

Sunday May 3, 2026

Galatians 5:1-5

30 minutes

@ FGBC

Galatians: Unlocking Freedom Series

### What are You Focused On?

- When you are going about a day to day task, what do you focus on?
  - o Do you focus on the task at hand or do you focus on something else, while completing the task at hand?
    - Most of the time our focus is on what we should or shouldn't be doing, but that can sometimes get us in trouble.
      - I have never worked in the food services industry, but I learned a lesson from the food services industry a while ago that changed my life.
        - o If you are carrying a drink you don't focus on the drink, but you instead simply walk.
          - When you focus on the drink you are bound to spill.
          - When you simply walk with drink in hand not focused on the drink that is filled to the brim, more often than not you will not spill.
        - Or imagine that you are going for a run...where are looking while you are running?
          - o Head down in front of you at every step you are taking?
          - o Ahead in the distance at where you are going?
- As we dive into Galatians 5, we have no choice but to acknowledge where our focus lies.

### READ GALATIANS 5:1-5

- What are we focusing on?
  - o Are we focused on obedience to a certain set of rules (such as circumcision)?
  - o Or are we focused on a pursuit of Christ?
- The right answer is answer number 2...yes, absolutely I am focused on a pursuit of Christ.
  - o But so often our focus tends to turn back to the rules...am I acting the way that I should?
    - Am I doing the things that I should?
    - Am I obeying the rules and laws that I should obey?



- Since we don't talk about circumcision often in our day to day conversations, apart from time spent in church, let's switch gears a bit to something that maybe makes a little bit more sense in our day to day lives.
    - Naturally most of us tend to be people who enjoy doing stuff.
      - Working, reading, watching TV, play video games, gardening, fixing, we travel, we do things with our families, we doomscroll on our phone...we do all sorts of things to fill our time.
      - When it comes to spirituality...following Jesus...that doing remains true as well
        - Reading our Bible, praying, worshiping, going to church, serving, helping out, we join a small group etc.
          - None of these things are wrong and I would recommend that everyone in this room makes these things a part of their day to day life practices.
            - These are spiritual disciplines...practices that when we live them out, open the door for God to reveal himself to us.
    - I remember reading a story about a guy who had to take a cross-country flight once, and he walked onto the plane and sat in his seat and did nothing.
      - He didn't have a phone, headphones, a book, an e-reader...nothing.
        - This guy was either completely crazy, or he was simply content with being instead of occupying his time doing something.
    - The essence of **doing** is that we need to accomplish certain things and certain tasks in order to earn our keep.
      - The essence of **being** is that we simply need to exist and there is nothing that we need to do to earn anything, including salvation.
        - If I am being honest, I would prefer to be able to do stuff to earn my "salvation" so to speak because then I can "control where I am at."
        - Being requires a deep trust that God is God in the midst of my imperfections and desire to do things to appease God.
          - Faith lies at the heart of being.
- Scripture lays out some lists of what following Jesus might look like.
  - Galatians 5:22 – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

