

Read: Galatians 5:1,13-24

Free to Follow Christ

Galatians 5:1,13

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. 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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is summertime! A time for kids to be “free” from school and excited for vacation time with family and friends. Some kids spend months dreaming about summer—what they might do and with whom they might do it. Then, finally, they are “free”! But not too long into summer, excitement deflates like a balloon. The words “I’m bored” begin to be mumbled. Children become restless because they don’t have something to do all the time. They begin to get annoyed with their siblings. Maybe there’s an argument over nothing. Perhaps it leads to physical actions—poking, bumping, hiding things from each other. We have all been there. Summer freedom isn’t always what we dream it to be.

Today’s devotion began, “It is for freedom that Christ has set you free.” There are two reactions to being set free. One is, “Let it all hang out!” The other is, “Oh, behave!” One is accompanied by an attitude that says, “I’m free to do whatever I want.” The other is so afraid that people who have been set free will go crazy, it sets up more and more rules to get people to behave. Both reactions come with this warning, “Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Thinking there are no rules or that keeping certain rules gets you really close to God is not freedom. That’s a burden. That’s slavery.

But there is another way, a better way! It is a way of living that happens only by the grace of God. First, he performed a miracle when Jesus set us free from slavery to our sinful nature. Then, he set us free to live for Jesus by the working of his Holy Spirit who set up a new attitude inside every believer.

Now, we are free to love and serve God and others as he would want. We are free to sing our praise, and it doesn't matter whether we are a little off key. We are free to pray to God, and he's not going to say, "Call me later. I'm busy." We are free to give to others without worrying, "I might not have enough for myself." We are free to be nice and to love other people even if they don't expect it or deserve it.

This summer, celebrate your freedom to follow Christ!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Explain in your own words what it means to be “free.”
- Today’s devotion was about being free. Who sets us free? Free to do what?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Agree or disagree. Jesus set me free to do whatever I want.
- Today’s devotion encouraged, “Serve one another humbly in love.” How might that love look when serving a sibling? A parent? A friend?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- List examples from today’s Bible reading (Galatians 5:1-6) of how you might make decisions that show love to others before yourself.
- Why is “freedom in Christ” so hard to live out on our own? Which person of the Triune God helps us live it out?

Closing Prayer:

Loving God, we praise you for your selfless love and are amazed at your acts of kindness for us. Thank you for the freedom you won for us. May we use our freedom to love and be of help and support to everyone. We pray in the name of Jesus our great example. Amen.