



HIGHER GROUND  
CALVARY CHAPEL

# SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

GALATIANS: FAITH VERSUS WORKS

Class 05

Freedom In Christ

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In Chapter 5 we have three sections:

- Stand In Liberty (Verses 1-6)
- Serve In Love (Verses 7-15)
- The War Within (Verses 16-26)

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Up to this point in his letter, Paul has been defending the gospel of salvation by grace alone and his position and authority as an apostle.

In the middle of his letter, he changes his tone and attitude from that of a scholar and authoritative apostle to a pastor and 'passionate lover of the soul.'

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He is angry with the Judaizers and with the fact that the Galatian Christians have practically thrown out the gospel that they so readily accepted and believed, beginning a new life in the Christian faith.

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Paul is dumbfounded by this and even considers they have wasted his time.  
But he perseveres in his letter, though he desires to be in their presence so he could physically talk with them.

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Whom he had called fools and foolish, he now calls “brethren” (brothers and sisters – in Christ) and continues this throughout the remainder of the letter.

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He has been contrasting the benefits of the gospel and the downfalls of the law.

In the previous section of his letter (Chapter 4), Paul compared a child to that of a slave; both being equal in status, but the child is free and an heir.

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At the father's appointed time the child becomes eligible to receive the family inheritance.

The heavenly Father's appointed time was when Jesus came to earth and all who believe in Him,

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who accept His gospel of salvation by grace through faith, are immediately adopted into His "family" and become sons and daughters, immediate heirs to the kingdom of God.

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There is no law involved in grace and at the end of the previous section Paul tells the Galatians to throw out the law, just as Abraham through out Hagar and Ishmael.

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He's now beginning to wind down this letter and moves to the liberty believers experience in Christ, but warns against using their "liberty as an opportunity for the flesh." He exhorts them instead to serve one another through love (v. 14).

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Further on in this chapter Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit (fruit of the Spirit), encouraging his readers to not only live in the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit.

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**Stand in Liberty**

Galatians 5:1-6

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Paul uses these words, “stand fast,” 6 times in his letters (1 Cor 16:13, Gal 5:1, Phil 1:27 and 4:1, 1 Thes 3:8, 2 Thes 2:15). They are also used in Psalm 11:8 and Jeremiah 46:14.

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Of course, this doesn't mean to quickly stand.  
To stand fast is “to hold one's ground, maintain a position, be steadfast, remain upright, persist, persevere, and don't give up.”

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Paul just wrote about their adoption and position as sons and daughters and the freedom they have in Christ, no longer bound by their previous ways and certainly not bound by the Mosaic law.

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Now he says, "Hold your position, don't give up the freedom and liberty you have in Christ!"  
"Therefore" is referring to the previous verses at the end of chapter 4.  
Again, this is a continuous letter so in its originality, there was no break here.

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As Paul writes, he wants the Galatians to stand fast because, "we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free."  
All true believers are no longer under the bondage of any law nor of sin. We are set free by Christ.

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If you have ever been involved in or seen a tug-o-war you know that the people on both sides are digging their feet in, trying to hold fast their position and with the strength of the team attempting to pull the opposing team across a line.

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That is the image of being steadfast in the liberty.  
The opposition is the devil and his lies.  
He is tugging on the rope to pull believers into his traps.  
We are pulling against him, but we have the power of the Holy Spirit.

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We cannot win this tug-o-war by our own power.  
It would be no contest.  
What is this liberty that Paul is talking about?  
It can be translated “freedom.”

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We generally associate liberty to those objects of liberty we Americans have – the Liberty Bell, Statue of Liberty and our Pledge of Allegiance.

We also have memorized the words of Patrick Henry, “Give me liberty or give me death,” from his famous speech before the Continental Congress.

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The definition of liberty is “the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one’s way of life, behavior, or political views.”

Vine’s Expository Dictionary states liberty is rendered “freedom” here in Galatians 5:1

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If we use “freedom” in place of liberty, we would read, “the freedom by which Christ has made us free” or “with freedom did Christ set us free.”

Freedom being a noun and free being a verb makes the work of Christ in us complete, meaning it was done once for all.

