

GALATIANS CHAPTER 5 – Christian Liberty; Love Fulfills the Law; Walking in the Spirit

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS -- JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH:

The Book of Galatians is such a source of truth and revealing that justification is through faith in what Jesus Christ has done and in this faith alone!

Habakkuk wrote - Hab 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. In Galatians, Paul repeats this verse in chapter 3:11 "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

GALATIANS CHAPTER 5 – Christian Liberty;

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free ("For freedom Christ freed you"). , and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Gal 5:2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

Gal 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Gal 5:5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Chapter 5

We've come to the third and final section of this glorious Epistle written to the Galatians.

In chapters 1 and 2, Paul outlined his personal experience with grace.

In chapters 3 and 4, he gave doctrinal instruction about grace.

And now in chapters 5 and 6, he will demonstrate the practical application of grace.

Gospel Freedom This is a critical passage. **Paul wants to show us that gospel freedom from fear and condemnation leads us to obey God, not to please ourselves.**

v. 1 stand fast—stand firm, unmoved, keeping alert, being strong, resisting attack and sticking together..

1Co 16:13: Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

Php 1:27.. that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind

Php 4:1 ...so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

1Th 3:8 ...stand fast in the Lord.

2Th 2:15...stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught,

Yoke - Paul may have borrowed the term “yoke of bondage” from Peter, who, in Acts 15, used it in reference to the rules and regulations of Judaism. “Don’t let anyone put a yoke of bondage on you,” echoed Paul. The yoke Jesus bore on His shoulders as He carried the Cross to Calvary is all-sufficient.

v. 2 “If you add anything to the Cross in an attempt to obtain a right standing with God, you’re not saved. That’s how strongly the Father feels about the sufficiency of the finished work of His Son,” said Paul. The Word says if any man adds anything to the Cross, Christ profits him nothing.

vs. 3-4 *again* - But here Paul once more makes his radical claim **that pagan idolatry and biblical moralism** (ie: keeping the laws of the Bible) are **basically the same thing!** Suppose, while driving through town, you saw a flashing red light in your rearview mirror. You pulled over, and the policeman said, “You were driving fifty-five miles an hour. You broke the law.” The same is true of the law. If you’re seeking justification by keeping the law rather than by accepting grace, breaking the law in even one point means you’re guilty—regardless of how many “good things” you’ve done in other areas.

vs. 5-6 It doesn’t matter whether you’re circumcised or uncircumcised, the reason faith works is not to fulfill a requirement of the law. It was in response to an incredible love.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT

Chapter 5 brings us to the third major division in Galatians after the Introduction. The first section was personal, and it was important for us to know the personal experience Paul had had. Following this was the doctrinal section of justification by faith in which Paul insisted that our salvation must rest upon God's salvation and that there is only one gospel.

We come now to the practical side, which is sanctification by the Spirit. Justification is by faith; sanctification is by the Spirit of God. Scripture tells us, however, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been made unto us sanctification—that is, God sees us complete in Him. Regardless of how good you become, you will never meet His standard. You will never be like Christ in this life. Christ is the only One about whom God said, "... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mat_3:17). But the body of believers, the church, has been put in Christ. He is the Head of the body; those of us who are believers are His body in the world today—and we should represent Him, by the way.

The method of sanctification is by the Spirit. In this section we see the Spirit versus the flesh. Either it is a do-it-yourself Christian life or somebody else will have to do it through you. His method is doing it through you.

In this section we see liberty versus bondage. Any legal system puts you under bondage, and you have to follow it meticulously. (McGee) Isa 61:8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant.

Vs. 5-6 *But faith working through love*: such a faith in Christ as discovers itself to be true and genuine by a sincere love to God and our neighbor. If they had this, it mattered not whether they were circumcised or uncircumcised, but without it nothing else would stand them in any stead. No external privileges nor profession will avail to our acceptance with God, without a sincere faith in our Lord Jesus. Faith, where it is true, is a working grace: it works by love, love to God and love to our brethren; and faith, thus working by love, is all in all in our Christianity. (Henry)

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OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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Love Fulfills the Law;

Gal 5:7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

Gal 5:8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

Gal 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Gal 5:10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

Gal 5:11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

Gal 5:12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

v. 7 Allowing legalists to cut in front of them and obstruct their freedom in Christ, the Galatians had set themselves up for a fall.

v. 8 We who are believers in Jesus Christ, on the other hand, can truly say, “Just read your Bible. It’s all you need. You don’t need special literature. You don’t need something some man has written to reveal the keys of spirituality to you. If you really want to know the truth, just read the Word.”

