

**Grace Bible Church**  
**Adult Elective Fall 2016**  
**Topic: Galatians**  
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**(Text: Swindoll's Living Insights - Galatians)**

**Galatians Chapter 5:1-25**

- Galatians is a polemic. Polemics are related to apologetics. Both are subsets of theology. Polemics serve to argue for the truth of certain Biblical doctrines within the church whereas apologetics serve to argue for the truth of certain Biblical truths outside the church. Paul uses Galatians as a polemic to teach key, core Christian truths about salvation and right standing before God. In general, Paul notes throughout the text that the Law and grace/mercy are totally opposite each other.
- V. 1
  - Our freedom in Christ is not without purpose. It is with the purpose of living rightly with God and of sharing the good news with others. These are the key benefits of our freedom.
  - We have the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we can love God and love others. We can use the power of the Holy Spirit to obey God and serve Him.
- Vv. 2-6
  - There are two extremes which may be seen: Extreme Legalism and Extreme License. Paul addresses both (eventually).
  - Here, he focuses on **legalism**. By following part of the Law (circumcision), there are multiple consequences:
    - It shows the Galatians really don't believe in the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice re salvation and sanctification
    - It requires following ALL of the Law. Once part is chosen, all must be obeyed.
    - It severs the Galatians from Christ. This does not mean their salvation was lost (if they truly belonged to Christ in the first place...). It means they have fallen from the lifestyle of grace and have chosen the lifestyle of legalism. Essentially, they arrest their process of sanctification and serve to keep others from the saving knowledge of Christ.
    - FLESH vs. FAITH
      - Flesh: my holiness depends upon me and my life is characterized by rules/regulations/laws
      - Faith: my holiness is only possible via the Holy Spirit and my life is characterized by peace and rest in Christ which is manifest in good works (cf. James 1 and 2)

- Vv. 7-12
  - The Galatians were pushed out of the race. They had been running well, then someone pushed them off the course and sent them running in the wrong direction (the total opposite direction!).
  - The Judaizers were threatening to stop their sanctification (or to possibly take them away from salvation if they had not given their lives to Christ already). The consequences were eternal!
  - Paul expresses that he has confidence they will get back on track and sidestep the Judaizers.
  - Paul tells the Galatians that the Judaizers will be judged for their evil (and that judgment could be in this life or the next... we don't know based on the text...).
    - Cf. James 3:1 -> This reinforces the importance of sound teaching and using the Bible as the measuring rod ("canon") for all Truth.
  - Paul notes that while he has supported circumcision (culturally ... cf. Acts 16:1-3), it is only to "win Jews" (cf. 1 Cor. 9:20). It is cultural and not salvific! He notes he was not "preaching circumcision" (if he were, why would there be the controversy?). Paul is so opposed to the preaching of circumcision (as part of keeping the Law [read: doing works for salvation!]) that he writes that he wishes the Judaizers would emasculate themselves. The stakes were high! Paul is using any and all devices he can to put this in writing!
- Vv. 13-15
  - Paul now turns to **license**.
  - **Believers are free! They are free with purpose: love and obedience!** But, they are not given a license to sin!
  - Believers are free from the life of sin that characterizes fallen mankind. They are free to a life of righteousness.
    - NOTE: Paul writes that this freedom does not allow for sinfulness! With the Holy Spirit, there would not be a desire to sin further (and go back and live like slaves to the flesh). This was likely what the Judaizers were saying/preaching: living in grace will give license to sinful behavior. Paul refutes that notion immediately.
    - Obedience and service takes us away from our self-centeredness and the Holy Spirit changes us (and our desires). We still will have sinful desires, but our deepest desire(s) will be for Christ and for obeying Him. We may sin, but our lives will not be characterized by it. We will be sensitive to it and will have the power (via the Spirit) to overcome it.
  - The believer's life will be characterized by Love (*agape* love -> giving regardless of the return on investment). It is NOT self-serving.

- Note, with the Holy Spirit we have the power to keep the Law. Keeping the Law flows from our salvation. It does not enable our salvation. The Judaizers got the cart before the horse.
- Vv. 16-18
  - The Holy Spirit gives believers the power to overcome the flesh.
  - Swindoll writes that our lives should be controlled by the Spirit. “The issue is control. The solution is surrender.” This comes from self denial (cf. Luke 9:23)
- Vv. 19-23
  - Deeds of the flesh vs. deeds of the Spirit!
    - Flesh:
      - Sexual sin
      - Sins against God
      - Sins against others
      - Sins against oneself
        - Paul writes that those whose lifestyles consistently show deeds of the flesh do not have the Spirit of God dwelling within them (not that they will lose their salvation). A lifestyle of sin is apparent in one who is unregenerate (who has not accepted Christ and has not turned from sin in repentance).
        - Believers should reject the sinful flesh, and with the help of the Spirit, should display fruits of the Spirit!
    - Spirit:
      - The word is in singular form here. They are a unity of deeds which all believers possess (unlike Spiritual gifts which are different from believer to believer).
      - The Law cannot condemn those who live by the Spirit.
        - Love
        - Joy
        - Peace
        - Patience
        - Kindness
        - Goodness
        - Faithfulness
        - Gentleness
        - Self-control
- Vv. 24-25
  - Upon baptism by the Spirit (at salvation) we exchanged fleshly sin for the righteousness of Christ. This gave us new life. With that new life comes the means and desire to walk with Christ.
    - Saying “no” to sin.
    - Knowing who we belong to (Christ) and where our value lies.

- Loving and obeying Christ.
- Knowing that we are powerless in and of ourselves. But, knowing that through Christ and the Holy Spirit we have the power to overcome sin and to lead others to Christ.
- APPLICATION:
  - What deeds of the flesh give you the most difficulty?
  - What fruit of the Spirit (which you have if you are a believer!) most helps with overcoming that fleshly struggle?