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Vine's definition also states possibly the preferred meaning is: "not to bring us into another form of bondage did Christ liberate us from that in which we were born, but in order to make us free from bondage."

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Not necessarily the bondage of sin, but the bondage of the law.

Though it is true that Christ has also freed us from the bondage of the flesh (sin), we will continue to sin until we are made perfect.

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Paul is specifically referring to the bondage of the law, whether it be the of the Mosaic law or the natural law.

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“What Christ has done in liberating us, according to Paul’s emphasis here, is not so much to set our will free from the bondage of sin as to set our conscience free from the guilt of sin” (John R.W. Stott).<sup>1</sup>

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The Galatians had never been under the Mosaic Law and Paul is telling them that through the freedom Christ has given them they are truly free from the tyranny of the law.

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They are free from the continuous struggle to obey the law and the feeling of guilt when they fail to do so. As J. Vernon McGee says, “liberty is not a rule, it’s a principle.”<sup>2</sup>

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Though this too is an impossibility, (for fall short of the glory of God), it is the desire in our new nature.

We have not received the perfect life yet so we will fail, but God forgives us of our shortcomings and we continue in a forward motion, striving to please Him.

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Why does Paul want these Christians to hold their ground and not give up their freedom in Christ?

So they don't get "*entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*"

I don't know if any of you have ever been tangled up in barbed wire, but I can tell you it is no fun.

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It is painful and unless you have wire cutters on you, you will need help getting untangled.

To be tangled with a yoke is not as painful, but there isn't a great deal of mobility. There is no freedom to go where you want to go.

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When we think of a yoke, we typically think of a pair of oxen or cows that are connected together with a “yoke” for the purpose of pulling a wagon, cart or even a plow.

For you younger students, this is what it looks like.

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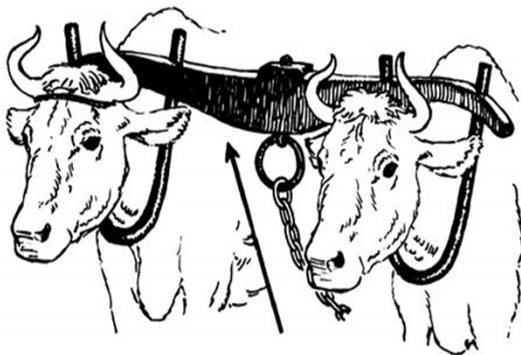
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A yoke is simply something that connects two or more objects together in order to make them work in unison under the control of a guide.

For farming and traveling, the yoke made it so the oxen would stay together and balance the burden between them.

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The yoke was also used in training. An experienced ox would be used to train a younger ox.

Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt 11:29-30).

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Jesus uses a word picture here to demonstrate that He is able to carry the heavy burdens that the world puts upon us – all the worries, problems and unexpected events and expectations.

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We go through a process where we *learn* to give Him our burdens.

For some reason, it's difficult at first, but we do learn eventually to give Him all of our burdens.

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Rest for those who are in bondage doesn't come until the end of that bondage.

For the farm animals, rest comes at the end of the day, but the work starts all over the next day until the work is done. Jesus has done the work.

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And we can rest in that! There is no work for us to do when it comes to salvation. Paul is taking the Galatians back to this point.

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Since they have received freedom from the bondage of every law from Christ, they need to stand firm in their freedom and not give in to the bondage of the law.

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Don't let the law be as a yoke that controls you and forces you to go places and do things you are not required to do as sons and daughters of God. This is the yoke of slavery.

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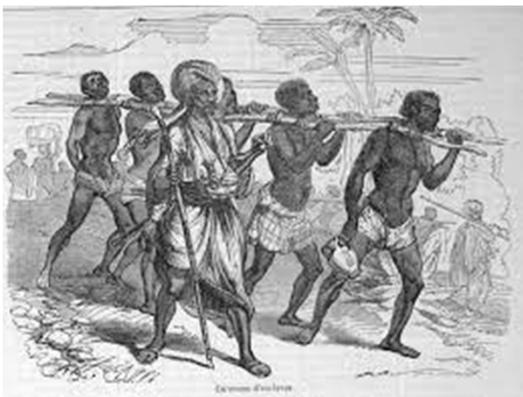
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Paul had said that as children we were under the authority of guardians, just as slaves are. But now as believers, we are adopted as sons and daughters, no longer under this guardianship.

