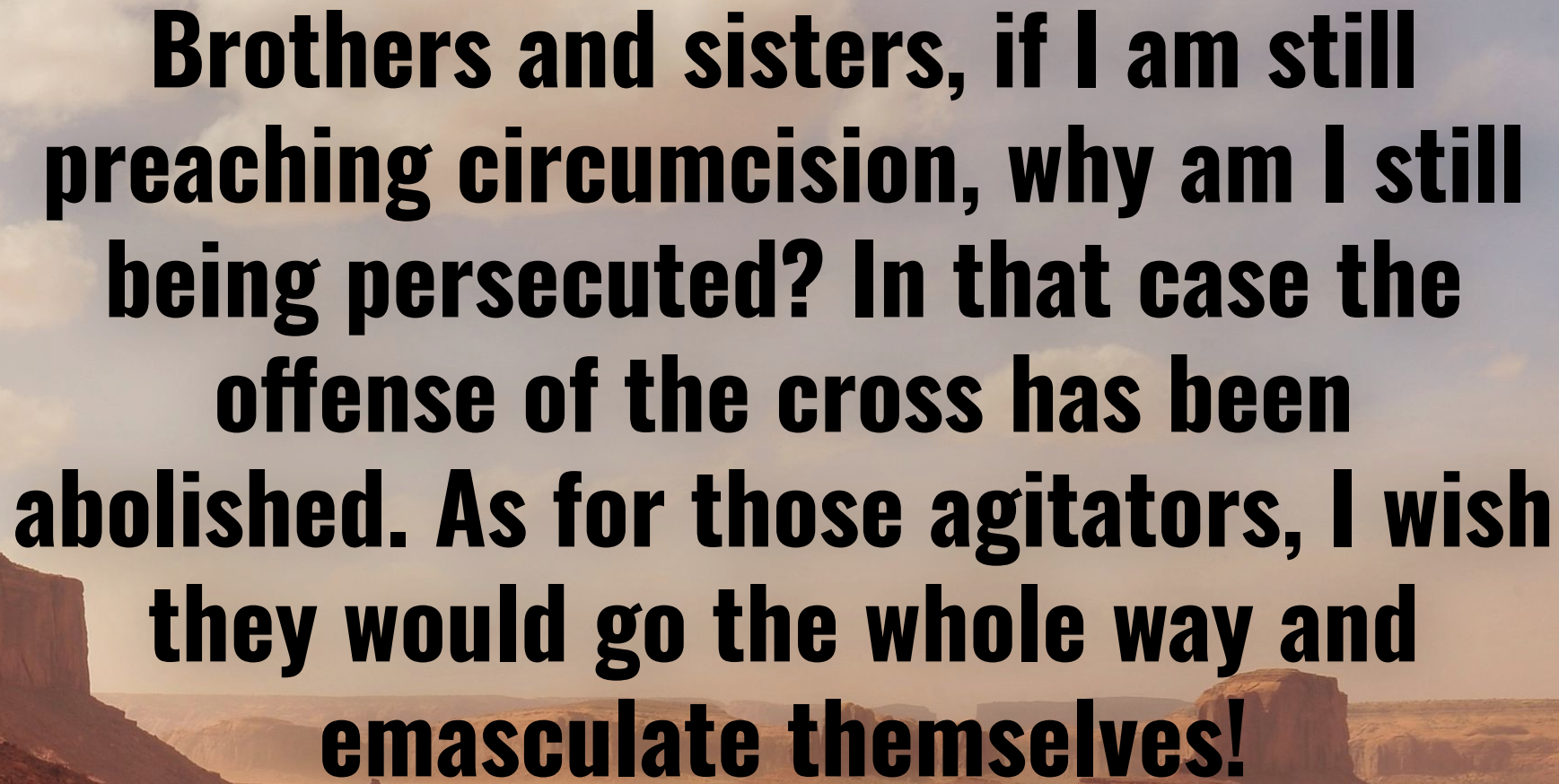


**You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.”**

Galatians 5: 7-9 NIV

**I am confident in the Lord that you will  
take no other view. The one who is  
throwing you into confusion, whoever  
that may be, will have to pay the  
penalty.**

