

Galatians 5

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Galatians 5:1

"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

Paul is now making an appeal for his readership to be steadfast in Christ. The purpose of Jesus' death was to set mankind free from the bondage of sin which the law of Moses could not do. The bondage of the law of Moses was twofold. The law of Moses was full of all kinds of rituals and tedious acts which had to be carried out in the most minute of detail in order to be effective. Those who would live faithfully under the law of Moses had to do all kinds of things in order to live righteously before God, particularly in the area dealing with the atonement of sin. So in that aspect, the Jews lived under the bondage of all kinds of difficult and tedious rituals which were a part of the law of Moses.

Secondly, we must keep in mind that even after all of the ordinances were kept, the Jews living under it were still under the bondage of sin because as we learn from Acts 13:39, that the law of Moses was incapable of the justification of sin: *"and by Him [Jesus Christ], everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses"*. So we see here that the Jews were living under the bondage of a law which could not release them from the bondage of their sin.

Jesus did what He did on the cross so that humanity could be set free from the bondage of both the law of Moses and the bondage of their sin. Paul's readership had been set free through their obedience to the gospel as Paul had already affirmed in Galatians 3:26-29, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"*.

Paul is urging his readership to resist the teachings of those who would bring them back under the bondage of the law and to stand firm and steadfast in their freedom. What Paul is not saying here is that they are free to sin and that there is no law whatsoever governing the actions of a Christian. Many people today try and use this passage to set forth the idea that Paul is teaching against obedience to the law of Christ. Such a notion should be rejected outright. Christians are obligated under the law of Christ. The law of Moses was replaced with the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) and the law of Christ does contain ordinances of its own which Paul referenced in 1 Corinthians 11:1-2. There are things under the law of Christ which must be done in order to live a righteous life before God and inherit eternal life. None of these required works of righteousness in and of themselves will earn the Christian a home in heaven, nor do

they merit God's favor in any way. God does not owe humanity anything when they submit to His authority and obey Him. Freedom from the law of Moses is not the freedom to sin. Neither is the freedom from sin a license to sin.

Paul made this perfectly clear in Romans 6:1-2, *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"* and then later in the same context he repeats it and then explains that the freedom from the slavery of sin means that Christians have submitted themselves as slaves of God: Romans 6:15-18, *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

This concept is further expounded on by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:22, *"For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave."* The immediate context of this verse is dealing with literal slaves of the first century. Paul is telling them not to seek the freedom from their masters, but to abide faithfully in their present state. But in this context Paul makes a broad statement which supersedes the immediate context. It matters not whether a Christian is living as a slave or a free citizen, he or she is still Christ's slave nonetheless.

Therefore those who believe and teach that Paul means the freedom from the law of Moses means the freedom from the law of Christ are in serious error. They are reading more into the text than the overall context of Galatians and the rest of scripture warrants. The only law Paul is warning his readership against falling into the bondage of here is the law of Moses.

Galatians 5:2

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing."

Circumcision was the main issue that the Judaizers were pushing on the Galatian Christians. It was their contention that it was necessary to first become a son of Abraham in order to come to Christ. A Jew living under the law of Moses saw circumcision as an outward act which accomplished two things. First it was a necessary step one had to take in order to become a Jew and be identified as a son of Abraham. Secondly it was an outward symbol of one's commitment to accept, follow and live by the law of Moses.

What Paul is saying here is that anyone dedicates themselves to the law of Moses, there is no benefit whatsoever from Christ. Paul has built a case against the law of Moses since verse six of the first chapter. Paul dove immediately into the topic he wanted to address with them as soon as his short salutation was completed and he has not let up since then. He has consistently built his case from the ground up. The case he has made against it is..

- 1) They received the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the gospel preached by Paul and not through the teachings of the Judaizers.
- 2) Those who live by the law of Moses live under the curse of the old law.
- 3) The blessings of Abraham could not come through the law of Moses.

- 4) The law was only a guardian/protector whose entire purpose was only to bring the people to Christ.
- 5) Those who lived under the law of Moses still had to be redeemed. The law of Moses was incapable of redemption.
- 6) One does not come to be in Christ through the old law. It is done through baptism which is exclusive to the gospel.
- 7) Jews and Gentiles alike were the sons of God where Gentiles were excluded under the old law.
- 8) Those living under the law of Moses were servants where those in Christ are considered sons.
- 9) The Allegory of Sarah and Hagar teaches that there can be no shared inheritance between the law and the gospel.
- 10) Those who commit to the Judaizers doctrine can expect nothing from Christ. Christ will benefit them nothing.

And now, Paul is about to wrap the whole thing up in some summary statements that are designed to leave no doubt whatsoever in the minds of his readership as to the final consequences they faced if they did not repent and return to the gospel he had preached to them at the first.

Galatians 5:3

"Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."

And now on top of everything else that Paul had explained to his readership, he now drops this bombshell in their midst. Those who accepted the doctrine of the Judaizers and had committed themselves to following their lead now have found themselves in the unhappy position of being required to observe all of the law of Moses.

The Judaizers were not trying to bind all of the old law on them. Only parts of it here and there. This is evidence that these Judaizers were not teaching then the entire law of Moses. They were in fact teaching a combination of the two. They believed in Jesus Christ but they were forcing the Gentiles to observe specific parts of old law while not bothering them with the whole thing. If such had been the case, the Galatian Christians would have been traveling to Jerusalem and offering animal sacrifices at the temple. The temple was still standing and being used for Levitical worship by Jews who had rejected Christ.