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Verses 2-4

Paul is saying, "Look, this is Paul writing, and ultimately speaking, to you.

I'm not one of the Judaizers, but I'm your pastor, an apostle of Jesus Christ and it is in His authority that I came to you first and started the church there.

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Because of this I have authority over the church."

In these three verses Paul tells them that rather than gaining benefits from circumcision, there are consequences.

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Though circumcision was a physical procedure, it was not a physical process, nor a ceremonial rite.

Circumcision was a commandment of God for the Children of Israel making it a theological symbol.

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Paul lays out four consequences, even sentences, resulting from them being circumcised:

1. Christ will profit you nothing (v. 2)
2. You are always indebted to keep the whole law (v. 3)
3. You have become estranged from Christ (v. 4)
4. You have fallen from grace (v. 4)

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Before circumcision, Abraham was justified by his faith.

He was then commanded by God to be circumcised; he and all the Israelite males.

This was a physical mark of cutting and a spiritual mark of identification.

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Through the physical cutting, God was spiritually cutting the people out of the rest of the human race to be his people. It was the promise of blessing and sanctification.

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It also meant that if a Hebrew male disobeyed the covenant God made with Abraham he would be cut off from the blessing and glory of God, symbolizing the flesh that had been cut from him.

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If you have ever been to a rodeo or have seen one on TV there is a competition for “cutting” steers from a small herd. Horses, generally Quarter Horses, are trained for this specific purposes.

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They are called “cutting horses.”

10-12 steers are turned loose in the are and the cowboy is told which steer to cut out of the herd. It can be one or as many as three.

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The cowboys are timed for this event from the time they are released.

The horse and rider act as one as they move to “cut” the steer from the herd. It’s really an amazing thing to watch.

In a sense, that’s what circumcision was (and still is for the Jews).

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God set them apart from all the other human beings. He “cut” them out.

But now all believers are spiritually circumcised by the blood of Christ.

Through Christ we are set apart from the rest of humanity.

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Paul is now telling the Galatian Christians that there is absolutely no value anymore in physical circumcision.

The consequences are many and certainly not worth it.

Adding the law to your salvation nullifies your salvation and Christ has no value for you.

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We are spiritually rich in Christ.

We share in the riches of God's grace (Eph 1:7)

We share in the riches of His glory and the glory of Christ's inheritance (Eph 1:18; Phil 4:19)

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We share in the riches of His wisdom and Knowledge (Rom 11:33)

We share in the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph 3:8)

Colossians 2:3 tells us that in Christ we have "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

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These are all the things the Galatians were willing to give up for circumcision.

Christ has no value and they will fall under the rule of the entire law, not just the portion that pertains to circumcision, and since they will never be able to keep the whole law they will always be indebted to it.

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It's like our mortgage, until we pay it off, we are always indebted to the mortgage company.

Unless they are free of the law, they will always be indebted to it, like the Jews are today.

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KJV uses the phrase, "become of no effect unto you," (become estranged) and it means "to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative."

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This means that Christ is no longer an active part of your Christian life, nor can He be. He will not compete with the law or with idols and other religions.

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Commentators spend more time explaining falling from grace and either mention very little or nothing about this part of verse 4. They are synonymous with one another.

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Once a person adds anything to their salvation by grace through faith, Christ has no effect in their lives and they fall from grace. Can they be restored? Absolutely!

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Dropping to the low level of the law is falling from grace.

Dropping to the low level of another religion is also falling from grace.

Eleven times in the Old Testament God says that He is a jealous God.

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He desires us to give all to Him and not try to substitute all of Him with something else.

These are the dangers believers face when they try to add to salvation by grace through faith with works.

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Paul isn't just warning the Galatians, he's warning all true believers, God's sons and daughters.

If God promises to provide everything his children need (and He does), why would we want to try to add anything to that?

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There's nothing to add.  
The law will not provide anything we need.  
Idols and other religions will not provide anything we need.  
"To live by grace means to live by God's abundant supply of every need.

