February 15/16, 2014

Study Questions
Standing Firm
Free Indeed: A Study in the Epistle of Galatians
Galatians 5:1-12

Opening Discussion

1. What is and is not legalism? Are rules? Which rules? Is there an organization or individual that doesn't have either spoken or unspoken rules or convictions? Is that legalism?

2. Can two people be doing the exact same thing outwardly where one is operating out of legalism and one is not? Explain?

3. In your experience, is legalism typically clearly spelled out or more something unspoken but clearly understood or felt in a particular culture?

4. Is it safe or conservative to have a little legalism just in case? Why or why not?

Bible Study

1. Read Galatians 5:1-6: What is the "freedom" Paul is referring to in 5:1? What are believers free from? Is this freedom based on our performance or on what Christ has done for us? Why does this distinction matter?

2. What is the "yoke of slavery?" Compare Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. Why would the Jewish legalist view the "yoke" as a good and necessary thing? What would be the parallel to this thinking in today's church culture?

3. The phrase, "keep standing firm" is a command. That makes legalism disobedience. Compare with 5:7. Why is this important to understand? Do legalists consider themselves more or less obedient to Christ?

4. What is Paul saying in 5:2-4? What does he mean by "the whole law?" What gives the legalist the authority to cherry pick what laws matter and which ones can be ignored?

5. Is the real distinction between the world religions and Christianity (broadly defined) or between those who believe they are justified by works and those who believe they are justified by grace? In other words, does the legalist under the banner of the "Christian Church" have more in common with pagan religions or with grace-based Christian Churches?

6. According to 5:5 what are true Christians waiting for? What is the basis for this hope?

7. Read 5:7-12. Explain the leaven illustration. Can someone remain just a "little" legalistic? Why or why not?

8. Why does Paul get so graphic in 5:12? How is this similar to your answer in question #5?

Application

1. The key to freedom is in believing what is true. In practical every day terms what does it mean to be set free according to this text?

2. What are some practical ways to continue to "stand firm" against the deceit of legalism?

3. Would you say that you personally are living more in the truth of 5:1, 5 or 5:7? Are you living in freedom or has someone hindered you from running the race?

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