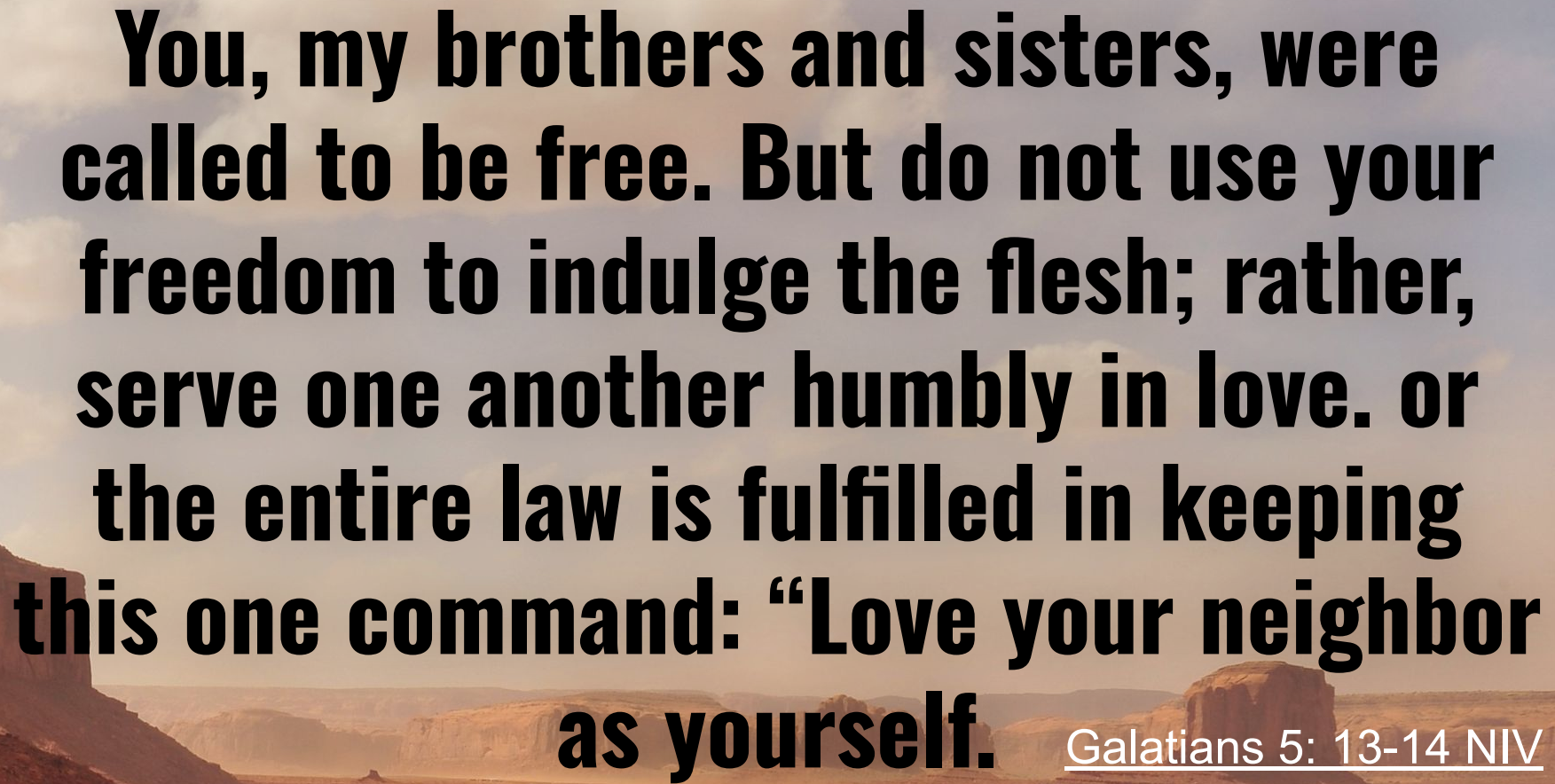
Galatians 5: 10 NIV

A desert landscape with red rock formations and a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!**

Galatians 5: 11-12 NIV



A desert landscape with red rock formations and a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

**You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. or the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.**

Galatians 5: 13-14 NIV

**If you bite and devour each other,  
watch out or you will be destroyed by  
each other.**

Galatians 5: 15 NIV

# Being Held Back

- ❖ Galatians were doing well
- ❖ Someone put obstacles in front of them
  - Mean to trip them up
  - Not from God



# Being Held Back

- ❖ **Paul's opponents are not from God**
- ❖ **They don't share the truth**
- ❖ **This spreads very easily**

# Being Held Back

- ❖ **Paul is livid with his opponents**
  - **Wants them cut off from the Galatians and even God**



