

Galatians

Chapter 5

Introduction:

1. Paul will now apply practically what he has taught doctrinally.
2. The Bible gives us doctrine (teaching), but is also profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (**2 Timothy 3:16**). The Bible is both doctrinal and practical. This balance is very crucial in the life of believers.
3. The last two chapters of Galatians are very practical and exhortative in nature. Paul desires for the churches of Galatia to rid themselves of the legalistic teachings of the Judaizers and walk in the freedom they possess in Christ.
4. The last word of Chapter 4 is "free." The Christian is free! We are free from the power of Satan, the dominion of Satan, and the fleshly allurements of the world.
 - **2 Corinthians 3:17** declares "...and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." We have been freed by the Spirit. This freedom is not a license to sin. To the contrary, it is freedom to be changed by the Spirit of the Lord into the image of Christ. **2 Corinthians 3:18**
5. Instead of the outward oppression of a law system that we cannot keep, we have the inward working of God's Spirit that bears Christ-like fruit through us.
Galatians 5:22-23
 - The law brings bondage and condemnation. **Acts 15:10**
 - God's Spirit brings **glory** as He works in the believer. **2 Corinthians 3:18**
6. These are the truths that Paul will emphasize in Chapter 5.

Verse 1

1. After four chapters of doctrinal teaching regarding law and grace, it is now time for the rubber to meet the road.
2. Paul exclaims, "***Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.***" Paul's clear teaching regarding law and grace now demands a decision.
 - Will the Galatians continue to live their Christian lives by the rules, rituals, and rites of the religious law?
 - Or will they choose to live their Christian lives by faith through God's grace and God's Spirit?
3. Living by law produces a yoke of bondage.
 - The phrase "yoke of bondage" carries the idea of slavery, burden, and bondage.
 - A farmer puts a yoke on his oxen. Why does do this? To work him, to keep him straight, to control his every action.
 - The yoke of bondage is clearly a reference to the Law of Moses. **Acts 15:10**
4. The Jewish legalists wanted to strap the yoke of the law on these Gentile believers in order to control them, dominate them, and enslave them. 2:4
5. Paul tells these believers, "You're free - you don't have to allow them to do this - throw the yoke off because they have no right to place it on you - Christ has set you free forever! You now belong to Jesus!!" **Romans 7:4-6; Galatians 3:24-25**

Illustration: A woman is living under the cruel dictatorship of her husband - he is demanding and condemning. He has a list of rules and requirements for her and no matter how much she tries, it is never enough. But the husband dies and she meets a gracious, kind, loving, and godly man and marries him. Imagine her choosing to continue keeping the rules and requirements of her first husband, trying to meet his expectations. This is what the Galatians were doing in trying to keep the law. They were entangling themselves in a yoke of bondage unnecessarily.

6. Paul wanted the Galatians to "*stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.*"
 - "Stand fast" means to stand firm - don't budge an inch. Paul wanted them to follow the example he had set. 2:4-5

Verse 2

1. Paul's divine calling and office was that he was the apostle of the Gentiles.
Romans 11:13
2. Speaking with divine authority he says, "*Behold, I Paul say unto you...*"
 - It did not matter who else told them something different - the Judaizers from Jerusalem, Barnabas, or even Peter (2:11-13).
 - Paul was **their** God-appointed apostle and they'd better listen to him. 1:11-12
 - What a shame that so many churches and pastors today fail to recognize the divinely authoritative message and ministry of Paul for the Body of Christ.
 - Paul's teachings are ignored or diluted by taking Scriptures that were written to Israel and misapplying them to the church, the Body of Christ.
 - When Paul's unique apostolic office to the Gentiles is recognized, it clears up so much confusion.
3. Paul will not compromise in the least. He asserts, "*...if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.*"
 - Remember, circumcision was the sign of God's covenant relationship with Israel. **Genesis 17:11; Leviticus 12:3; Joshua 5:3-7; Romans 4:11**
 - Circumcision eventually came to represent the Law of Moses. It became the signature item of a Jew who lived under the Mosaic Law. **Acts 15:1**
4. When Paul says, "*...if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,*" he is simply saying, "If you choose to live your Christian life by the law, then you can't live it by the power of Christ." It is one or the other - grace and law do not mix.
 - Christ is in us, but He is of no profit (use, benefit) when we choose to live by law rather than by faith in Him.
 - Obviously, Paul does not have in mind here the actual **act** of circumcision. This is clear from verse 6. He is dealing with the heart attitude of these believers. Will they choose to live by law (as illustrated by circumcision), or will they live by the grace and power of Christ alone?
 - In the culture of Paul's day, circumcision was not common or practiced among the pagan Gentiles. Today it is much more common, not for religious reasons, but for health issues.

Verse 3

1. Paul says, "*For I testify **again** to every man...*"
 - Paul is purposely reiterating the same principle over and over again in different ways. Just like a man with a hammer driving a nail, he keeps pounding the same nail with force.
 - Paul's repetition demonstrates to us how important this issue is for those of us living under grace.
2. If these Gentiles decided to be circumcised, thereby becoming proselytes into the religion of Judaism, Paul wanted them to understand exactly what this meant.
 - It meant that they were now indebted to become doers of the entire law system.
 - A person can't pick and choose what commands they want to place themselves under - each commandment is just as equally binding as the other.
 - James said, "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*" **James 2:10**
3. Notice in Galatians 5:3 Paul says, "*...he is debtor **to do** the whole law.*"
 - The law is all about doing. **Galatians 3:10, 12**
4. Paul is saying:
 - Do you want to place yourselves under a religious law system of "doing," which can only bring condemnation and guilt?
 - Or, do you want to walk in the grace and freedom of Jesus Christ?