- Matthew 25:35-36 – feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, invite in the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit those in prison
- Micah 6:8 – do what is right, love mercy, walk humbly with God
- Isaiah 58:6-7 – free those who are wrongly imprisoned, let the oppressed go free, remove the chains that bind people, share your food with the hungry (don't just feed them out of your abundance, but join them in eating that meal), shelter the homeless, give clothes to those in need, help your relatives
  - As I was reading those lists, the doers in this room were processing and saying, “Check, check, done that, done that, haven't done that one yet...”
  - I read a commentary this week that said, “Humans, like the Jews of Paul's day, are chained to a treadmill of religious ritual.” (*The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1976 Eerdmans, pg 1101)
    - Our desire is to do the good things.
    - But the nature of these lists throughout scripture is not that we treat them as to do lists, but we put our faith in Christ, trusting that Father, Son, and Spirit will form us in the image of Christ so that we are not just people that do good things, but are those things.
      - The goal isn't that I love my wife, but that I am a person who is formed by Christ such that love for people...not just my wife or people that I like...love for people becomes who I am.
      - Back in my Manitoba days I had a friend who ended up making a few bad decisions and ended up in prison and on a couple occasions I made the trip to Winnipeg to go visit him...the goal isn't that I can now say, “I have met my quota of visiting people in prison” but that I become a person who desires to see abundant life formed in all people (prisoner or not) and I use the time that God has given me to love, care for, and visit people.
  - To be is to be formed as people who are Christlike...like Christ.
    - It's kind of like when you meet someone for the first time and you exchange pleasantries, you know their name and their job and that's about it, but you can see Christ in them...there is something about that person that you can't help but say, “They know Jesus because they look like Jesus.”
      - I did a funeral yesterday and after the service all of the people that know each other are talking and I am standing there sort of awkwardly, talking to a few people, and then a lady comes beside me and we start talking about various different things.
        - She ended up asking, “Are you part of a church.”

- The reason she asked this question, she said, is not because she wanted to evangelize, but she saw something in the way that I talked and shared about the deceased that caused her to think “This guy kind of looks like Jesus...not perfectly, but kind of.”
    - These people that we meet who act and conduct themselves in a Christlike manner and show gentleness and grace is how I imagine Jesus would conduct himself if he was walking beside me today.
      - Have you met someone like that before?
    - If our focus is obeying a part of the law, which is what circumcision represents, then Paul says, you have to obey every part of the law...you can't pick and choose what you want to obey and what you don't.
      - And then you mess up and break the law, you are in trouble.
- Instead of focusing on the rules and laws, Paul says, “Christ has truly set us free...we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.” (Galatians 5:1,5, NLT).
  - How many of you are okay with waiting on God?
    - This is a question I posed in my notes prior to Friday evening and the reality of this question hits home.
      - Am I okay waiting on God in the midst of the uncertainty of 1600 Johnson St.
    - This isn't a passive waiting, where we simply sit on our couches as much as we possibly can and do nothing.
    - It is an active and eager waiting where we continue to live our lives and go to our jobs and care for our families, while using the gifts God has given us to serve the Church and love our neighbors and communities, and in moving forward day after day we look for God to reveal himself in real ways to us.
  - As we focus on the author and perfecter of our faith, our lives become ordered with the things that God loves.
    - God loves community
      - Father, Son, and Spirit are a loving community of the fullness of God.
      - God has instituted the Church to be the meeting place of the Kingdom of God in a lot of ways, and so if God loves the church, then when we focus on Christ, we too should love the church.
        - And now we are buildingless, but in some ways, who cares?
        - God has got us because we are the Church.

- God loves people...not just people who love him back, but all people...if God loves people, then naturally, as I focus on Christ, I will hopefully come to love people too, even the ones that I don't like.
      - Our goal as followers of Jesus is to seek the righteousness that God has promised to us.
        - Our goal is to seek life everlasting and to live in the midst of an abundant life.
    - Almost 2 decades ago, Brandon Heath wrote a song entitled "Give Me Your Eyes."
      - The chorus is a bold prayer that I think is a prayer worth praying...it is a prayer that causes us to ensure that our focus remains on what matters most...Christ.
      - I want to pray this prayer over us as we conclude our time together and then we will spend some time in worship as the worship team leads us to the throne of God as we sing together.
- God, give me your eyes for just one second.  
 Give me your eyes so I can see  
 Everything that I've been missing  
 Give me your love for humanity.  
 Give me your heart for the brokenhearted  
 The ones that are far beyond my reach  
 Give me your heart for the ones forgotten  
 Give me your eyes so I can see.
- God, give us your eyes for just one second.  
 Give us your eyes so we can see  
 Everything that we've been missing  
 Give us your love for humanity.  
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 The ones that are far beyond our reach  
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 AMEN