# Being Held Back

- ❖ **Paul wants the Galatians free and not held back**
- ❖ **Free from the constraints of the law, sin, and fear**
- ❖ **They are free from being held back**



**JAM WITH THE  
BAND**



**SOLO IN THE  
SPOTLIGHT**

# Free To Love Like Christ

❖ **What holds us back?**

➤ **Time**

- **We have a lot of stuff going on**
- **Be free from being held back by time**
- **Take the time to love someone**

# Free To Love Like Christ

## ❖ Energy

- Don't have enough to give to love
- Let the Holy Spirit be your battery



# Free To Love Like Christ

## ❖ Effort

- Some are a lot of work and hard to love
- We're all hard to love sometimes

# Free To Love Like Christ

## ❖ Vulnerability

➤ **“It’s impossible to embrace someone and protect yourself from them at the same time”** (Brian James McMahon)

# Free To Love Like Christ

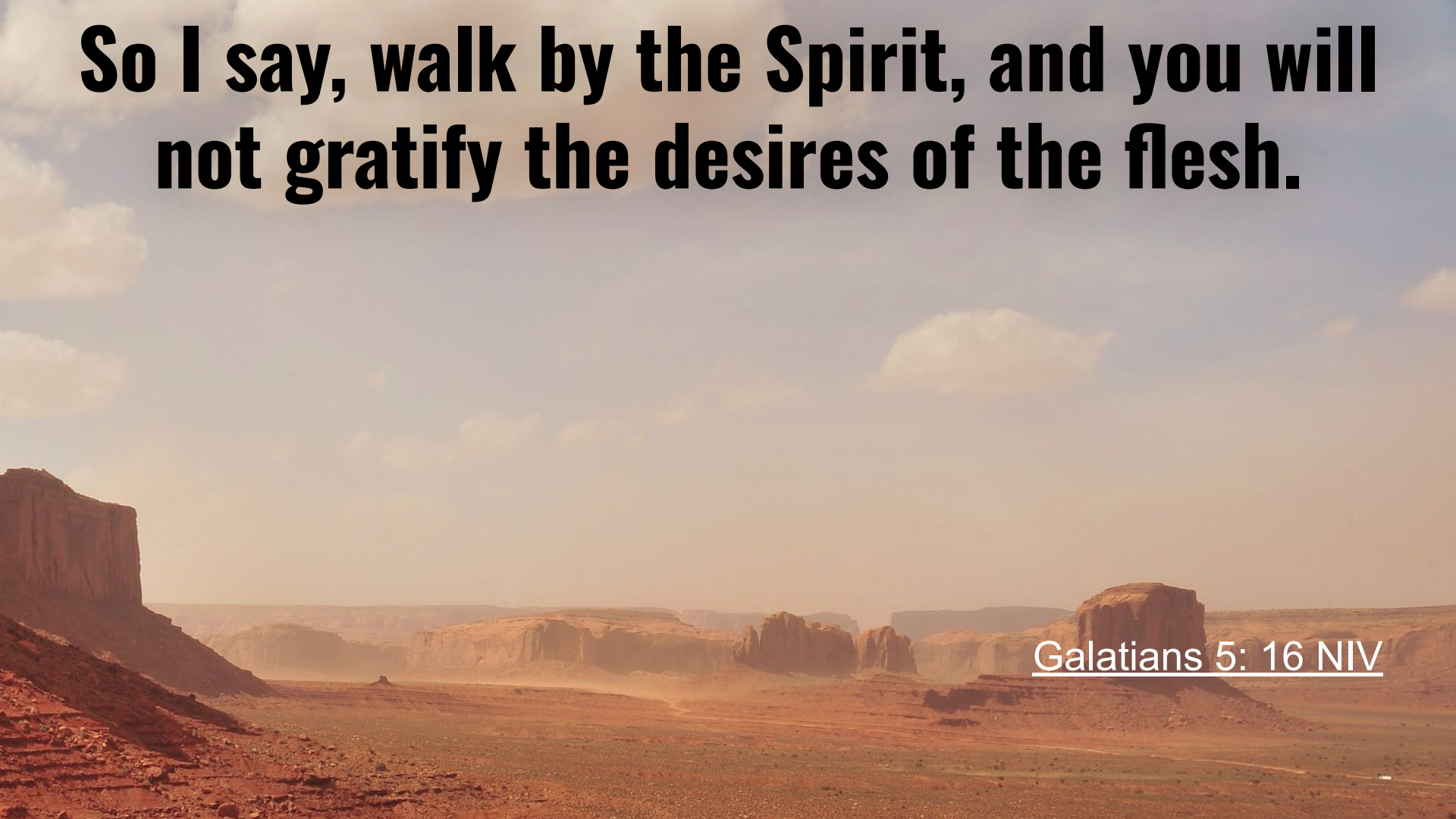
- ❖ **Be free to show your heart to God and others**
- ❖ **Be free from being held back and love like we're loved**