v. 9 Shifting his analogy from sports to cooking, Paul relates leaven, the symbol for evil throughout Scripture, to legalism. “Be careful,” he said. “Just as leaven hidden in a portion of dough causes all of the dough to rise, if you open the door to even a little legalism, it will surely spread.” The tricky thing about legalism is that it begins with the right motives. Because we care so much about our congregations or our kids, we put legalistic perimeters around them. Although the motive is sincere, it ends in disaster because rules and regulations produce only one of two things: self-glorification, or self-condemnation

v. 10 “I’m confident you’re getting my point,” said Paul. Let every Sunday-school worker, every Bible study teacher, and every family devotion leader hear Paul’s heart as he says to the Galatians, “Those who are causing you to get entangled in legalism will bear the responsibility for what they’re doing.” Each of us in teaching needs to approach our calling prayerfully.

v. 11 Accused of preaching circumcision, Paul said, “If I am, indeed, preaching circumcision, why is it the legalizers who persecute me? It’s not circumcision, but the Cross that offends them.” The Cross is offensive to the religious person because he wants to get in on the action and contribute to his own salvation or blessing. However, the finished work of Jesus Christ doesn’t allow for that.

v. 12-13 Before we were saved, we were in bondage to our own lusts. There was no alternative. We thought the coolest thing was to find the darkest place and go party. But it wasn’t too long before we found out that sin stinks. Sin ruins relationships. Sin kills joy. Sin wipes people out. It destroys families, messes up kids, and results in mental fuzziness and physical illness. Praise God! We’re free from that stuff. Therefore, the liberty to which we’re called is not liberty to sin, but liberty from sin. “If I’m not going to party anymore,” you say, “what am I going to do?” Serve one another! Pour yourself into people. Get involved in talking to others who are doomed and damned and struggling. You’ll find that talking to them about eternal issues will be more exciting and thrilling than anything you’ve ever done. Get involved in the things of the kingdom, and you won’t miss the old stuff at all.

v. 5 *for the hope of righteousness by faith*; by which is meant, not the believer's justifying righteousness, as if it was something future he is waiting for; for this is already wrought out, and brought in by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith; is discovered and applied to the saints by the Spirit of God; is put upon them, and imputed to them by the Father; and is what they now have, not in hope, but in hand; their faith having received it, as their justifying righteousness; in which they will ever be found, living and dying: **but eternal glory and felicity is here intended, called "hope"; because it is the object of hope, or is what is hoped for; it is unseen, as what is hoped for is: it is future, and what is to be enjoyed hereafter, and therefore hoped for; it is certain, possible to be enjoyed, though with difficulty; which gives room for hope, and exercises and tries that grace; the foundation and encouragement of hope in it are the person, blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, who is our hope: and hence it is styled "the hope of righteousness", because none but righteous persons shall enjoy it: and that by virtue, and in consequence of their being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which gives them their title to it.** (Henry)

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Gal 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Walking in the Spirit

Gal 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

v. 14 Get ready. You are about to become an Old Testament scholar, knowing the one word that sums up the entire law... *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* Love is the one word that encapsulates the entire law. **Not legalism—love.**

v. 15 What if we really believed that every time we put someone down, made a snide remark, or rolled our eyes in response to someone else, sooner or later we would be hurt to the same degree? Scripture says flat out, straight on, and with great clarity that if you bite and devour, take heed—you will be consumed by another. Others will talk about you to the degree you talk about others. On the other hand, the more grace-oriented you are, the more loving you'll be.

v. 16 In the arena of liberty, the key is not to suppress the flesh. The key is to surrender to the Spirit. Legalism says, “Deal with the flesh through ritual, pain, and agony.” Paul says, “There’s a much better way. The solution is not to worry about the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit.” Walking in the Spirit is so exciting. So, too, to overcome preoccupation with sin, walk in the Spirit. Enjoy the Lord. Do what He tells you to do in any given moment, and you'll forget sin. How do people overcome the lusts of the flesh? The simplest, most effective way is to walk in the Spirit. Just be enraptured with the goodness of the Lord. Do what He's telling you in your heart—whether it be some practical expression of love, a moment of intercession for someone, an encouraging word to share, or a merciful act to do.

v. 17 If you're trying to overcome the flesh in your own energy, you'll struggle perpetually, regardless of how many resolutions you make on December thirty-first, or how many slogans you paste on your refrigerator. The fact is that you'll never overcome the pull of the flesh on your own. Even though the spirit may indeed be willing, the flesh is too weak (Matthew 26:41). “Down with purple elephants!” you may write upon your mirror. But in reality, whatever your elephant is, whatever your heavyweight fleshly tendency might be, it will never be overcome by your own resolve or religion.

v.18 I love this word “but.” Gaining victory over the flesh by keeping the law is futile in our own ability, but if we're led of the Spirit, we're not under the law theologically or practically. We're free! **To be “led by the Spirit” is to change, and be changed, to be the people we want to be.**

v. 19 *adultery - Pro 6:32_ Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.* Uncleanness speaks of impurity of thought or life. *Lewdness* speaks of licentiousness—or, literally, doing things without a license.

v. 19 *Adultery* is violating the marriage covenant by sexual immorality.