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To live by Law means to depend on my own strength—the flesh—and to be left to get by without God's supply" (Warren Wiersbe).<sup>3</sup>

Verses 5-6

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Paul is declaring there is no righteousness in the Law, but that it is through the Holy Spirit that we greatly anticipate the day we receive God's righteousness.

In our present state we are only righteous through and because of Christ.

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Isaiah said that he was clothed in righteousness.

61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
My soul shall be joyful in my God;

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For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments,  
And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.

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Every true believer in Christ Jesus can declare this same thing.

It is Christ who covers us in His righteousness, but there will be a day when we receive His righteousness.

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This is the only prophetic statement Paul makes in Galatians.

Our hope is a true hope, not some wish that is made by breaking a wishbone and imagining the possibilities of it coming true.

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This hope is assurance, or the expectation, that we *will* receive righteousness because of our faith in Christ.

When it comes to Christ, the only things that matter is faith and love.

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Circumcision and uncircumcision are meaningless to Him.

It is only the circumcision of one's heart that matters.

And the circumcision is done through faith in Christ and His love for us.

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But Paul says here that we need to have *faith working through love*.

Wait, he's been saying all along that salvation is by faith alone.

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Is he now adding works, which is contrary to what he has been refuting?

No, not at all.

True faith will always manifest itself in and through love.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is in us.

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He was in the Galatian Christians.

It is the Holy Spirit in us who produces the good works of love.

The NIV translation is, "*faith expressing itself through love.*"

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Love does not add anything to salvation by grace through faith.

Faith which saves is faith that works, a faith that is expressed in love.

James 2:20, 26 says that “faith without works is dead.”

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James doesn't say that 'salvation without works is dead.'

We hear pastors and Bible teachers say that we need to exercise our “faith muscle.”

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Faith by itself is all that is needed for salvation, but Christian growth requires exercising that faith, beginning with love.

God's love is the foundation for our faith so love should be the foundation for our Christianity.

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**Serve In Love**

Galatians 5:7-15

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To “run well” is to obey the truth.  
John Stott says it is “applying  
belief to behavior.”

Paul is speaking in the past  
tense.

They were running well, obeying  
the truth of the gospel, at the  
beginning after they believed and  
received the Holy Spirit.

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As we have seen before, Paul  
often uses physical athletics  
(running) as a word picture for  
the Christian faith and  
relationship with Christ.

They were doing great when  
he left them.

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They believed the truth of the gospel and that Christ had set them free from their bondage of sin and corruption.

They obeyed the truth and enjoyed their new freedom in Christ.

What happened?

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He asks, "Who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

*Who* implies it was only one who threw an obstacle in their path.

The false teachers had come and contradicted the truth they had believed.

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The result was what we read previously; they estranged themselves from Christ and fell from grace.

But it was much more than just the words of the false teachers.

Paul says, "*This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*"

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Galatians 1:6 told us it was God who called them to grace. The only who that is behind this persuasion is Satan. Every person is under one of two influences: the influence of the Spirit of God or the influence of the spirit of Satan.

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The Judaizers apparently did not know they were being influenced by the spirit of Satan. A true believer cannot be possessed by a demon or demons, but we can certainly be influenced by them.

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Where does temptation come from? The Spirit of God took Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt 4:1)  
*James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

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Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness by the Word of God and then He defeated him again in the grave.

Temptation can only come from the devil.

Evil is Satan's agenda and he roams around seeking those whom he may devour.

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Under the influence of Satan, the false teachers were spreading a gospel of works.

They were trying to convince the Galatians to abandon the truth of the gospel.

After Paul says this, he takes them to a baking class.

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If you have ever made bread, you know how yeast works.

It only takes a small amount to mix in with the dough so it will rise.

The same way a small amount of yeast affects the dough for a single loaf of bread, evil has the same effect in the church.

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It just takes one person to spread a little gossip or one person to convince another of a different doctrine to create dissention in the church. Paul is saying that these false teachers have infected the whole Galatian church.

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This kind of destruction must be stopped in its tracks. This is why Paul is writing this letter. He is trying to stop the infection that is running rampant through the new church in Galatia.