**So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**

Galatians 5: 16 NIV

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape. The foreground is a flat, reddish-brown plain. In the middle ground, there are several large, flat-topped rock formations (mesas) and smaller rock pillars. The sky is a pale, hazy blue with some light clouds. The overall lighting is soft, suggesting either early morning or late afternoon.

**For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

Galatians 5: 17-18 NIV

**The acts of the flesh are obvious:  
sexual immorality, impurity and  
debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft;  
hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage,  
selfish ambition, dissensions, factions**

Galatians 5: 19-20 NIV



**And envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Galatians 5: 21 NIV

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,  
peace, forbearance, kindness,  
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and  
self-control. Against such things there  
is no law.**

Galatians 5: 22-23 NIV

**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

Galatians 5: 24-26 NIV



# Free From The Flesh

- ❖ **Indulgences of the flesh lead to**
  - **Disunity**
  - **Personal struggle**
  - **Crossing spiritual lines**

# Free From The Flesh

- ❖ **The Spirit produces fruit**
  - **Natural and not forced**
  - **Focused on others**
- ❖ **Desires of the flesh are crucified**

# Free From The Flesh

- ❖ **Stay in step with the Spirit**
- ❖ **Don't be envious of demeaning to others**
- ❖ **“We have far more interesting things to do with our lives than tear each other down, each of us is an individual” (Galatians 5: 26 MSG)**





# Freedom In The Spirit

- ❖ **Free from desires of the flesh**
  - **Quick gratifications and things to make us feel good**
  - **Be free from instant gratification and be free to enjoy eternal satisfaction**

# Freedom In The Spirit

- ❖ **Fruits of the Spirit are juicy and ripe**
- ❖ **You are free to produce them**





# Wrap Up

- ❖ **Free from obligation /  
freedom to fall into grace**
- ❖ **Free from being held back /  
freedom to love like Christ**
- ❖ **Freedom in the Holy Spirit**

## Audio file

[Galatians 5 Audio.mp3](#)

## Transcript

So most of you would say no, you're not a free spirit. I looked up kind of what this this means a little bit. According to LinkedIn, a free spirit would be somebody. Your heart is guided by intuition. Your soul yearns for genuine experiences. The opposite from Miriam Webster is a conformer, A follower or an adherent. I would be like many of you, kind of by the book. Logical. Follow the rules. Not a free spirit. That's not inherently bad. Being a free spirit isn't inherently bad either. They're fine. They're just very different. Well, today, we're going to talk about a little different kind of spirit, and it is one that gives us freedom, and that will be the spirit of God today. Think about this. You don't have to be a free spirit to have freedom in the spirit of God. You don't have to be a free spirit. You still have freedom in the spirit of God. We're in week five of our Galatians series. We will wrap it up next week, so let's recap just a little bit quickly before we dive in. We'll be in Chapter 5 today. So Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians, and there's a number of churches in the region of Galatia that it circulated. Too, they were taught the truth of the gospel. Now they're turning away from it. So Paul writes a very passionate letter to say you gotta get back to the truth. You have to get back to the truth. And that's where the title of the series comes from. You can handle the truth. They know it. They need to live by it. So we've talked about how we find this truth by looking into the eyes of God. We also learned that this truth is one that stands on its own. It doesn't need anything added to it, and it doesn't need to be tweaked or tailored. It's what it is in its purest form. It's a truth that we can have faith in, right that we can trust, and we we have faith in it last week that it's a truth that makes us children of God part of God's family, and today it is a truth that gives us. For freedom and that freedom is guided. By the Holy Spirit and quickly as we dive into this about being about freedom, this is not a freedom that we would think about given to us as citizens of a country or anything like that, or a constitutional freedom. This is a very different freedom. It is freedom and Christ which is bigger, better and way more wide reaching. So today we're going to see how being free. In the truth of God keeps us free from some things, but then also frees us up to do some things. So that's what we'll look at today. We'll be in Galatians 5. We're gonna start with versus one through 6 is bookmarked in the Bibles on your table. It will be right up here on the screen behind me. So I will read Galatians 5 verses one through 6. It's for

freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words, I Paul tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You're trying to be justified by the law. By the law, have been alienated from Christ. You have fallen away from grace for through the spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope for in Christ. Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love will stop there. So Christ gave freedom again, that's our focal point. Today, Paul says to take that freedom and hold onto it with everything they have. When the Galatians weren't free, right, they were burdened. They're enslaved. That's where they're going. They're being taken by this false gospel. That is a burden that is an obligation, and Paul wants them to be free. Now, this freedom isn't the ability or license to just do whatever you want to, in essence, be like the free spirit we talked about. But it gives them the ability to fully focus. On their calling and on Christ. List. Here's the issue with the law. The law was full of obligations and not freedom. It would one after the other, after the other. And here's the thing. When somebody would get circumcised out of obligation, Paul says you're under the whole law now. It's not just that one. You don't get to pick and choose, and it's very possible that Paul's opponents conveniently left that part out to the Galatians. So yeah, just do this. No. He's saying you don't get to pick and choose. You're under all of them. And to do that, you have to be fully devoted to the law and puts the focus just on not breaking the law and not sinning. It's such a focus on yourself and your behavior, all the things to. Not do with Paul would probably say God's not primarily concerned with your sinlessness, but with their devotion. Can't be devoted to the law and devoted to God fully at the same time it doesn't work. So the Galatians are at a crossroads with this. And the law way actually might look attractive to them. Because for those of us, I would say not free spirits, it's logical. There are DOS and do nots right there and it makes sense and you can follow them and you can see it. So it might be attractive in that way and the way of Christ might look less attractive on the outside because it's not always easy to see what's coming or what to do and not to do. But that's faith. That we just trust in God and he will guide will be led by the Holy Spirit. When they have faith, when they follow the way of Christ, they're free to see and be led by the Holy Spirit. That's the freedom they have to just trust in that. But that takes devotion and focus on God, but the Holy Spirit also provides embrace, reassurance and confidence. All the things the law can't provide. The way of Christ is waiting to fully realize the joy of salvation when we're with Jesus or we're in heaven, the law is working to try and earn it. Wait for it. The Spirit way is falling into grace through repentance and forgiveness. The law way is falling from grace into legalism and obligation. The spirit frees us from obligations of the law and lets faith be expressed in love, which has way more value than anything else.



Over the last few years there's been this challenge that's gone around online and been out there. It's called 75. And this is supposed to be an overall Wellness and self improvement plan and challenge. And it's supposed to help with physical and mental health. They're both involved and there are a number of different pieces to it. You pick a diet of your choice and you stick to it, you drink a gallon of water every day. There are no cheat meals or alcohol. You exercise twice a day for 45 minutes. One of those needs to be outside. And you read 10 pages of a nonfiction book supposed to be geared towards some type of self improvement, and you take a progress picture every day. And you do this all for 75 days straight. And I'm not here to promote. It. Or knock this plan. OK, now there's a lot, but if you can achieve that, it's great. But here's the kicker with this plan, if you miss even one of those pieces one day, you go back to day one because it has to be straight. That's the idea of the plan. So you get you can get 74 days through, you don't get to start 74 again, you go back to one. There is no freedom to fail. You're obligated to check. Every box, every day, with no grace to fail as Christians were free from the obligations of having to check a box every day, and we are free to have grace and actually free to fail when we do. We're free from obligations. We're free to have grace. Think about the obligations you all have. Work meetings, drop offs, bills. Taxes, grocery shopping. You're free, right? Nah, but you actually not. Don't go to meetings tomorrow. And my pastor said I'm free from going to this meeting now. What I'm saying we're free from God's truth. Of our salvation, we're free to have his grace. We're free from having to check all these boxes to do it. The obligation to work, to earn it. That's in the bank already. Jesus paid that one. Free from the obligation of checking boxes to just show that we're good, Christy. Free from constantly starting over when we screw up, like how we couldn't mess up in that 75 hard challenge. There's no grace to mess up as Christians being free from obligation as having the freedom to fall into grace, to have grace. Grace is super dope because he races the need and even the reality for perfection. It takes the focus of our own actions away because it doesn't matter if we're not perfect, we don't have to worry about screwing up. It allows us to be free to see other. People to see them and be with them because we don't have to be so self focused. If you mess up, confess it to God and then fall into his grace and keep going. Don't go all the way back to start. We don't have to. I'm not saying screw up on purpose, but when you do and we all do, don't fall back into obligation but fall into grace in the truth of God. So we're free from obligation. We're free to have grace. Let's keep going. Galatians 5, seven through 15, you were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. I'm confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. Brothers and sisters, if I'm still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the offense of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they