Fornication is the ancient Greek word *porneia*, and it speaks of sexual immorality in a broad sense. *Porneia* started out meaning “the use of a prostitute,” but by Paul's day it was “used for a wide variety of sexual sin.” (Morris)

Uncleanness is another broad word, referring to sexual impropriety in general. It should be thought of as the *opposite of purity.*

Lewdness (sometimes translated *licentiousness*) has the idea of “ready to sin at any time.” It speaks of someone who flaunts their immorality, throwing off all restraint and having no sense of *shame, propriety, or embarrassment.*

v. 20 *Idolatry . . . sorcery.* These are *religious* sins. They are sins of worship, and remind us that it isn't only tragic to worship the wrong God, or seek the wrong spiritual power - it is *sinful* as well.

Idolatry is the worship of any god except the LORD God revealed to us by the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ.

Sorcery (translated *witchcraft* in the NIV) is the service and worship of occult and spiritual powers apart from the true God. Paul uses: *pharmakeia*, from which we get our word for “pharmacy.” Morris defines **sorcery** as “the use of any kind of drugs, potions, or spells.” In the ancient world, the taking of drugs (especially hallucinogens) was always associated with the occult, and the Bible's association with drug taking and sorcery points out that drugs open up doors to the occult that are better left closed.

Hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envies . . . murders: These are each “*people*” sins. They are sins that primarily express themselves in how we treat others.

Hatred (*ekthra*) is an attitude of heart, and it somehow expresses itself in actions such as **contentions, outbursts of wrath**, or many other works of the flesh. But **hatred** is the inner motivation for the ill treatment of others. Just as **love** is the inner motivation for the kind and good treatment of others, **hatred** is an inner motivation.

Contentions translates the ancient Greek word *eris*.. It means the rivalry which has found its outcome in quarrels and wrangling.” Most commonly it is translated as *strife* (as in [Romans 13:13](#) and [1 Corinthians 3:3](#)), and simply speaks of a combative and argumentative spirit. The Holy Spirit never led anyone into **contentions**

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Gal 5:20 *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*

Gal 5:21 *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Gal 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, (re the Lord) longsuffering, kindness, goodness, (re others) faithfulness,*

Gal 5:23 *gentleness, self-control. (re internal) Against such there is no law.*

INTERPRETATION

v. 20 *Idolatry*... One of the biggest idols in our culture is sports. *sorcery*... The Greek word is pharmakeia. Pharmakeia refers to drugs. It is no surprise that the drug culture and the world of the occult remain linked together to this day. *hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, heresies, ...* Most of us can literally feel our blood boil, the hair on the back of our neck begin to stand up, or our veins bulge as wrath manifests itself in our flesh quite literally. When you begin to feel wrath welling up within you, don't lash out at someone else. Instead, walk away from the confrontation. It may save your life. ...*strife*... Closely related to wrath, strife means “being antagonistic.” *dissensions, heresies*... Why would heresy be a manifestation of the flesh? Because people who propagate heresy do so for one reason: to glorify their flesh.

v. 21 “*envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries*” means partying. *and the like*... This list is not exhaustive. Paul says, “Here is only a sample of what the flesh is like.” I'm telling you again,” Paul says, “that those who are involved in heresy, adultery, strife, envying, drunkenness, and reveling shall not inherit the kingdom.” When did Paul say this before? In I *Corinthians* 6:9; *Ephesians* 5:5; and *Colossians* 3:6. “It's not legalism—it's revelation. The works of the flesh in one's life reveal an absence of relationship with the Lord. You see, Paul is **not speaking of the person who struggles with these things, or has fallen into these things. He's speaking of the one who perpetually, habitually practices these things arrogantly, stubbornly, and with no desire to be set free from them.** Therefore, wise is the man or woman who takes Paul's words at face value and says, “Lord, forgive me and help me. Cause me to be full of Your Spirit lest I miss out on heaven.” **Let's be clear about these things! They are sin!!**

vs. 22-23 **The fruit (not fruits) of the Spirit is love—as defined by joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control.**

APPLICATION

Jealousies translates an ancient Greek word (*zelos*) that is sometimes used in a positive sense - as for being zealous for something good. But here, clearly, the connotation is wrong. In this context it means “the desire to have what someone else has, wrong desire for what is not for us.”

Outbursts of wrath translates an ancient Greek word (*thumos*) that speaks of a sudden flash of anger, not a settled state of anger. It means to lose your temper, being unable to control your anger..

Selfish ambitions translates the ancient Greek word *eritheia*, and the word has an interesting history. It started out as a perfectly respectable word meaning “to work for pay.” It means 'selfish ambition', the ambition which has no conception of service and whose only aims are profit and power." It is the heart of a person whose first question is always, "What's in it for me?"