Paul is telling them that if they are going to accept anything out of the old law in any way, they had better plan on doing the whole old law. That means the atoning sacrifices, the Passover, the yearly pilgrimages to the temple, the tithing, etc, etc. Paul told them if they did any of it, they had to do it all. They were not allowed to mix and match the two. The two systems are mutually exclusive and if you are going to choose the old law, then it has to be the old law all the way. And here's the irony of it all. If they did choose the old law, Paul had already told them that it was incapable of their redemption. So in reality, Paul just told them to keep any part of the old law whatsoever obligated them to do all of a law which could not save them.

There is nothing inherently wrong with circumcision in and of itself, but what makes it wrong is when it is done as a means of identifying oneself as a child of God under the old law. Paul wrote concerning circumcision itself as an act in 1 Corinthians 7:19, *"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters."* The religious ceremony of circumcision was the equivalent of adopting the law of Moses. There is an application for Christians beyond Galatia on this. Of utmost importance here is the fact that if circumcision as a

commitment to the law of Moses makes one a debtor to the whole law of Moses in Galatia of the first century, then we today can be assured that such a thing would be true today as well. And not just circumcision either; this consequence can be understood to apply to any ordinance, precept or commandment that is unique to the law of Moses and not part of the law of Christ.

For example, under the old law of Moses, part of the Levitical worship included the burning of animal sacrifices and the burning of incense. Nowhere in new covenant worship is there ever a hint of animal sacrifices or the burning of incense. The animal sacrifices and burning of incense is unique to the law of Moses in that regard therefore the observation of either if these in new testament worship would carry the same consequence as receiving circumcision. According to what Paul is saying here, if one is going to burn incense in worship to God, they make themselves a debtor to the whole old law of Moses from the animal sacrifices on. This also extends to the use of manmade instruments of music as well (2 Chronicles 29:25). Almost all of the denominational organizations use manmade musical instruments in their worship on a regular basis. Paul says to do this makes them a debtor to the animal sacrifices, the feasts, the yearly trips to Jerusalem and all the other commandments which are a part of the old law of Moses. The ramifications of this are unmistakable and the consequences for this are spelled out plainly in the next verse.

Galatians 5:4

"Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace."

The Galatian Christians had been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), they had received the blessing promised to Abraham that Paul spoke of, They had received the redemption mentioned in Galatians 3:13 from the curse of the law, they were Christians but now, because of their apostasy into the old law of Moses, they had been severed from Christ. They had fallen from Grace. Because of what they had done, they were no longer in a position to inherit eternal life.

The old law of Moses could not justify anyone in the first place (Acts 13:39), moreover, to try to appeal to the law of Moses in any way carries the consequence of being severed from Christ and falling from the favor of God. Because of their accepting the teachings of the Judaizers, these once faithful Christians in body of Christ found themselves in a state where if they were to die in the flesh, they would be eternally separated from God. To be severed from Christ is to be separated from God.

Jesus Christ died to usher in the gospel system of faith. To appeal to the law of Moses for justification is to reject Christ, all of His teachings and His blood in favor of a system of law that had been fulfilled, abolished and was inferior to the new law in every aspect. Paul has made it clear throughout this letter that the law of Moses was inferior to the law of Christ and totally inadequate to accomplish what the law of Christ was capable of. He has made it crystal clear that the promises of Christ were not dependant in any way on anything from the law of Moses. Christians have direct access to God through Christ and do not in any way whatsoever come to Christ through the law of Moses. When God fulfilled the law of Moses, it was replaced with the law of Christ. And now, after all of this, Paul drops this bombshell on them. If after all they had learned from Paul concerning the two laws and they persisted in their folly and insisted on trying to get to God through the law of Moses, they have in effect rejected all that Christ did for them to bring them a much better way and this resulted in Christ rejecting them. What we need to take away from this is that to follow in any way the law of Moses is to reject Christ. And to do so will bear the consequences of being severed from Him and to fall from His grace.

There is a doctrine out in the religious world which advocates that a Christian once saved can never so sin as to lose his or her salvation. This doctrine is called Once Saved Always Saved and it finds its roots in Calvinism. The Galatians to whom Paul was writing to were Christians. They had been baptized into Christ. And now some of them were severed from Christ. Since we have here a record of Christians being severed from Christ, the doctrine of OSAS cannot be true for all Christians. The law of Christ applies equally to all humanity. If any Christian can be severed from Christ and fall from grace for any reason, then all Christians can, whether living in the first century or the 21st.

Galatians 5:5

"For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."

"Through the Spirit" means according to what the Holy Spirit of God revealed to them and not the old law. Paul is here contrasting what he had been teaching them with what the Judaizers were teaching by referring to his teachings as being through the Spirit of God. The logical opposite here is that what the Judaizers had been teaching was not through the Spirit and Paul had already successfully communicated this to them earlier in the letter.

At this time in the Christian age, the Holy Spirit was working actively to provide the word of God in its entirety. In the beginning the Holy Spirit had a much more active role but as time went on and more of the word of God was recorded, we see the Holy Spirit taking a step back in favor of the written word. A case in point is this very letter that was being written. Paul wrote this letter to established churches with Christians in them who had received the gifts of the Holy Spirit on a prior occasion as we learned in Galatians 3:2, where he asked them, *"Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"* A list of the miraculous gifts is given in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues."* The miraculous gifts of knowledge and prophecy were part of the miraculous gifts and this helped to provide God's word in times when it was needed. So we see here that this information being sent to the Christians in Galatia was not coming via the Holy Spirit, rather it was coming through Paul's letter. So also was the information given by letter to the Ephesians, the Corinthians, the Colossian and many others through letters. If the Holy Spirit had of supplied everyone in the 1st century with all the truth, then there would have been no need for Paul, James, Peter, Jude, John and others to have written anything. So we can conclude that the Holy Spirit was working things so that the word of God would be revealed in written form.