would go the whole way and emasculate themselves. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh, rather serve one another humbly in love. The entire law is fulfilled and keeping this one command love your neighbor as yourself. If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. Up there. So Paul starts a section with the image of a race, right? They're running really well. They're doing a good job, right? Running well. They have good form, good pace, their knees don't hurt. It's great. Now someone cuts in and puts obstacles in front of them. Imagine running on a track and you come around a curve. And it's supposed to just be a Sprint, and there's a whole bunch of hurdles and different things in your way to trip you up. And the person that put them there is not an assistant coach trying to help you make you stronger. They're literally trying to trip you. They want to trip you up and hold you back. That's what Paul is saying is happening to the Galatians. These opponents are not from God. They're not from God and they sound good. They might seem good. They're motivating. They talk about things like truth and righteousness, but it's not the truth. And it's not the way from righteousness. It can't be from God this way. And part of the problem is how easy this spread. This is the whole yeast working its way through. False teachers will come in and say something, and the students will hear it and take it in, and then in their own way become teachers and teach it to somebody else. And it just keeps going, going and going. So they're teaching this and at the same time. Time. They're also taking shots at Paul as they go. They're saying he's still preaching circumcision. We're not totally sure what they're getting at because he's clearly not doing that in Galatians. But what they're trying to get the Galatians to think is, hey, he's not teaching it here, but maybe over here he was teaching. It was convenient and look good. It's not going to look good to you guys who doesn't do it here. That's what they're trying to get them at. Rightfully so, Paul's not happy about this. He's livid with these opponents. He wants them cut off from the Galatians and quite possibly cut off from God. And he uses strong and vivid language here, but he sees it as an attack on God. Attack on God's people and the church. These opponents of Paul want the Galatians back under control of the law to hold them back. There is no place for someone to hold back followers of God in the church then or the church now. So Paul wants them freed. Free in the right way, free from the constraints of the law, free from the constraints of sin, free from the fear of just sinning, free to act in a way that shows God's love for others, not to attack each other, not to come at each other, but to love. Attacking others is just being held back. So, he says, be free from all of it. Be free from held back, separate from being held back and live out who they are. Live out the freedom and the truth they have and God and live and love. They had to separate from being held back. Thought about that idea of separating from something to to move on. I thought about musicians today, and how many of them used to be in like bands or groups, and our solo artists right there are a. And maybe there are times when being in a band did hold you back and they

just need to go so a little bit bigger and better times and being a band is awesome also. But there's a different look and feel to it, right? Justin Timberlake, solo artist, was in In Sync. Beyoncé, who was Destiny's Child. Darius Rucker was part of the greatest band ever in Hootie and the Blowfish. You had Paul McCartney. Little band called The Beatles. We could go on, but at some point, for different reasons, they had solo careers. They wanted to let maybe more of the musician in them come out. As Christians, we need to break free from things to really show who we are in Christ. We need to break free from things that hold us back from loving like Christ would love. So we're free to love like Christ. Thing is, we are first loved by Christ undeservedly and unconditionally, and we are free to love others in that way. So let's think about what holds us back from doing that today, not so much how to love somebody or how to serve somebody. We've done that before, but what holds us back from doing it? So I'm going to give three things that I came up with. The first one is time. It takes time to love. Love is an action. Love is something we do that takes time. I'm not going to look at all of you and start to say, yeah, I know you guys all. Got a ton of. Free time? We're not. We're all busy people. I believe that we have a lot of stuff going on. Just hang out with a friend on Monday and he's like what you guys got coming up this month and I just ran down the list of all the things we have. And I was like, wow, there's a lot happening. A lot of it's. Good, but it's a lot of stuff. Like May is like this double stuffed Oreo right now. That's what it feels like. OK, here's what we need to do. All of us take that double stuffed Oreo and make some of the filling, loving others like Christ. If you don't love a double stuffed or you'll pick a different cookie, it just works anyway you do it. OK, don't make time a constraint. Or something that holds you back time is a valuable asset today. So many people will say that I've started to believe it's also become one of the biggest hindrances we have because we never think we have enough. We're held back from things. I'm like that. I don't have time for this. I don't have time for. This. That's something we got to kind of help ourselves to get past. Be free from being held back by time. God will help you get done. But you need to get done. And what I've discovered when I actually allow God to help me with this is that kind of. Puts in perspective. What I really need to do, and maybe stuff I thought I needed to do, wasn't quite as important. So then take that newfound freed up time and use it to love someone. So time is a constraint. Second constraint. I'm gonna cheat. It's actually 2, but I'll call it the EE. The first one is energy. Energy can hold us back. Don't feel like enough energy. I just don't have it in me. You're tired. You're stressed. You're just plain spent. Because we have to take care of ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually to have energy to love, it takes energy. Fill yourself with the Holy Spirit every day and let the Holy Spirit help be that battery that gives you some energy to love. Also, many times loving actually fills us. We have to give to love somebody. But when we do it from an honest and authentic place many times it also fills us right back up. So for yourself from not having the energy so you can fill and be filled, the 2nd is effort takes effort to love



