

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Freedom

March 12 & 13, 2022

You are not a prisoner to fear or guilt or shame. You are not a prisoner to the failures of your past. You are not a prisoner to the hamster wheel of trying to earn your sense of worth. You are a child of God, so live like it!

SCRIPTURE TEXT: GALATIANS 3:1-5, 13-14

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

For centuries people had tried to walk a fine line of obeying rules and regulations to earn God's favor and avoid God's anger, but in Jesus they were set free from all of that. St. Paul, who pastored so many of those early Christians, found that pattern disturbing. Not only did he grieve that people were rejecting a life of freedom for a life of bondage, but in Paul's mind to rely upon the law to earn God's love and favor was a denial of the Gospel itself. And so, Paul wrote letters to those early Christians to set them straight and to call them back to freedom. Paul's reminding those early Christians that the new and joyful life that they were experiencing didn't come from obeying the law, but by entrusting themselves to the Good News of God's love revealed in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. "Why", Paul says, "would you ever return to a life of bondage to fear when you've already tasted the freedom of the Gospel?"

Imagine someone languishing in a prison cell, and suddenly someone comes along and unlocks the door and says, "You're free." Stunned, you walk out of the prison and step outside. You feel the sun on your face and feel the wind in your hair. It's glorious! And then you turn around and walk back into your cell. That makes no sense, does it? And yet that's what the Galatian Christians were doing. Rather than living in the freedom of God's love revealed in Jesus, the Galatians were returning to the prison of trying to earn God's love by obeying the law.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does freedom mean to you?
- How does this passage from Galatians reveal our freedom in Jesus?
- How have you found balance in obeying the laws and embracing the freedom we do not need to earn?
- Through God's grace, we are free from the imprisonment of guilt and shame. How does that make you feel?

APPLICATION: This week, pay attention to your "shoulds". Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand why you "should" do something. Is it driven by guilt or shame? Or will it breathe life into you? Dwell in that freedom.