

The Epistle to the Galatians
Lesson #20 • Galatians 5:13-18

“Life in the Spirit”

Part 1 of 3

• H A N D O U T •

► Now in Part 1 of “Life in the Spirit” Paul turns to the *practical* matter of how the Lord wants His people to live the Christian life and how to walk in His Spirit.

This study reveals one of the major reasons why the Judaizers were so avidly *against* the idea of salvation through Grace and not by works. Simply stated, they were convinced that Believers who abandoned the Law and trusted only in God's Grace would become unprincipled, and morally depraved. They feared that Grace, through Faith, without the discipline of the Law, Believers would not, nor could not, be sufficiently strong to resist the ethical debauchery of paganism. **In other words: without the restraints the Law provided, their behavior would become so licentious that it would be deemed unacceptable by anyone's standard who were trying to please God.**

Although Paul has spoken about Believer's freedom in Christ several times in this letter, Paul has not, as yet, actually defined this **freedom** in pragmatic terms, nor has Paul outlined how God expects the Believer to deal with the ethics of life. So, Paul begins this part of the journey by answering the concerns of the Judaizers and to succinctly define what it means for the Believer to have Freedom in Christ. This is the first of a three-part discussion.

Paul begins by addressing it from a negative point of view: what Freedom is NOT!

Galatians 5:13 • You, my brothers, were called to be free. But, do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Q: In the preceding Lesson [#19], Paul berated the Judaizers, ending with his statement that he wished these “agitators” would emasculate themselves. Other than the strong language, how is the tone of this opening verse different?

Q: What is the warning that immediately follows the statement of freedom?

Q: When Paul speaks of man's “sinful nature” what exactly does he mean?

► The Greek word that is translated as “sinful nature” or the “flesh” is: _____

Q: Paul tends to use a lot of comparative and contrasting language to make his points. In this verse, what is the contrasting phrase Paul employs with this warning?

► Paul contrasts _____ with _____

Q: The word “serve” in Greek is “douleuete.” It's from the root word “slavery.” What is ironic about Paul choosing the root word for slavery to describe how we are to serve one another?

Q: How would one define the differences between: [1] “being a slave to sin” [2] “being a slave to the Law” [3] “being a slave to one another?”

[1] BEING A SLAVE TO SIN:

Psalm 51:5 • “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”
Romans 7:15, 21-23 • I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. I have discovered this principle of life -- that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

[2] BEING A SLAVE TO THE LAW:

Romans 3:20 • No one can ever be made right with God by doing what the Law commands. The Law simply show us how sinful we are.
Romans 7:10, 12 • So I discovered that the law's commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.
James 2:10 • For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

[3] BEING A SERVANT OR SLAVE TO ONE ANOTHER:

John 15:12 • This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.
1 John 4:7 • Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
John 13:34-35 • A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Galatians 5:14 • The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Q: Throughout this letter Paul has consistently argued *against* the sufficiency of the law and ardently defended the gospel of grace. Now, he suddenly seems to be arguing in favor of the Law. Is this a contradiction or perhaps an attempt to compromise in order to silence the Judaizers?

Q: What does the phrase “summed up” mean?

- 1.
- 2.

Matthew 22:39-40 • "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

► In verse 14, Paul used “Peplerotai” as a _____

Q: Since the Gospel teaches salvation can only be acquired by Grace through Faith, how are Christians to view the Law?

Galatians 5:15 • If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Q: What do the words “biting” and “devouring” tell us about the strife that was present in Galatia?

Unfortunately, quarrels and strife within the Church Body was not new for Paul ...

1 Corinthians 1:10 • I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 • Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Q: Paul warns the church about “biting and devouring” each other. In what way is there a link between being “free in Christ” and the problem of “biting and devouring” in the church?

Q: Overall, are there practices in our churches today that could lead to biting and devouring, and which ultimately could threaten our Christian Liberty?

So, having described the strife, Paul offers a solution ...

Galatians 5:16-18 • So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

- Q: What is Paul's solution to the back-biting and devouring within the Church?
- Q: What are the significant character traits of a person who is living with their sin-nature in control?
- Q: At what point in our Christian walk do we finally escape having to struggle against our sin-nature?
- Q: What happens to our sin-nature when we come to faith in Christ?
- Q: How does scripture summarize the role of the Spirit of God as we live and walk in Him?

It is the Spirit of God:

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It is the Spirit of God:

- Q: What does Paul mean when he says: *“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.”*

**Paul now shifts his attention to the works of the flesh.
This is where we will pick up the study next time ...**



Next Time • Lesson #21

~~ Life in the Spirit ~~

Part 2 of 3 • Galatians 5:19-21