somebody. Some people are a lot of work and are really hard to love. There are some people that you don't like. We're called to love them. There are some people that you'd rather tear down that we're called to love. There are some. Thought we would just like to be better than. That we're called to love, Paul cautions us. And all this, not tearing down and this is The thing is, it's hard, but we're all hard to love sometimes. There are people that don't like us. But we are loved by God first and we love because he loved us. So be free from the mindset of not wanting to put in the effort to love somebody, love with the freedom and in the way God loved you first. Final one is vulnerability. We can't open or we open ourselves up to love. And when we open ourselves up, it puts the possibility in play that we will be hurt and we have a friend named Brian James McMahon will actually be here to preach in a few weeks. Just plug that real quick Memorial Day weekend. Please be here. That Sunday, he's amazing, and he's gonna talk here, but he. The quote that he says it's impossible to embrace someone and protect yourself from them at the same time. So think about opening up to embrace and your arms go like this. So you open yourselves up. So maybe you've been hurt before when you opened up to love. Or maybe you're nervous about it. Now, and this is a normal and understandable feeling. I feel it. But The thing is, God will see our hearts. He knows when we're honestly trying to love, and he will provide the comfort and protection no matter what happens. So be free to show your heart to God and to others. This is not. Easy, but be free from the fear of vulnerability. Be free from being held back and love like we're loved. Last section, this is 5:16 through 26. So I say walk by the spirit. You will not gratify the desires of the flesh, for the flesh desires what's contrary to the spirit and the spirit. What's contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, \*\*\*\*\*, and the like, I warn. You. As I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. All right. So he says. Walk by the spirit. Walking was how people got around, but it also denoted a lifestyle. So walking by the spirit. Was a spirit LED lifestyle a spirit lifestyle? And Paul is saying it's not possible to do that and indulge in the flesh. And we talked about the flesh he's saying sinful desires. It's not possible to live a spirit lifestyle and indulgence and full desires and be bound by the law. The spirit kind of takes us away from the law, free from the law and makes us free with the spirit and the Holy Spirit. Again protects and loves, unlike the law. And it does it through faith. So Paul kind of breaks down the flesh versus the