The Galatians received all of God's word through the Spirit, either directly or by the hand of Paul through verbal or written communication. In any event, it was all authoritative and it was complete regardless of the medium through which it came. The application for us today is that now the entire will of God for mankind today comes exclusively through the word of God. The Holy Spirit does not reveal anything new today. It was all revealed in the first century: 2 Peter 1:3, *"as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue", and what we have recorded by inspiration is sufficient to furnish us who live in the 21st century and beyond: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

"wait for the hope of righteousness."

The hope of righteousness is the hope we have in Christ. We hope for a home in heaven where we can be in the literal presence of God forever. This hope we all wait for is available only through living a righteous or rightful life. John wrote in 1 John 3:7, *"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous."* Peter said as recorded in Acts 10:35, *"But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."*

A contextual paraphrase of what Paul means here could read, 'For we through the teachings of the Spirit of God and not through the teachings of the Judaizers, wait for the hope of the blessing and good for which our conformity to His will in purpose, thought and action leads us to live righteous lives.'

Galatians 5:6

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love."

Those who live "in Christ" have nothing spiritual to gain from being circumcised as a commitment to the law of Moses. Nothing the Judaizers were teaching had any benefit for them at all. The only thing that does benefit is living by the system of faith in Christ through love. The Greek word of "love" in this verse is "agape" love which is that love which is a self sacrificing love which compels one to act in another's best interest no matter the personal cost.

Resist the Judaizers

Galatians 5:7

"Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?"

Paul is telling them here that they were on the right path originally. Notice that Paul said they were "running". Paul used this idea of running in other writings such as 1 Corinthians 9:24, where he wrote, *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."* This verse is in the context of salvation so we know the crown Paul is referring to is that crown of life mentioned in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10.

"who hindered you"

That's a rhetorical question. Paul knew they understood exactly who was hindering them by promoting the Judaizing heresy. He want them to reflect back on what he had already written and answer that question for themselves.

"that ye should not obey the truth?"

Truth must be obeyed. This notion of many in the religious world that believe and teach that salvation can be obtained on the basis of faith alone will point to Paul's contrast of the law of Moses and the system of faith in Christ and try to place both the old law and the law of Christ in the same category. By doing this, they try and set forth the idea of a passive faith where God has no expectations and the Christian has no obligations. These people will point to select passages to support their doctrine and just pass over ones like this and thereby project only a partial view of the truth. Any teaching based on an incomplete view of God's truth is not truth at all. The whole counsel of God must be observed, not just that which is easy and does not place obligations on us. One cannot just believe the truth and be pleasing to God. Truth must be obeyed.

Of significance here to the topic of salvation by faith alone is that Paul had just finished telling them that to appeal to the law of Moses caused them to fall from grace. Once saved Christians who were previously running acceptably the race of Christian faith now found themselves outside God's grace. What the Judaizers had been teaching was different than what Paul had taught and was therefore not the truth. These Christians had fallen from grace because they obeyed something that was not the truth. These Galatian Christians still believed in Jesus Christ. They were just taught by the Judaizers that they had to go through the law of Moses in order to get to Christ. They were believers, they had faith in Jesus Christ, but because of something they were doing, they had fallen from grace. If salvation were obtainable on the basis of faith alone, then there are no actions that could cause one to fall from grace. It would be impossible for anyone to fall from grace if salvation were by faith alone and the Christian believed in Jesus, yet we have an example right here of Christians who did based on something they did.

The obvious conclusion is that truth cannot just be believed. It must be obeyed. The Gospel cannot be just believed, it must be obeyed (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 1 Peter 4:17). God's will cannot just be believed, it must be obeyed (Matthew 7:21). The Galatian Christians had been deceived into thinking they did not have to obey the truth. They are not alone. Millions of people today are being lured into a false security of thinking the very same thing.

Galatians 5:8

"This persuasion (came) not of him that calleth you."

The persuasion they had received from the Judaizers did not in any way come from God. It was Paul who delivered the gospel to them in the first place but ultimately the calling was from God. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, *"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Galatians 5:9

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

The Galatian Christians far outnumbered the Judaizers, however, the influence of a few had worked its way through the churches of Galatia to the degree that many had been severed from Christ and fallen from grace. Paul uses the imagery of yeast in causing bread dough to rise. A little bit of leavening yeast will work its way through the entire batch of bread dough until all of it is affected.

This use of leaven as figure for the spreading of corruption is a common one in scripture.

1 Corinthians 5:7 *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."*

Matthew 16:6 *"Then Jesus said to them, 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.'"*

Mark 8:15 *"Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.'"*

It only takes a little error to so corrupt the truth that it is no longer the truth. It is often times the greatest danger we face is from corruption from within which can lead to a departure from the truth by the whole congregation. Every single Christian in any given congregation commits sin from time to time. There is no such thing as a congregation of

Christians who do not sin. Neither is there any such thing as a congregation of Christians who are in the same place in their journey for the truth. The danger comes from the sinner in the midst of the group who practices sinful behavior as a lifestyle, refuses to repent and openly and actively teaches or promotes sinful behavior.

The danger Paul is warning his readership of is the danger of the doctrine of the Judaizers spreading throughout the congregations and leading them completely away from Christ. This suggests that the apostasy of the Galatian churches was not complete at the time of Paul's writing, but if left unchecked, much like leaven working its way through a whole lump of dough, the results within the churches will be that they will be completely corrupted.

Galatians 5:10

"I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be."

Paul has confidence in his Galatian brethren that they will want to do what's right when they know what the truth is. And he finishes this thought off by letting them know that the Judaizers, every last one of them, whoever they may be, will suffer the judgment of condemnation for what they have done.

Paul had just told them that whoever succumbed to the teachings of the Judaizers had been severed from Christ and fallen from grace, now he is pronouncing a similar fate on those who were the cause of their apostasy. Both the deceived and the deceivers alike in this situation are going to be lost. The application for us today is the same. Those who come in to our assemblies today teaching error are going to be just as lost as those who fall pray to their apostasy. Everybody loses in such a predicament. That is why we today must be vigilant, ready and willing to stand steadfast in the truth and take such steps when necessary to defend it.