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Paul's confidence is not so much in them as it is in the Lord. We often place confidence in the ability of another person who has demonstrated their ability to do a specific thing.

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But when it comes to guidance for someone or for a thing, our confidence should be in Christ. When we place confidence in ourselves or in another person, we are giving the flesh more value than it deserves.

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I have a good friend that was very conscientious of herself and thought people were looking at her when she was singing. She was allowing her “flesh” to lack the confidence she needed.

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I often asked her, “Who is your confidence in?” She always answered, “Jesus,” but she didn’t stand on that confidence.

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Paul was confident that the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, would guide these Christians to maintain the mind of Christ and stop allowing the false teachers to continue in the trouble they had begun.

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“He who troubles you” again is Satan by way of the false teachers.  
He is throwing them into this state of confusion.  
Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the *author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

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If it's not God, then it can only be one other, Satan.  
We know this because Paul uses the singular, “he” and “his”  
In 4:14 Paul says, “they zealously court you,” and “they want to exclude you.”

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So we know there was more than one of the false teaching Judaizers.

Paul is referring back to what he had said in 3:1 – “Who bewitched you?”

The same *one* who bewitched them is also the *one* who is behind these false teachers.

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He is the real one who is troubling them and he knows his end.

He will bear his own judgement.

“Whoever he is” means, “whoever he is to you.”

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Paul knew that Satan was behind all of this, but there seems that there was one man leading all the other false teachers.

He too will be judged for his misleading, just as all the false teachers today will be judged one day when they stand before Jesus.

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They will all be held accountable for misleading and misguiding the sheep. But I also believe that each individual will be held accountable for his/her actions and for falling into the trap these false teachers have set.

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Paul was hopeful and believed that the Galatians would see the errors of their way and return to the gospel that he preached to them at the beginning. Paul had not changed the gospel he had preached to them.

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If he had, he asks “why am I still being persecuted?” The gospel of grace (salvation by grace alone) was not being accepted by the Judaizers and Paul was being persecuted for what he was teaching.

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By adding just one part of the law to the gospel of grace nullifies the offense of the cross.

The cross was (and still is) an offense to many people, but particularly the Jews.

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The cross meant that justification was no longer accomplished through works.

Why anyone would want to continue “working” for justification is beyond me.

Today we see religions and cults working for justification from God, but they will not receive it.

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The cross is an offense to them too.

Man’s pride says that he must earn his way to justification.

When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He meant it was finished.

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Nothing more had to be done for salvation and justification for every man and woman.

Then Paul adds, *“I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”*

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There is a difference of opinion as to what Paul is saying here.

One opinion is that Paul just wants these Judaizers to be removed from the Galatians.

Another opinion is that Paul wishes these Judaizers would be castrated so they would not produce more “children of slavery.”

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The phrase, “cut off” is the Greek word *apokoptō* and means, “to cut off, amputate.”

Vine’s Expository Dictionary states that the phrase in the literal sense speaks of “members of the body;” metaphorically, in the Middle Voice, of “cutting off oneself,” to excommunicate.

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Whatever Paul actually meant we know he was not happy with these men and the way they were misguiding the new believers in Galatia.

John 3:16

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That means that every human being is “called to liberty,” but not every human being answers the call.

If you have a cell phone you likely get many calls that you ignore.

We call them “SPAM” calls.

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But Jesus doesn’t use a cell phone, He uses the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to people.

God calls people to Jesus through the “voice” of the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, so many people refuse to answer that call.

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They treat it like a “SPAM” call and ignore it.

For those who have answered the call to liberty, they must be careful not to abuse this liberty.

Paul warns the Galatians (and all believers) to not use this liberty in Christ to indulge in the flesh.

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The flesh is our fallen human nature.

In Christ we have a new nature, we are a new creation but the old nature is still lingering and is anxious to get us into trouble.

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Paul said in Romans 6:1 “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

And 6:15 “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” Certainly not!

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Paul is telling the Galatians that though they are free from the law, that doesn't give you license to go do whatever you want to do.  
Sin is still sin and God hates sin.