spirit. What comes of it? And the first part is indulgences of the flesh lead to things that cause disunity, things that push people away from each other drive a wedge between. Indulgences of the flesh are also personal struggles, things that as easy to get carried away with Overindulgent urges and desires that quotes, you know, some is good, more must be better, or nobody's looking or have just one more of these types of things. And then he gets into crossing spiritual lines, really idolatry and witchcraft and other gods, and Paul's day. This was a big, big thing. There were multiple guys people could pray to today. It could look like a lot of things new age or crystal readings or Ouija boards where thing. When I was younger, that type of stuff. Basically it's trying to hedge a bet or find another way that if it doesn't work through God, maybe it'll work through this way. So following the flesh, when you do this and indulge in, these is almost like they're puppeting you because they control and there's no room for the Holy Spirit in them. So Paul's like free from that, be free in the spirit because the spirit produces fruit. The section is famously known as the fruits of the spirit, and the fruit is naturally produced, right? It's not forced or mandated, not a law or a rule that can force it. Nothing can come down and say grapes. You have to grow. Here or faith? You have to come out. This is just produced by living with the spirit. It's a byproduct. And many of the fruits focus on others and offering grace, kindness, gentleness, and patience. The flesh creates the opposite of those. And then love again, we talked about the last section, but a deep full of grace, more than emotion, pursuit of others kind of action, no law can combat these fruits or rule against them. When following the spirit and producing fruit, the desires of the flesh are crucified, and this is big language from. All because it invokes destruction, but that's the level it's at for Paul, because he's clear that these fleshy desires and living in that way, where an enemy of the gospel, so he's like, we gotta get rid of them. He's like, begs them to stay and step with the spirit, focus on the spirit serving others through the fruit that is produced. Saying not being envious of others or chatting others, or trying to be better than them. Right. That's what that last verse encourages. 26 does let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. I love the way that the message translation by Eugene Peterson hits that verse. It says we have far more interesting things to do with our lives than tear each other down. Each of us is an individual. So produce the fruit and do the interesting things. Avoid the stuff that comes out when we follow the flesh. When we tear each others down, we want to produce something good. This one was a was ripe with a cooking illustration for me here. So we want to produce something good. I want to make good food. When I cook. Right. So here's a pan. Alright. A picture of a pan. There's a lot of things happening in that pan. One of them is shrimp. I made shrimp on Thursday. I wanted to make a Thai chili shrimp. Here's the thing. I wanted a nice seared shrimp. But I have a tendency to put too much stuff in a pan. I overcrowd the pan and I put a lot in there, and if you cook, you know. When you crowd your pan, it doesn't cook as well. It doesn't get as hot. The food is less desirable now when I

don't overcrowd the pan, I get that nice seared shrimp that's juicy and delicious, but crowding the pan is appealing. I get more done, I get it done quicker. Giving in to the desires of the flesh is like overcrowding your pan because there's a lot of them and they seem really appealing. But putting all that in there only produces something undesirable. Being free from that and only having the Holy Spirit and the pan is producing good quality food. That's the fruits of the spirit. So be free in the spirit, be free from the flesh and produce good fruit. So we're free from the desires of the flesh. These are desires that make us feel good. But there are also things. If we think about it, we tend to want to hide from God, and oftentimes these are quick gratifications or feel goods. They're great in the moment, but then later make us feel pretty guilty. And they're different for all of us, but they can tend to creep in when we're vulnerable. We're vulnerable when we're doing great because we can drop our guard. We're also vulnerable when we're having a rough time. We just want to feel better and we think I'll just do this just one time. What will it hurt? But many of us know that one time leads to another time. It becomes a pattern. So we break free from these vices. We want to break free from instant gratification and be free to enjoy eternal satisfaction, because we'll always be satisfied. Jesus, we break free from the fleshy desires and stay focused on Jesus. We are free to naturally produce the fruit of the Spirit, it's a byproduct of being free in the spirit. And fruits of the spirit are juicy and ripe, and they don't spoil. So allow yourself to produce them. And I think that's the key. Allow yourself the freedom to produce them because you can. You are free to do it and they're there when we follow the Holy Spirit, allow yourself to be patient. Allow yourself that self-control, cut the weeds and the thorns of your life and let that fruit grow. Let it show. You're free to produce fruits of the spirit, and they come from having freedom in God. So take advantage of the freedom we have in God, free from the obligation to have to save yourself and be free to fall into grace. You don't have to earn everything or prove anything. Live freely, and fall into grace when you mess up. Free from being held back from living out the freedom you have in God, we are free to love like Christ, free to let that love show to others and not be held back. By anything else. And we have freedom in the Holy Spirit. The ability to be free from desires of the flesh that lead us away from God, free to produce the fruit of the spirit fruit that cares about others and honors God. Being able to do that is true freedom, and that freedom is found only in God. So whether you're a free spirit or not like we talked about the beginning, it doesn't matter because you have freedom in the spirit of God. Let's pray. God, I thank you for this morning again and for these words in this chapter. I gotta thank you for the freedom that we have in you. For the freedom that we have in your gospel, God, in our relationship with you, that that we're free from having to save ourselves, God and that we're free to have grace and that that doesn't run out. We didn't deserve it. We don't earn it, but it's there for us whenever we need it. And I think that we're free. From being held back. And it's hard. It's hard to not be held back. But I thank you that we're free to love



others like you loved us. And I pray that we would remember that you loved us first, and that's why we love others. I gotta thank you that we're free to. Produce those fruits of the spirit. Got to really let you show through how we act that we can all do that. As difficult as that is at times and in life. God, that's what you've called us to do. And that when we stay in step with you, when we seek you, when we're with you, that comes out. So God, we thank you for that. And I thank you again that we have freedom. In your name, Amen.