

Living Free Galatians 5:1,13-15

Freedom, it's what we celebrated with parades and fireworks this 4th of July. Freedom, it's what makes this Nation so unique. In a sense, it's what brings us here today. Our freedom of religion allows us to gather and worship without fear of reprisal.

How would you define FREEDOM? Are you living free? Or do you feel like a prisoner?

As Americans we love to celebrate Independence Day, to boast our freedom before the whole world. While we celebrate our freedom, the Apostle Paul offers up a precautionary word about using our Freedom. Paul basically calls us to live free!

I. Beware of the _____

A lot of us live a life of Faux Freedom, like faux leather...its not real. We have accepted our freedom in Christ and the freedom we have in this country but we've allowed ourselves to become ensnared and enslaved to habits which have slowly stolen our freedom.

We have to Beware of The _____ of life if we want to be LIVING FREE which Christ offers. As Paul says in a modern translation, "Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you."

II. Satisfy, Don't _____

Second we're called to Satisfy, _____. Actually what he said was, "do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another."

The reason Paul reminds us to "Love our neighbor" is because of this Mutual Responsibility we have for one another. Especially for those who may be struggling with some aspect of life or faith. Or may have a weakness we don't know about.

We must take care not to confuse this freely offered liberty for license. The long list of what Paul calls in Galatians "fleshly works" is what results when we let our freedom to ... become freedom from.

III. Love as you have been _____ Love as you _____ to be loved

Serve One Another in Love (v. 14) – Circumcision had been the mark that identified Abraham's descendants as God's covenant people. Paul suggests a new mark that seems to be consistent with Jesus' teaching in Mark 7, "nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean,' ...rather it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'" Christ's followers were supposed to be recognized for the way they lived, rather than for the customs and ceremonial laws they had observed.