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Paul says, "do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh"  
The word, opportunity (KJV occasion) is the Greek word *aphormē*  
It is a military term for "a place from which a movement or attack is made, a base of operations."

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Christian freedom, then, is not to give a base of opportunity, or operations for the flesh.  
Rather than abusing God's grace with the flesh, Paul says to serve one another through love.

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Instead of serving the flesh,  
serve one another.  
But don't serve out of duty,  
because you think it is a good  
work or because it seems  
right.  
Do it out of love for each other.

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The agape love; the love that God  
has for everyone demonstrated  
by the sacrifice of His only  
begotten Son.  
A deep, sincere and unconditional  
love.  
When a believer has this love for  
another there is nothing that  
interferes with it.

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There's no pride or arrogance,  
no discontent, anger or jealousy.  
There is joy, compassion, and  
pure love.  
We are then reminded of the  
words of Jesus regarding the  
law: "*You shall love your  
neighbor as yourself.*"

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Jesus said that He fulfilled the law; all of the law.

And Jesus fulfilled the law through demonstrating love: love for God the Father and love for one another.

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Matthew 22:37-40 37 Jesus said to him (a Pharisee lawyer), “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

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If anyone truly loved the Lord God and one another in these ways, then they would never sin.

We all love ourselves.

In our true nature we are self-satisfying, self-indulging, self-gratifying.

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The world today is all about taking care of “the self.”

It doesn't seem like it was this long ago (to some of us), but in January 1979 Phyllis Starr Wilson started Self Magazine for women.

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There's nothing wrong with taking care of ourselves since Paul tells us that the human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The focus, however, is, as the magazine states, on the Self.

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The true believer's attention is focused on God and others, not so much on ourselves.

Having this *agape* love for our brothers and sisters and “neighbors” will not give opportunity to be cruel to one another.

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“Biting and devouring” are acting maliciously toward others in speech and/or actions.

We’re all probably familiar with the term, *backbiting*, which means to say mean or spiteful things about a person who is not present.

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This can often happen within the church and will create great problems, including dissention.

Paul is warning the church against such things because the results can be devastating.

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**The War Within**

Galatians 5:16-26

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There is a war being waged within every human being and it has been going on since the fall of mankind.

It is not a physical war, but a spiritual war.

It may not be physical, but it does affect the physical.

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It is spirit against flesh; old nature against the new nature; the spirit of Satan against the Spirit of God

The spiritual war has been going on even before creation.

We talked about it in the Cults module and the Gifts of the Spirit module.

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Paul tells the Galatians that they can defeat the desires of the flesh by “walking in the Spirit.”

Walking in the Spirit is being in complete submission to the Holy Spirit at all times.

The idea here to begin with is that it is time for these Christians to walk.

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They are no longer little children, infants.  
They are now like adult sons and daughters.  
The time of crawling and stumbling is over.  
It's time to walk, but they don't have to walk alone.

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The Holy Spirit is in them so He is always with them, just as he is in and with every true believer.  
Infants and little children seem to always get into things they shouldn't be getting into.

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As we mature we are less likely to do those things we did as little children.  
We still do things we aren't supposed to do, but, as Paul stated before, we are no longer under the guardianship as little children.

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Parents often have said, “Act your age.”

Paul is telling the Galatians to “act their age” as grown-up believers.

It’s time to walk.

At the beginning of the chapter he said it was time to stand.

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Now it’s time to walk!

But don’t walk aimlessly, walk by the guide of the Holy Spirit.

Stay on the path that He is leading you on and you won’t get lost in the sins of the world.

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Many people, when hiking in a forest or wilderness, get off of the hiking trail to look at something and then cannot find their way back to the trail.

It could be anything that captures their attention and draws them off the trail.

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The flesh does the same thing to us.

It is subtle and inviting and causes us to take our eyes off of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is our path, our guide and our compass.

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But the flesh comes along and when we give in to it, we drop the “map” and the “compass” and off we go to this attraction of the flesh.

Verse 17 tells us of the spiritual war that wages within us:

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*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.*

“Contrary” means opposition, against.

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The flesh and the spirit are in opposition of each other.  
They are adversaries.  
It's like putting the positive sides of two magnets together.  
They oppose one another and it is impossible to join those two ends together.

