

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtmwebsite.org Today's Date: July 6, 2025

Live As Free People

by Dan Trygg

“Unto freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not be entangled again in (or, 'hold yourself within') a yoke of bondage.”

Galatians 5:1

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only not the freedom unto an opportunity for the flesh, but by means of the *agapē*-love serve one another.”

Galatians 5:13

“Live as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as servants of God.”

1 Peter 2:16

“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of corruption/rottenness; for by whatever a person is overcome, to that he/she has been enslaved.”

2 Peter 2:19

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Christ came to set us free. He came to liberate us from the power of sin (Rom. 6:6), the obligation and requirement of the law (Rom 7:4-6), and to enable us to serve God and other people with a good and honest heart in the power of the Holy Spirit. **He came to free us from the vacuous emptiness of a life without God, and fill us with the joyful transfiguration of His life flowing from within ours** (Eph. 4:17-24; 2 Cor. 3:4-18). He came to redeem us from the vain, useless, and unprofitable habitual patterns of life we inherited from our families, and our culture (1 Pet. 1:18). He delivered us from the authority and legal claims of the devil (Col. 1:13; 2:13-15; Heb. 2:14,15). **He came to free us from the conforming pressures of this world system, so that we could live a life of radical transformation** (Rom. 12:2).

Notice that **Galatians 5:1** describes this liberation as a past, completed action. ***We were set free! It was accomplished, ...finished, ...done!*** The price *was paid!* That's what Jesus proclaimed from the cross, ***“It is finished!”*** The Greek word is *“Tetelestai”*, which meant “it has been completed, ...paid in full” (Jn. 19:30). It was what a creditor would write on a bill, once the full payment was made and the debt was retired. **Galatians 5:1 says that Christ has set us free, ...it is done..., ...but, there is a warning! “Don't be entangled again in a yoke of bondage.”** Even though we *have been set free*, it is possible to once again be entrapped, entangled, and caught up in things that could bring us into bondage. **This could be the sinful desires of our old nature, or the familiar patterns of our past ways of thinking, or habitual behaviors. Or, it could be unprofitable religious practices that are powerless to change us, but others insist are the way to find or maintain freedom.**

In Galatians 5, it was the latter, ...the rituals and legalistic expectations of other religious people. This can come in many forms, but essentially **religious legalism will divert our attention from what Christ has done and can do for us, and in us. It directs our attention to our own efforts to be righteous.** We are convinced that our status with God is based upon *our performance*, not *His working* for, in, and through us. The sad reality is that this mindset actually severs us from the inworking grace of God, and Christ will be of no benefit to us (Gal. 5:2,4). We will get what we are trusting in: *our own abilities* instead of *God's*. **While there may be a veneer of outward righteousness for a time, eventually the reality of SELF-effort will become readily apparent**, either by fleshly appetites or self-centered arrogance. The works of the flesh, described by Paul in Galatians 5:19-21, are the inevitable results of human effort on its own.

Note that Paul exhorts us to “stand” in the freedom. The verb tense is a present imperative, which would be translated as “keep standing” or “stand and be standing”. **We are to “stand firm” in the freedom, and not allow ourselves to relax into familiar patterns that would entangle us, once again.** In the context of Galatians 5, the “familiar pattern” would be the old religious legalism of Judaism. **The word for “be entangled” could be more literally translated as “be held in”.** It could be understood as a Greek middle voice, where the subject is intensely involved in doing the action, but it limits or affects him or her. That would be translated as “don't (for yourself) hold in.” In other words, **instead of standing firm in freedom, the subject is choosing to limit him or herself to the familiar pattern. Instead of following liberty, the person is choosing conformity.** Instead of being willing to step forth in freedom, he or she chooses to stay within the norm. **The person is choosing compliance, instead of transformation. Instead of “standing up” in freedom, he or she chooses to sit down within the expectations of others, i.e., to “be held in”.** Because of fear of disapproval, or lack of confidence, they “hold back”, and do not step forth in freedom.

