

Free to be Series

“Free from Religion”

Galatians 3:1-14

Free from performance evaluations.

Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

Galatians 3:1-4 (NLT)

Free through Faith.

Example: The Holy Spirit

I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

Galatians 3:5 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit is a Gift.

Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But -

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Titus 3:3-6 (NLT)

Example: Abraham.

In the same way, “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, “All nations will be blessed through you.”⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

Galatians 3:6-9 (NLT)

Abraham was saved by his faith.

Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!”

And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Genesis 15:5-6 (NLT)

Free from the curse.

But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law.” So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, “It is through obeying the law that a person has life.”

But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:10-14 (NLT)

“Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.”

Deuteronomy 27:26 (NIV)

“If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree, the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung is cursed in the sight of God.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23a (NLT)

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Romans 3:20-24 (NLT)

SO WHAT?

Free from Religion.

Religion is a cultural system of behaviors and practices, mythologies, world views, sacred texts, holy places, ethics, and societal organisation that relate humanity to what an anthropologist has called "an order of existence". (Wikipedia)

Free for Relationship.

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12 (NLT)

Growth Group Questions

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. Do you look forward to or dread performance evaluations?

If you have ever had to do performance evaluations for others, do you enjoy or dread that? Why?

2. Tell of a situation where you felt like you didn't measure up to expectations. What happened and why did you feel that way?

3. Re-read Galatians 3:2-3. What has been your experience with the Holy Spirit? (when did you first sense the spirit in your life, how does he continue to influence you, etc.)

Did you feel like you had to be good enough to receive the Holy Spirit in your life?

4. Re-read Galatians 3:10-12. How is salvation by faith alone different from so many other religions?

Do you think people have a hard time accepting salvation through faith by grace? Why or why not?

5. Re-Read Romans 3:20-24. Even though the law can never save us, how can we use the Law benefit us? How can the law help us to grow?

Why is legalism appealing to some people?

6. How can you embrace a new way to enjoy simple relationship with God this week?