



**LC STUDY GUIDE**  
**Done in Sync with the "MORE" Series**  
 The Passage: Galatians 5:7-18  
 For Life Community usage the week of 6/7/15

**Preface:** The LC year is winding down and this is one of our final gatherings on a year focused on community. Our study today focuses on the difference the Holy Spirit makes on community, especially during times of conflict.

**Today's Big Idea: The Holy Spirit gives us freedom to love one another.**

**Galatians 5:7-18**

7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." 10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. 11 Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. 12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

13 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. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

**Context:**

One of the challenging pieces to the rise of Christianity was to discern which practices and traditions to include from Judaism and which ones Gentile believers would not need to practice and yet still be identified and included in the Christian community. The issue that Paul is addressing here is circumcision. Jewish believers continued the practice, but Gentiles who came to faith did not see it as a requirement. After Paul left Galatia (his first missionary journey), Judaizers had become leaders in the Galatian church and were teaching and applying pressure on all believers, Jew and Gentile, to adhere to Mosaic Law, including the practice of circumcision. Galatians is likely to have been written a year to a few months before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-30) which would address the Jewish-Gentile controversy.

**O** – These 9 verses contain a pattern and are a representation of Paul's message to the Galatians. What do you notice about his tone? How do you describe his passion?

**O** – Paul is trying to address the confusion, confront them on their errors, and he also had some strong words for the agitators (v. 12). What key theme does Paul use to help them clarify their confusion?

*(The key theme is the freedom the Spirit gives. When we understand the freedom we've been given, we discover that we not bound by law and tradition, but are free to worship God, serve humbly, and love others.)*

**I** – As Paul states, our God-given freedom can be used in many ways, ranging from controlling one another to serving one another. How does this key piece of teaching help the churches in Galatia navigate their Jewish/Gentile circumcision conflict? Understandably, circumcision is an uncomfortable topic to discuss in mixed company today. Feel free to contextualize to the issues of today.

*(Notice that Paul tells them to use this freedom to serve one another, as opposed to using the Spirit's power to convince the "other side.")*

**A** – Today, every church, every Christ-following community, deals with challenges. What differences/distinctions come to mind among today's believers? How does the message contained in 5:15-18 help to inform and guide us?

**A** – Paul equates our flesh to our prideful sinful desires and encourages his readers to walk by the Spirit where there is freedom. We often make the mistake of thinking that freedom is found in better data, feelings, etc., but Paul is clear about where that freedom comes from. How does this change/shift our life practices/thinking in where we find and live in freedom?

**Prayer together:** Let us pray that we as followers of Jesus would allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, in our LC, and in our church for the glory of the Father.

**Text notes** (you can access biblical texts via [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com)):

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single night.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.