Galatians 5:11

"But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away."

Most of the more dependable sources of scholarship believe this refers to the allegations of the Judaizers that Paul himself taught circumcision. They evidently backed this up by appealing to the known instance of Paul's circumcision of Timothy, whose father was Greek and mother was Jewish (Acts 16:3). Paul's reason for doing that, however, had nothing whatever to do with Timothy's salvation, but was for the purpose of avoiding and frustrating Jewish persecution. Under the circumstances, with Timothy's father being a Greek, it was impossible for Timothy to be effective in the ministry because of their prejudice against the uncircumcised.

Paul is asking his readership that if he were preaching circumcision as a matter of salvation, then why are the Jews still persecuting him? If Paul were really teaching circumcision as a matter of salvation, then the one main contention between him and the Jews would have been eliminated. Their persecution of Paul in that regard would have stopped. But it didn't as Paul here attested.

"then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away."

If Paul had taught circumcision as a necessity for salvation, then he would not have been persecuted by the Jews. The gospel would have been compromised and would cease to be offensive to the Jewish unbelievers. The cross did away with the old law completely. This included circumcision as a requirement for the child of God. Because of the

cross, circumcision went from being something necessary as a binding part of Jewish law to something one could take or leave on a voluntary basis with no religious significance whatsoever. The unbelieving Jews just couldn't accept that, and if they had been right in not accepting it, then the cross of Christ which represented the end of these things would have been done away with.

The cross being referred to a stumbling-block by Paul means that the cross was an impediment in the way of what the Judaizers were teaching. The cross represents the end of Law of Moses; Ephesians 2:14-16, *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity."* The "law of commandments" meaning the Mosaic law was abolished at the cross. The cross was therefore an obstacle that would have been taken out of the way if Paul were preaching circumcision. The cross and the law of Moses are therefore mutually exclusive and as we have seen in our study of earlier verses, they cannot be mixed, or combined in any way shape or form.

This age old tradition of circumcision of Jewish men was keeping many Jews from converting to Christianity because they just couldn't bring themselves to let it go. But as Paul has made clear throughout this letter, the cross of Christ cannot be removed without compromising the truth. Circumcision no longer has any religious significance whatsoever in the Christian age. The old law in its entirety, including circumcision had been done away with.

Galatians 5:12

"I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision."

These may be some of the harshest words ever penned by the beloved apostle Paul. We see here the manifestation of his frustration with those who crept into the church and led them astray. The NKJV renders this verse thus, *"I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!"* With circumcision, only one's foreskin is removed. Paul wanted them to go much further than a traditional circumcision. The NIV has an excellent rendering of this verse. Galatians 5:12

"As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!" Paul was not happy at all with the Judaizers and he communicates his frustration in a very vivid and pointed fashion.

Love Fulfills the Law

Galatians 5:13

"For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only (use) not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another."

Christians enjoy many liberties which were unavailable to those living under the law of Moses. Christians are free of the Mosaic Law which was incapable of justifying anyone. The law of Moses was replaced with the "law of Christ" as Paul refers to it in Galatians 6:2. James referred to the "law of Christ" as the "law of liberty" in James 1:25 & 2:12. The law of Christ is a law liberty because it liberates the Christian from the penalty of sin, the guilt of sin and from the fear of condemnation. No matter how well one followed the law of Moses, they could never be released from penalty and guilt of sin and from the fear of condemnation. The law of Moses was incapable of these things. The best it was

capable of achieving was the forgiveness of sin in prospect, which was a temporary measure put in place until Christ's shed blood at the cross provided the final redemption of those sins.

Hebrews 9:15

"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (NKJV)

What Paul is saying here is that while Christians are called from the bondage of the old law and the bondage of their sin, they should not use the liberty they are blessed with as a chance or a reason for sinning. Christ's law of liberty only works so long as one is faithful to that law. Paul provides a list of sins of the flesh coming up in verse 19-21 which if engaged in will keep any Christian out of their inheritance in the kingdom of God. The law of Christ provides no liberty for those who practice a sinful lifestyle.

Sadly, there are those living today who believe that the law of liberty does indeed relieve a Christian from their obligation to live according to their desires. This is nothing new. There people living under the law of Moses who thought the same thing. The attitude they had mirrors the attitude some today have about their sin.

Jeremiah 7:4-10

4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'

5 "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor,

6 if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt,

7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

8 "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.

9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know,

10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'?

(NLJV)

Today, people who have this attitude have replaced the temple with the blood of and they go about their lives thinking His blood delivers them from any obligations to live in accordance with the will of God. The freedom we have in Christ must never be understood to mean the freedom to live as we see fit and Paul will make this clear in the next few verses. People who try and set forth this idea of the freedom in Christ as being free from the obligation of obedience to God fail to take in the overall context of what Paul teaches concerning the freedom Christians enjoy through the gospel.

Galatians 5:14

"For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, (even) in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The "law" Paul is referring to here is the "law of Christ," mentioned again in Galatians 6:2, *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"*. This was also a commandment of the law of Moses as recorded in Leviticus 19:18, *"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor*

as yourself: *I am the Lord*" (NKJV). We know from the context of the entire letter that Paul is referring here to the law of Christ because he has been telling his readership all along that they are not supposed to follow the law of Moses and now here is a law they are supposed to follow. This is not the same law Paul has been condemning all along. Christ himself had made the "first and great commandment" to be the "love of God, and love of one's neighbor" (Mark 12:29-31). There has never been a time when this was not the primary obligation of anyone living in service to God.

