



08.15.10 / Galatians 5:1-15

**Materials Needed:** none

### Opening Activity

Ask children if they have ever played basketball before, and to describe how someone scores a point for their team. Talk about how sometimes points are scored from behind the three-point line, and sometimes points are scored from right underneath the basket. Someone who is shorter and smaller might score better from farther away, while someone who is taller and bigger might score better under the basket. Some teams might prefer fancy jerseys with their names on them, others might all wear the same kind of sneakers to promote team unity. But the end goal is the same – to get the ball in the basket, right? At the end of the game, it's the score that determines the winner – not the way that the baskets were scored. It wasn't important what kind of strategies were used, or what color uniforms the players were wearing, or what types of shoes they had. There are many different opinions on the best way to win a basketball game – that's what makes it fun to watch! Tell the children that this is similar to what we are going to talk about tonight - some people that had the same goal (following Christ), but were very different in the way they went about their lives.

### Read Galatians 5:1-15

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves! For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

### Question 1

Fill in the blank . . . To be a real Christian, you have to have faith in Christ, and also \_\_\_\_\_. *Nothing! God's love and forgiveness is freely given, and all we have to do is accept that gift, having faith in Jesus!*

Paul wrote to the church in Galatia because some people were telling them that in addition to having faith in Christ, you had to follow the Jewish ritual of circumcision in order to be a Christian. Paul told the Galatians that Christ had set them free from sin, from death, and from requirements that might earn God's favor. In other words, if we want to be saved, we must simply have faith in Jesus, and there is NOTHING else we need to do!

### Question 2

Can you think of things you try to do to make God love you more? Share these with the group if you're comfortable doing so. *Allow the children to answer.*

Jesus loves you completely and fully already, and there is nothing you can do or need to do to make Him love you more. In fact, He loved you before you ever loved Him, and He knows you better than you know yourself!



**Discussion**

Does this mean that it's OK for us to do whatever we want, even if it hurts others? Of course not! In 1 Corinthians 10:23, Paul says, "Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial." Living in freedom certainly doesn't mean continuing to sin – that's what Christ freed us from! It means the opposite – we are free to NOT sin. We are free to stand firm in God's promises that He will take care of us and guide us on the right path.

**Wrap Up**

As you close in prayer, pray that God will give you the strength to trust Him and what He has done to save you. Ask Him to show you where you try to do things to make Him love you more and to remind you that He already loves you more than you can possibly imagine. Pray that this will bring you closer to others in the Christian community, and pray also for wisdom and a true understanding of what it means to be truly free in Christ.