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The stronger the magnets, the more difficult it is to get them close to one another.  
John Stott calls the two natures within us, "irreconcilable hostility."  
In verses 19-23 Paul contrasts these two natures, beginning with the flesh.

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He says, "Now the works of the flesh are evident."  
The "works of the flesh" has a much greater meaning than just the sins related to our bodily appetites.  
It encompasses everything to do with our fallen nature.

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Those who do not know Christ live in a constant state of the “works of the flesh.”

They do nothing for God and everything for themselves.

Here we see sins against the body; sins against God; and, sins against others (personal relationships).

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Paul begins with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness.

These are sins against the body (1 Cor 6:18)

These four fall under sexual immorality.

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**Adultery** is the act of sexual intercourse outside of the marriage; a married man or woman having sexual relations with another married woman or man.

**Fornication** is typically the act of unmarried men and women having sexual intercourse.

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**Uncleanness** is the act of sexual relations with impurity of lustful living or motives.

Like an unmarried couple living together and living as with all the rites of a married couple.

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**Lewdness** (lasciviousness-KJV) is unbridled lust, excess. Being out of control as in an addiction. These four reveal that all sexual offenses, no matter where they are conducted and to what extent, are to be considered as acts of the flesh.

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Next Paul gives sins against God – idolatry and sorcery. The very first commandment God gave to Israel was, “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

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Therefore, to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” is to not have any other gods in life at all.

Not man-made or heavenly.

**Sorcery** is witchcraft, which is tampering with anything evil or that involves the powers of evil.

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Paul now lists sins against others (personal relationships)  
*hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath (fits of rage NIV), selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders*

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Jesus summed up the last 6 commandments of God into one command, “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”

Loving others with the love of Christ, that pure agape love, will leave no room in the heart to treat others in any of these ways.

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Loving others with the love of Christ, that pure *agape* love, will leave no room in the heart to treat others in any of these ways.

Finally, we have sins, or offenses, to human character: **Drunkenness** and **revelries**

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Paul said in Ephesians to “not be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.”

Drunkenness is obviously being intoxicated, but not just with alcohol.

This would include the use of drugs and anything that alters the normal human behavior.

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Revelries refers to carousing, parties and orgies.

Drunkenness and revelries often go together.

The Greeks were known for their parties and “drunken orgies.”

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These parties led to all kinds of evil, to include idol worshiping and sacrifices (both human and animal) as well as sexual immorality.

This was acceptable conduct for the Gentiles, and it is even acceptable in today's society.

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This is obviously not a complete list of sins and offenses since Paul adds, *“and the like.”*

When Paul says, *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God,”* he is speaking of those who continue in the activity of any of these sins.

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“Practice” does not mean to continue working on it until it is perfected or great improvements are made.

It is the Greek word, *prassō*. It means to exercise, to be busy with, carry on.

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It is something that a person is always doing and has even become habitual.

It's not referring to an isolated "slip."

Those who are constantly involved in these sins will not enter into the kingdom of God.

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Indulging in the works of the flesh will result in being excluded from God's kingdom.

Involvement in these is clear evidence that participants are not in Christ.

If they are not in Christ they have no right to the inheritance of Abraham's seed, nor to the promise.

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Paul now contrasts the fruit of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence that one is filled with the Holy Spirit; the manifestation of the Holy Spirit working in a believer.

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These are not gifts of the Spirit.

When a believer is walking in the Spirit, they will produce fruit of the Spirit.

Notice each of these is singular.

There's only one of each fruit.

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Believers can have multiple gifts of the Spirit, but only one of each fruit.

We have a few fruit trees and each one produces only one kind of fruit.

Paul begins with *love, joy and peace*.

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Everyone, believer and non-believer, has the capability to **love**.

The Greeks categorize love into four words: *phileo, storge, eros and agape*.

Phileo is brotherly love; love we have towards another person, a close friend.

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Storge is love we have for relatives; mother, father, son, daughter, brother sister and so on.

Eros is physical love; intimacy and sexual relations. Eros was the Greek god of love and sex.

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Agape, in addition to unconditional love, speaks of deep affection and benevolence; an act of the will.