In the immediate context of Paul's letter, let's keep in mind that he had informed them that followers of the Judaizers were severed from Christ, the Judaizers themselves were condemned, having just made a statement that he wished they would take their demands of circumcision much further on themselves, followed by his comments of their doctrine working its way throughout the church like leaven in bread dough. It's time he made sure the actions his teaching on this subject were sure to provoke within the congregations were carried out with the right attitude. The Galatian Christians were faced with some tough decisions. Paul's teaching here implied they had to act. Paul wants to remind them that the actions they are to take are done so in the proper manner and for the right reasons.

Galatians 5:15

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

The Judaizers had succeeded in their goal to a degree. We know that a certain percentage of the Christians in Galatia had fallen prey to their teachings. To what extent we can only speculate, but from the words of Paul, we can assume that the degree was enough that it had taken a firm hold and threatened the very existence of the Lord's church in that region. These Judaized members of the Lord's church had to be instructed correctly. The error they had fallen prey to had to be reversed. They had to be taught. Paul wants this process to be carried out in love and without destroying one another. The situation they were faced with if handled incorrectly could cause them to consume one another with the results being disastrous. Paul is telling them to make sure the cure for the apostasy from within does not cause additional harm within. Love and concern for one another is the key to making the task before them more successful.

This is not to be understood that severe action against error from within is not to be engaged in. Paul makes this perfectly clear in 1 Corinthians 5 where we read some very strong words in regards to the dealing of sin within a congregation. While love is always to be at the heart of our actions, there comes a time when that love means doing what's in the best interest of others, including those of the entire congregation. And if such action does become necessary, it is the responsibility of every Christian to take heed and be careful. Sometimes action is necessary, but do your best to make sure you don't consume each other and be lost as well.

Walking in the Spirit

Galatians 5:16

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

God's will for man is revealed by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 2:9-13, *"But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but*

which the Holy Spirit teaches..." (NKJV). The Holy Spirit was responsible for revealing and teaching God's will to the inspired men of the first century. And nothing necessary was left out as taught in 2 Peter 1:3, "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue". And then in 2 Tim 3:16-17, Paul wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." So we know from these scriptures that the Holy Spirit revealed all of the will of God to inspired men in the first century who then wrote it down in its entirety.

Therefore to walk in the Spirit simply means to obey the teachings given by Him. In the first century the Holy Spirit worked hand in hand with man to reveal God's word and to get it recorded. Today, we have God's word in written form. Walking in the Spirit for us today is the same as it was in the first century. When we obey the word of God, we are walking in the Spirit. By telling his readership to walk by the Spirit, Paul is simply telling them to walk according to the will of God. When one walks according to the will of God, then one will not walk after the ways of his own desires. Paul explains this in the next verse.

Galatians 5:17

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would."

The inclinations and desires of the flesh are contrary to those of the Spirit. They draw us away in an opposite direction, and while the Spirit of God would lead us one way, our fleshly desires would lead us another. As noted from the previous verse, the reference to the "Spirit" here refers to the Spirit of God who taught who was responsible for delivering to mankind the will of God. Paul goes into great detail in explaining the difference between the two in Rom 8:4-11, "that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

"that ye may not do the things that ye would."

Quite simply, walking in the Spirit means one cannot live according to their own desires. The Christian who would live according to the will of God must set their desires and passions aside and live in accordance to the will of God.

Galatians 5:18

"But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

"The law" in this context is the law of Moses. What the Spirit teaches and what the law teaches are mutually exclusive. Paul has been writing about fleshly desires and here he places the law of Moses in the same category as one's fleshly desires. This is a very significant point to draw from this context. The law of Moses is placed in the same grouping as a whole list of sins of the flesh coming up in the next verse. The obvious conclusion here is that

while the law of Moses had a purpose, that purpose has been fulfilled and as a result of that fulfillment, any adherence to it is a manifestation of the desires and passions of someone's heart as opposed to the direction the Spirit of God would lead. The Spirit of God and the law of Moses are mutually exclusive. The law of Moses has been fulfilled and discarded utterly and completely.

Galatians 5:19-21

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are (these): fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness"

Of great significance here is that Paul has started a list of sins which when he finishes states these things will keep one from their inheritance in the kingdom of God. Some points to keep in mind here as we go through this lengthy list is that first and foremost, Paul is writing to Christians, some of who had been severed from Christ and had fallen from God's grace. One prevalent modern doctrine which this list destroys is the doctrine of 'once saved always saved' (OSAS). If such a doctrine were true, then a Christian would be able to practice the things in the coming list without any danger of losing one's inheritance in the kingdom of God. There is no hint in this verse that such is the case.

Another prevalent doctrine that this destroys is that Paul's teaching on grace and law excludes a Christian from the necessity of strict obedience to the will of God. If this were the case and "law" in the letter of Galatians and elsewhere in scripture means the law of God under the gospel age then the list Paul gives here would not keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God.

And finally, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone is dealt a death blow here. If salvation were obtained on the merits of faith alone, then it would not be necessary to abstain from the list of fleshly sins which Paul lists here. Christians would not have to stop practicing a sinful lifestyle in order to inherit the kingdom of God which Paul flatly denies in verse 20.

Paul starts his list with the most obvious sins of the flesh. *"fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness"* This pretty well covers any kind of sexual sin that can be engaged in. If one were to make a table of sexual sins with these three headings, any one of these types of sin could be listed under one or more of these three categories. All sexual sin will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:20

"idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,"

"Idolatry"

literally means 'image worship'. This could be a pagan god or any material thing which one would desire more than they desire God. Concerning idolatry, Paul wrote in Colossians 3:5, *"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."* Idolatry certainly means image worship but on a broader scale, any material thing one may covet to the degree they set aside God's law is also a form of idolatry.

