

Galatians Chapter 5

Verse 14

1. Love takes the place of all of God's laws.
2. This is a quote from the law in **Leviticus 19:18**. But Old Testament saints did not enjoy what we do today. **Romans 5:5** teaches the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given unto us.
 - We now have been given a divine supernatural capacity to love God and others.
3. When we are allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us with His love, we do not need a list of laws to tell us what to do - the love of God leads us to do the right thing.

Romans 13:8-10

- Illustration of mom loving children: she doesn't need laws to make her take care of her child. Why does she feed it, rock it, change its diapers, and sit up in the middle of the night with it, etc.? Is it because the law says she must? Of course not; it is because she loves the child.

Verse 15

1. The Galatian churches had been deceived into living by law rather than by grace. What did the Judaizers legalism produce? It produced fighting, bickering, internal division, and strife.
 - The word devour in this verse is the same word used in **Matthew 13:4** describing birds coming and devouring food.
 - Like wild animals, these Christians were attacking and devouring each other.
 - This is sad when you see this in churches, but Satan absolutely loves it.
2. Let this be a lesson: the law can legislate and demand righteousness, but it can't **empower** people to keep it. It cannot change the heart.
3. All of us, in our flesh, are self-consumed, selfish, self-centered and we want our way. No law can change this evil nature. The Galatians are perfect examples of this.
4. In order to love God and others, it must come from a changed, inward, divine nature. It takes a walk in the Spirit which Paul will discuss in the next section.

Verses 16-18

We will cover the next three verses together in one section because they are all so closely tied together.

1. Verse 16 is the victorious Christian life in capsule form. It is so simple, yet so profound.
2. Paul anticipates the objections of the Jewish legalists "If you teach people they are free from the law, they will become lawless and live in a wicked and sinful manner."
3. Paul will now reveal the answer to this objection. "Walk in the Spirit..."

- God has given Christians something better than the law. He has given believers His very Spirit to indwell them. **Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22**
4. What is the flesh? The flesh is that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God.
 - *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* **Matthew 26:41**
 - *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:..."* **John 6:63**
 - *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing..."* **Romans 7:18**
 - *"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."* **Romans 7:25**
 5. What does the flesh long to produce? A quick glance at **Galatians 5:19-21** will answer that question.
 6. It is important to realize that while the flesh is no longer the Christian's identity (**Galatians 5:24; Colossians 2:11-13**), it is **still** present in the life of a believer. Paul makes this clear in verse 17.
 - Paul says that *"the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh..."*
 - The word "lusteth" means "to set the heart upon, to long for."
 - So the flesh has its heart set upon things that are against the Spirit and the Spirit is longing for things that are against the flesh.
 - They are contrary the one to the other.
 - The word "contrary" means "to lie opposite, to be adverse." It is translated "adversary" in other places, and the same word speaks of the Antichrist "opposing" the things of God (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**). The flesh and the Spirit are warring adversaries.
 7. What is the result of this struggle? Paul tells the Galatians, *"...so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."*
 - In context, what "things" did they want to do? The works of the law. 5:18, 3:2-3
 - Paul is saying, "You **can't** live by the law. It is impossible. The flesh will not allow it. You will never measure up. You will end up frustrated and miserable."
 - Verse 17 is where so many Christians are living. They are trying so hard to live up to a certain religious system and they can't do it. The flesh won't allow it and they feel condemned, defeated, and defective.
 8. But there **is** an answer to this dreadful dilemma of the flesh. The answer is to simply be led of the Spirit. Verse 18
 9. When I am walking in the Spirit and being led of Him, I don't have to worry about living up to a set of rules or laws. I am no longer under the law, but I am living my life by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. **Romans 8:2**
 - Walking in the Spirit simply means that I am yielded to Christ and totally relying on His Spirit as my source of life and strength.
 - Walking in the Spirit is living a life of total reliance upon Christ. You are not focused on the law or religious performance or man-made rules and tradition. Your focus is Christ alone. **Colossians 3:1-4**
 10. When we are walking in the Spirit, Christ is living His divine life through us. **Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 4:10**

- This is a life of freedom from the taskmaster of the law. Verse 18
 - This is a life of freedom from the sinful lusts of the flesh. Verse 16
11. The Galatians were trying desperately to live up to the righteousness of the law, but they could not.
- Paul's answer was not, "You need more rules," or "You need stricter rules," or "Try a little harder," or "Pray harder."
 - His answer was, "Quit your fleshly effort, quit your obsession with the law, and simply walk in the Spirit. Walk by faith in Christ."