Dissensions translates the ancient Greek word *dichostasia*, and it literally means “standing apart.” [Romans 16:17](#) and [1 Corinthians 3:3](#) translate this word as *divisions*.

“*Dissension* describes a society . . . where the members fly apart instead of coming together.” (Barclay)

Heresies translates an ancient Greek word (*haireisis*) ***Heresies*** can be thought of as **hardened dissensions**. is a Christian virtue; unyielding intolerance is a sin.”

Envy is the ancient Greek word *phthonos*. It doesn't so much want what someone else has (as in **jealousies**), but it is bitter just because someone else has something and we don't.

Murders translates the ancient Greek word *phonos*, which is well translated by the English word **murders**.

Drunkenness . . . revelries: These can be thought of as *social sins* - sins that are often committed in the company of other people.

Drunkenness is clearly described as one of the **works of the flesh**. While Christians may differ as to if a Christian can drink alcohol, the scriptures *precisely* forbid **drunkenness**, but being impaired in any way by drink is sin, as well as drinking with the *intention* of becoming impaired.

Revelries, translating the ancient Greek word *komos*, doesn't mean simply having a party or a good time. It means *unrestrained* partying. Barclay says, “It describes the kind of revelry which lowers a man's self and is a nuisance to others.

And the like: This demonstrates that Paul understands that his list is not exhaustive. These are not the only **works of the flesh**. It isn't as if one could find a work of the flesh that is not described in this list, then one would be free to do it.

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Gal 5:24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Gal 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

INTERPRETATION

v. 24 Crucifying the flesh is about strangling sin at the motivational level, rather than simply setting ourselves against sin at the behavioral level. Real changes in our lives cannot proceed without us discerning our particular “characteristic flesh”—the idols and desires that come from our individual sinful nature. We have to ask ourselves not just what we do wrong, but why we do it wrong. We disobey God in order to get something we feel we must have. That’s an “over-desire”. **We need to take up the cross, dying to our old man – our fallen, human nature -- and follow Him!**

v. 25 Walking in the Spirit **simply means doing what the Lord tells you to do moment by moment**—whether it’s making a phone call to someone in need of encouragement, getting away for five minutes to pray, or chopping wood for someone in need. It is also the most impacting, exciting, unpredictable life there is.

v. 26 Those who live in legalism desire vainglory. “Look how many people I witnessed to. Look how many hours I prayed. Look what I don’t do,” we say whenever legalism creeps into our lives. But the problem with vainglory is this: It’s never enough. **Don’t get caught up in the cycle of legalism, saint. Don’t be one who competes with people. Instead, be one who completes people. Do not let your hunger for honor make you either despise or envy people.** A Gospel-based Self-image The Spirit works in us to apply the gospel to our self-perception and view of others. He creates a whole new self-image which is not based on comparisons with others. Only the gospel makes us neither self-confident nor self-disdaining, but both bold and humble. **That works itself out in relationships with everyone.** The gospel is the only thing that addresses conceit, the vainglory.

APPLICATION

v. 22 *The fruit of the Spirit is love:* It is fitting that **love** be the first mentioned, because it encompasses all of the following. It may even be said that the following eight terms are just describing what **love** in action looks like.

Love translates the ancient Greek word *agape*. We could say that this is a *love of the Spirit*, because it is a **fruit of the Spirit**. This is above and beyond natural affection, or the loyalty to blood or family. It is also helpful to understand the *works of the flesh* in the light of this **love of the Spirit**. **Each one of the works of the flesh is a violation or a perversion of this great love.**

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lewdness are counterfeits of love among people. Idolatry and sorcery are counterfeits of love to God.

Hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, and murders **are all opposites of love.**

Drunkenness and revelries are sad attempts to fill the void only love can fill.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy: We could say that this is *joy of the Spirit*, because it is a higher joy than just the thrill of an exciting experience or a wonderful set of circumstances.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace: This **peace** is peace with God, peace with people, and it is a *positive* peace, filled with blessing and goodness - not simply the absence of fighting.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . longsuffering: **Longsuffering** means that one can have **love, joy, and peace** even over a period of time when people and events annoy them.

Longsuffering in itself is a work of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . kindness, goodness: These two words are closely connected. About the only difference is that **goodness** also has with it the idea of *generosity*.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . faithfulness: The idea is that the Spirit of God works faithfulness in us, both to God and to people.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . gentleness: The word has the idea of being teachable, not having a superior attitude, not demanding one’s rights.

The fruit of the Spirit is . . . self-control: The world knows something of **self-control**, but almost always for a selfish reason.

Against such there is no law: Paul wrote with both irony and understatement. There is certainly **no law** against **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**. But more so, if a person has this **fruit of the Spirit**, he doesn’t *need the Law*. He already fulfills it.

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