"Sorcery"

Other translations render this as witchcraft or magic. Simon the sorcerer Acts 8:9, *"But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great"*. Paul listed this as a sin of the flesh.

“enmities”

This means hatred, hostility, or a reason for opposition.

“strife”

Means to quarrel, or be contentious. The KJV renders this as *“variance”*.

“jealousies”

Means envy or haughty indignation.

“wraths”

The NKJV renders this as *“outbursts of wrath”*. An explosive temper that leads one to sudden displays of anger.

“factions”

The NKJV renders this as *“selfish ambitions”*. The original word carries the meaning of ‘intrigue’.

“divisions”

This means disunion and dissent. The KJV renders this word as seditions. Denominationalism would fall into this category and is listed as a sin of the flesh which will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God. Paul wrote specifically about this in his letter to the Christians in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, *“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”*

“parties”

This appears to be a somewhat unclear translation of the original text. The Greek word here carries the meaning of heresy or a sect. “Parties” in the correct sense of the original language would be groups of people who have separated themselves from the truth. Denominationalism falls into this category as well if not more so than under the heading of divisions. Denominations are divisions from the body of Christ. Those who are involved with them are members of entire groups of people who have separated themselves from the body of Christ. It is interesting to note here that this word in the original language is also used for the word ‘heresy’ which is how the KJV & NKJV translate this word. The NASB renders the original word as *‘factions’*.

Galatians 5:21

“envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“envyings”

Means ill-will or spite

“drunkenness”

means intoxication. It should be noted here that the state of being intoxicated is where the sin lies, therefore any substance which produced such an effect would be included in this category. Alcohol is not the only substance whose effect is intoxication.

“revellings”

Means carousing. Drinking parties, lewd celebrations, gatherings where fleshly desires are commonly sought after. In modern days, drinking establishments, wild parties, drinking parties, gatherings where drugs are taken, etc, etc are what's in view here. The NIV and the ESV render this as *“orgies”*. This is probably due to the fact that the original word comes from a root word which means to lie outstretched.

“ and such like”

Paul has provided a fairly comprehensive list of sins of the flesh here for his readership to examine. There may be some similar behaviors that people could deny as falling into a specific category given by Paul. He eliminates that possibility right here by adding that anything like these behaviors which may not be specifically mentioned are included.

“of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Makes his case right here very simple and easy to understand. Those who practice as a lifestyle any of the specific sins or anything of a similar nature will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is another way of saying “will not live in heaven with God”. Those who are denied entrance into the kingdom of God will not be living in heaven with God for eternity.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.
New King James Version

Galatians 5:22

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”

The fruit of the Spirit here is given as the contrast to the sins of the flesh. Paul is saying that the results of what the Spirit teaches, when lived and rightly applied, bring about certain characteristics or behaviors which manifest themselves in a Christian. And these are:

1) The fruit of *“Love”*

The first one on the list is ‘agape’ love which is a selfless, sacrificial type of love which leads oneself to act in the best interest of others. In the Greek there is another word for the emotional type of love which is “phileo”. This type of love is one which denotes affection or personal attachment as a matter of sentiment or feeling. We have an example in scripture where both ‘agape’ and ‘phileo’ are used in John 21:15-17, “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to

Simon Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me more than these?"* He said to Him, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You."* He said to him, *"Feed My lambs."* 16 He said to him again a second time, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me?"* He said to Him, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You."* He said to him, *"Tend My sheep."* 17 He said to him the third time, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [phileo] Me?"* Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, *"Do you love [phileo] Me?"* And he said to Him, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [phileo] You."* Jesus said to him, *"Feed My sheep."*

It is very significant here that Jesus asked Peter two times if he had that agape love for Him and then the third time he had to change the word in order to get an affirmative answer and Peter was grieved because of it. And we need to keep in mind that this was after Jesus' resurrection and Peter knew that he had denied Jesus on the night preceding his crucifixion three times. So when Jesus asked Peter if he has that 'agape' kind of love which will compel one to do what is in the best interest of others no matter the personal cost, Peter was unable to reply that he did because he felt a lot of personal guilt over having denied Him. Peter chose the other kind of love in its place, the love which denotes affection or personal attachment as a matter of sentiment or feeling. The application we need to make from this is that the love Paul says is the fruit of the Spirit is the 'agape' love and not 'phileo' love. When we are told to love our enemies in Matthew 5:44, it is the 'agape' love which is commanded. We are to do what's best for others without regard to how we feel about them. That is the love which is a fruit of the Spirit and which we are to strive to adorn ourselves with.

Paul provides a detailed description of "agape" love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*

2) The fruit of "Joy"

This word means cheerfulness and calm delight. Joy is a deep happiness in the Christian's relationship with Jesus Christ. Philippians 4:4, *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"*

The joy a Christian has in his hope is much more than an emotional state. Joy, like all the other fruits of the Spirit is a quality of life: 1 Peter 1:7-8, *"that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory"* This is a joy that permeates every facet of the Christian's life and is evident in all they are and all they do.

3) The fruit of "peace"

This word means quietness and rest. Through the old law, the Jews were never able to receive total justification. The best the law of Moses had to offer in this regard was a temporary atonement. The peace which Paul wrote of in Philippians 4:7 was never available to them: *"and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* Through Christ one can have this peace which can only come from a total reconciliation with God the Father.

It is God's will that we have peace with one another: Ephesians 4:1-3, *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."