The love Paul begins with here in verse 22 is the same agape love he mentioned in verse 13.

This love is contrary to our “natural” love.

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Without Christ and the Holy Spirit a person cannot love in this capacity.

“This is a love of concern, regard, compassion and loyalty to the body of Christ” (R.C. Sproul) <sup>4</sup>

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Love is so important that Paul devotes an entire chapter in 1 Corinthians to it (1 Cor 13), explaining what this love means.

Love is the foundation for all the works we do in the name of Christ.

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Paul said that “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

It is also impossible to serve God without agape love.

After love, comes **joy**.

Joy is different than happiness.

Happiness is an emotion; joy is a state of the heart and mind.

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After talking about the relationship of the vine, the branches and the vinedresser, Jesus speaks about love between Him and the Father and His love for those who believe.

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Then He says, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

Joy only comes from one source, Jesus Christ.

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It is because of His joy that is in us that we are able to get through difficult times.

Jesus says in John 16:22 that no one can take this joy away.

Because we have His joy, we are able to demonstrate that joy to the world.

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Next is **peace**; a supernatural peace that the world cannot offer.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

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Just like love and joy, this kind of peace can only come from God. Paul describes it as “the peace which surpasses all understanding.” And, just like love and joy, this peace can never be taken from us.

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**Longsuffering** – this word indicates that we are under attack and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to have patience in ways that are impossible with the flesh. We are able to endure the hardships of persecution

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**Kindness, Goodness and Gentleness** – These are all synonymous with one another. They all speak of the attitude one has towards others in spite of an opposite attitude directed to him/her.

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They are specific to words and deeds

Proverbs 19:22 *What is desired in a man is kindness.*

Jesus said, *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things”* (Matthew 12:35).

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**Faithfulness** – Speaks of loyalty; loyalty to God, to a spouse, to the brethren and to the church.

**Self-control** – Speaks of “the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites” (Strong’s Concordance)

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It also refers to controlling one’s anger.

There are a lot of angry people and there are many angry Christians.

But when Christians rant about today’s politics and injustice, they are not displaying the fruit of the Spirit of self-control.

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When people do things in the name of Jesus out of anger, Jesus is not in it and they do nothing for Christ's sake, but for their own.

Paul says that there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. There can't be.

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There is no rule against love, peace, kindness.

They all come from God and He is the final authority.

Paul tells his readers how all of this is possible

True believers *have* crucified the flesh and everything that it contains.

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This is not something that we are continuously doing.

Have is past-tense.

It has already been done.

The flesh was crucified with Jesus on the cross.

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This is not the same as “being crucified with Christ” (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20).

When the Holy Spirit indwelt in the believer, the flesh was metaphorically crucified with Christ.

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When Christ was crucified, he bore the sins of every human being.

When a person makes the decision to be a follower of Christ, the war between the flesh and the Spirit begins, but the flesh will always be the loser.

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Even when a believer gives in to the desires of the flesh (old nature), confession of sin (1 John 1:9) will bring cleansing and the flesh has no foothold.

Living and walking in the Spirit is being completely submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit.

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A believer cannot live and walk in the flesh if he/she is living and walking in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit is to allow Him be the guide of our lives.

A guide is very familiar with a specific territory and will not lead anyone to a place where they will be lost.

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Paul is telling the Galatians that when they believed in Christ crucified, the desires of their old nature was crucified and the Holy Spirit took over their spiritual lives.

Now they must allow the Holy Spirit to lead them in every facet of their Christian life.

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He will not lead them to a place that doesn't glorify God.

They must follow the Holy Spirit, not people.

Living and walking in the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> *“The Message of Galatians”*, John R.W. Stott, 1968, Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, pp. 101, 114

<sup>2</sup> *“Galatians”* by J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary Series: The Epistles, 1991 Thru The Bible*, p. 87

<sup>3</sup> *“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*, New Testament Volume 1, Warren W. Wiersbe, 2001, p. 714

<sup>4</sup> *“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free, Galatians” Galatians: An Expository Commentary*, R.C. Sproul, 2022 by R.C. Sproul Trust, p. 119

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## QUESTIONS



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