We were called to freedom, ...but some pervert the message of freedom. They turn liberty into a license to do what they want. They teach that we are no longer under the requirements of the Law, and God's grace covers our sins. Paul encountered such people. They were actually saying, “If grace is given to cover our sin, ...and where

sin increased, grace abounded all the more..., then we might as well sin, so that there will be even more grace, and God will get the glory for being a God of forgiveness” (Rom. 5:20-6:1). The apostle Paul was horrified at this line of thinking! “May it never be!” **Jesus came to free us from sin, ...not for sin!** Most people have not come up with such a developed idea, ...but, in a practical sense, **they are operating as if their sin does not matter. They simply assume that God will forgive them, ...they presume upon His grace. Of course, sin does matter! It is damaging, destructive, and has very real consequences!** Jesus did not free us from all the consequences of sin, ...especially the natural consequences that follow selfish, fleshly behavior here in this world. It can lead to brokenness, shame, bondage, and even death, ...both for ourselves and others. **Spiritually, it can damage our intimacy with God, and dulls our sensitivity to His Spirit. Our hypocrisy can dishonor the name of Christ, and drive people away from Him.**

Some false teachers promise their followers freedom, while they themselves are caught up in the bondage of corruption. Those who follow such people will often eventually become like them. **Notice what the scriptures say, “By whatever a person is overcome, to that he or she has been enslaved.”** We see religious leaders who are caught up in the pursuit and bondage of materialism and covetousness, ...even promoting religion as a means of gain. **They are preaching a false gospel.** Along with their wealth often comes pride, arrogance, and self-promotion. Many are caught in bondage to drugs, or sexual immorality. Jesus said that those who would genuinely continue in His word would know the truth, and the truth would set them free from slavery to sin (Jn. 8:30-36). **Somewhere along the way, such preachers wandered away from the truth, and they became deceived and enslaved. Jesus said that we would know the false teachers by their “fruits”** (Matt. 7:15-20). Do they look and act like Jesus? Do they carry themselves and treat others like Jesus? Are they serving others with *agapē*-love, ...with self-sacrificing practical actions that benefit that other person? Are they accumulating money and power for themselves, or are they using their resources to help others? Are they serving others, or expecting others to serve them?

The liberty that is in Christ frees us up from things that hold us back. We are empowered and encouraged to love others with love that comes from God. We are freed from the consuming selfishness that confines the hearts of other people, and we find a desire to open our hearts to others. **We are free to empathize and care about others.** We discover new promptings to reach out and help others. Because we have come to know God's love and care for us, we find ourselves willing to invest in others. Love is an action word, a verb. **The *agapē*-love of God frees us from fear and unhealthy self-restraint. We find a new ability to take action to care about someone else. This is freedom!**

This freedom comes from the Holy Spirit. He gives us new life (2 Cor. 3:6). He leads us to do things we would not have otherwise done. **As we respond to the Spirit, we find new liberty in our lives.** It is His working in us that enables us to turn away from the fleshly patterns of the past. The desires of the flesh are familiar, but there are *new desires* that come from the working of the Spirit in our lives. These desires are opposed to each other (Gal. 5:16,17). We must choose, ...and **the good news is that we can choose to follow the desires and promptings of the Spirit.** The apostle Paul wrote, **“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!” What kind of freedom? Transformational freedom!** As we ponder/reflect the glory of the Lord, ...His character and goodness..., we will be changed from the inside-out to become like Him, transfigured and transformed by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17,18). You will notice that we have a part to play in this process, and the Spirit also has a role. **For our part, we are to fix our attention, our “gaze”, our thoughts and our contemplation on the glory, majesty, and radiant goodness of the Lord.** This could be learning more about Him, pondering Him, worshiping Him, and conversing with Him, but **it also implies reflecting Him and His goodness back to the world around us.** It's like we are watching for His heart, and we express what we see of Him back to the people and circumstances around us. **As we do that, the Holy Spirit transforms us. He radically changes us. As we align with God's heart, and give expression to His leading, something happens inside of us, and we become more like Him.**

We were called to freedom, ...and Christ has set us free..., so Peter exhorts us to “live as free people”. Don't let yourself be hemmed in by old patterns, ...by the expectations of others, ...by fleshly temptations, ...and don't use apparent “freedom” in one area as a covering for some hidden enmity, corruption or ill-will. Put all that negativity and small-mindedness aside. **It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Pursue it. Embrace it. Let it challenge and stretch you. Rise up into it!** Allow God to renew your mind, expand your heart, deepen your faith, and enlarge your vision. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Ask Him to reveal more of Himself, so that your love and faith would grow, and you find greater ease in trusting Him with new things.

Freedom is your CALLING. Freedom is your DESTINY. Push out the walls! Pull out the stops! Let God lead you into FREEDOM, ...freedom to love, ...freedom to serve, ...freedom to reveal Jesus in fresh ways!

And Freedom is a growing process. I heard today that even butterflies need to learn how to fly!