Christians are expected to be the promoters of peace among mankind Jesus taught in Matthew 5:9, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."* Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, *"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another."* Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:10-11, *"For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it."*

Unfortunately, while peace is a fruit of the Spirit, there will be some with whom peace will never prevail: Matthew 10:34, *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."* Paul wrote in Romans 12:18, *"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."* The truth is divisive to those who refuse it because truth cannot ally itself with error. While the Christian is obligated to live peaceably with all men, this peace cannot exist in the presence of error. 2 John 9-11, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."*

4) The fruit of "longsuffering"

Longsuffering means to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart, to persevere patiently and bravely and endure misfortunes and troubles, to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others, to be mild and slow to avenging, to be slow to anger and slow to punish. Longsuffering and the next two fruits, "kindness" and "goodness" are the benevolent fruits.

God is longsuffering: 2 Peter 3:9, *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

Christians must be longsuffering: Ephesians 4:1-3, *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

Colossians 3:12, *"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;"*

Longsuffering is a quality of life which must be evidenced in a Christian's demeanor and behavior.

5) The fruit of "kindness"

means gentleness, moral excellence in character or demeanor.

Longsuffering causes the Christian to be patiently tolerant but that in and of itself is not sufficient. The fruit of longsuffering must be complimented with kindness.

Ephesians 4:32, *"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."*

Kindness does not allow us to compromise the truth. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:7-8, *"...but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."* Galatians 5:4, *"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."* The Christian cannot plead kindness as a reason for compromising truth.

6) The fruit of "goodness"

Virtue or the doing of good; active goodness or kindness; charity. Helpful to others in need and helping those who have harmed us. longsuffering is patient tolerance of others and kindness is gentle demeanor towards others but these two alone are still not sufficient. To these two, a Christian must add goodness.

Romans 12:17-21, *"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Goodness includes benevolence: Galatians 6:10, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."* This letter was addressed to the churches in Galatia (1:2), therefore the church/body of Christ is required to perform benevolent works to others with a preference towards those of the faith. It would be wrong for a congregation to neglect a needy saint in favor of an alien sinner. Paul commended the Corinthian church for their distribution of benevolent works to all, both in and outside the body of Christ: 2 Corinthians 9:13, *"while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men"*. When it comes to benevolence, good stewardship must prevail.

All of these benevolent fruits work together to form a faithful and obedient Christian like all the others are not just a show put on to impress others, rather it is a quality of life which must be included in the overall makeup of the faithful Christian. Each one building and complementing the other. None of them can be left out. They are non-optional.

7) The fruit of "faithfulness"

This word means a conviction of the truthfulness of God and His word which results in obedience to it no matter the cost. When examining the fruit of faithfulness there is no better example to be found in scripture than Hebrews 11. This chapter is sometimes called 'faith's hall of heroes'. The chapter is full of examples of people from various walks of life who conquered insurmountable odds, overcame persecution and persevered through unthinkable hardships,

sometimes paying the ultimate price for their faith. Throughout this chapter these great people of faith demonstrated their faithfulness through their obedience to God. The fruit of faithfulness is nothing less than faith completed by obedience. Faith without obedience does not have the fruit of faithfulness attached. The heroes of faith were faithful because they obeyed by faith. Christians today are likewise faithful when they are obedient. The fruit of the faithfulness is the same thing as obedience to God. This fruit of the Spirit like all the rest is non-optional and is a quality of life in a faithful Christian.

Galatians 5:23

“meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.”

The fruit of *“meekness”*

Means mildness and humility. Meekness in the original language does not in any way mean weak. Someone who was meek was strong in their convictions but harmless to others in the way it is demonstrated. The original term was used to describe a wild horse that had been tamed, but without his spirit being broken. The strength and power of the horse remained, but was tempered with gentleness.

Titus 3:1-2, *“Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work,*

2 to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men.” (ASV). The NKJV translates the word for *“meekness”* as *“humility”*. Someone who is meek has an humble demeanor associated with them.

1 Peter 3:4, *“but (let it be) the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible (apparel) of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”* The NKJV translates the word for *“meek”* and *“gentle”* in this verse. Gentleness is a quality of someone who is meek. Gentle, and humble does not in any way mean weak. A wild horse who has been tamed can be humble and gentle but still have the strength and power of a horse. A Christian can likewise have great strength, but display this strength with a quiet and gentle or humble spirit, a spirit of meekness.

Christ is our perfect example of meekness: Matthew 11:29, *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”* (ASV). The NKJV translates this as *“gentle”*.

Paul was meek, yet strong: 2 Corinthians 10:1, *“Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ – who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.”*

We are restore fallen saints in meekness: Galatians 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”*. This is something Paul knew the saints in Galatia had before them. They were going to have to restore the Judaized members among them to the truth of the gospel. That is why Paul told them not to bite and devour one another in this process (V15). They were to demonstrate meekness as a quality of life.

The fruit of *“temperance”* or *“self control”*

The original word literally means *“self control”* which is one’s ability to govern and keep in check their passions and desires so that they will resist them. Another term for this is *‘self mastery’*. Paul wrote concerning his quest to

demonstrate self control in: 1 Corinthians 9:25-27, *"And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."* Paul ends this with the words *"lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."* A lack of self control or temperance can cause one to be lost.

The fruits of the Spirit which Paul have listed here are required qualities of life which are non-optional to a Christian who would lead a successful Christian life and inherit eternal life. These fruits are required characteristics of an obedient servant of Christ. And contrary what many people in the religious world say today, the acquisition of these fruits of the Spirit are our responsibility. Christians have a role to fulfill in their salvation and the development of the fruits of the Spirit are a part of that role which must be undertaken by a Christian who would live an acceptable life before God. Paul makes this requirement more evident later in this letter.

"against such there is no law."

There are no rules against doing those things which are the evidence of the fruits the Spirit. There is no law against loving others in acts of self sacrifice, there is no law against acting in harmony with any of the things which characterize a Christian who has the fruits of the Spirit. Christians can love one another, they can love those outside the body of Christ. Christians can help one another and they can help those outside the body of Christ. Benevolence, generosity, faithfulness, kindness and longsuffering are options available to members of the body of Christ. There are no laws against such things. In other words, it is not a transgression of God's will to do these things.

The fruits of the Spirit are not something that the Holy Spirit of God injects into the Christian without any effort on the part of the believer. Rather these fruits are the end result of a Christian who diligently applies themselves to their acquisition. Notice Peter's words in:

2 Peter 1:5-10, *"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble"*

These things which Peter commanded his readership to add to their faith are fruits of the Spirit, many of which Paul mentioned in his letter to the Galatians. Peter leaves no doubt that the Christian has an obligation in this and that failure to meet this obligation constitutes a shortsightedness, even to blindness. Peter commanded them to be diligent to add these fruits of the Spirit in order to make their calling to Christ a sure thing. The fruits of the Spirit are therefore necessary and required characteristics which a Christian must exhibit if they are to live an acceptable life before God. A Christian must therefore examine him or herself and determine what, if any deficiencies are present and then work to acquire these characteristics for themselves.

Galatians 5:24

"And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof."

All of the things mentioned are the qualities produced within one when they act on the teachings of the Spirit. The Spirit does not miraculously inject someone with these qualities as some today try to teach. Rather these qualities are developed as a conscious effort of the Christian striving to live as the spirit would have them and as a result developing those qualities over time and through perseverance. These qualities are a result of applying oneself to the teachings of the Spirit and developing these qualities in contrast with the works of the flesh. When one puts off the works of the flesh and diligently applies the teachings of the Spirit of God, the fruit of that effort is the qualities we need to develop. Both the Spirit and man have a role to fulfill in this. The Spirit teaches through the word of God, mankind obeys those teachings and develops these qualities and they are the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul uses the imagery of the cross to illustrate how painful a process this can be. Christ crucified His flesh in agony for us, now when we put off the desires of the flesh and seek the fruits of the Spirit, we similarly go through a painful process. It is not easy to put to death our passions and lusts. Just like Christ sacrificed Himself, we similarly sacrifice ourselves in the pursuit of righteousness. It's painful; it's difficult; it's a sacrifice of love and self.

Galatians 5:25

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."

This is a command. Paul is telling his readership here that their life in the Spirit is a walk. This means it is a lifelong commitment of action. The sentence starts with a conditional term. "If" we are going to live by the Spirit then we must walk in the Spirit. Action is required. The application for us today is the exact same as it was for them. Our life in the Spirit today is every much a walk for us as it was for them. The Holy Spirit was responsible for getting God's will for us recorded, so if we are going to live by the word that the Holy Spirit inspired, then we too must walk according to that word. We are to act upon the teachings therein in obedience. We are to submit to that authority and obey it's teachings. It is never good enough to just believe the truth, one must obey it.

Galatians 5:26

"Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another."

These three statements were a reference to some of the failings of the Judaizers. They sought to gain control of the Galatian Christians thus exalting themselves. They attacked those who opposed their doctrine, and they envied anyone who might occupy a position of greater influence than they did. Paul is telling them not act like them. Live and walk by the Spirit, do not act like them. These behaviors are contrary to the fruits of the Spirit.

Vain Glory:

When the Christian who through the agony of crucifying their flesh to their passions and lusts and who through personal effort have developed and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in their lives are successful, they will not seek personal glory, they will not provoke another and they will not envy one another. We can add these to the list of sins of the flesh that Paul listed earlier. These self serving qualities are in direct conflict with the qualities of a Christian who has developed the fruits of the Spirit.

Luke 14:10-11

"But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Philippians 2:3-4

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Galatians 5 Paraphrase

So then stand firm in the freedom that Christ provided for you and do not be snared back into the bondage of the law of Moses. I, the apostle Paul, am telling you that if you are circumcised as an act of commitment to the law of Moses then Christ will be of no benefit to you at all. I'm telling you for a fact that anyone who receives the circumcision of the old law obligates them self to the practice all of that law. Anyone who tries to be justified by the law of Moses is severed from Christ and falls from grace.

For through the teachings of the Spirit of God, by faith, we wait patiently for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision or uncircumcision is of any benefit. What does profit us is our faith working through love.

You Galatians were doing great. So who is this that deceived you into thinking you didn't have to obey the truth? The one who called you into the light by the gospel never said such a thing. Be wary, because like leaven working through bread dough, the Judaizers will corrupt the whole church. I am confident that once you read this epistle, you will know better than to be persuaded from the truth. Those who are guilty of trying to teach you to follow the old law will bear their judgment whoever they are.

If I were still preaching the circumcision of the law of Moses, then why am I yet being persecuted? If I were indeed preaching circumcision like some have claimed then the cross of Christ which is the obstacle in the path of the Judaizers would have been removed and there would be no cause for them to persecute me any more. I wish those who were teaching you to be circumcised would go beyond that and mutilate themselves.

You Christians were called for freedom from the bondage of sin, however you should never use this freedom as an opportunity to sin, but through love be servants of each other. For the whole law of Christ is fulfilled when you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. As you work yourselves out of the doctrine of the Judaizers, be careful that you do not attack each other to the point that you cause yourselves to be condemned as well.

Live your lives after the teachings of the Spirit and you will not fulfill your fleshly desires. Because the desires of the flesh conflict with the teachings of the Spirit and the Spirit conflicts with the desires of the flesh. These two are opposed to each other so you cannot live any way you want. If you are led by the Spirit of God, you cannot live according to the law of Moses.

Now the works of the flesh are evident and these are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, heresies, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things similar to these. I am warning you that anyone who practices such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the results of living according to the teachings of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self control. There is no law against exhibiting these characteristics. Those who are of Christ Jesus have put away the passions and lusts of the flesh. If we live by the Spirit, then let us live according to His teachings. We must not allow ourselves to become proud and arrogant, nor should we provoke or envy one another.

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