

Galatians 5:1-18

Stand Firm; False Teachings; Walk by the Spirit

Galatians 5 key words: "freedom (free), circumcision, law, faith, Spirit, love, flesh (sinful nature)"

Day 1

Read Galatians 5:1-5

Freedom versus slavery

1. What two commands did Paul give in 5:1?

IT'S GREEK TO ME: "**Subject/burdened/ entangled**" Strong's NT:1758 *enecho*; to hold in or upon, i.e. ensnare

"yoke" Strong's NT:2218 *zugos* ...a coupling, i.e. (figuratively) servitude (a law or obligation)...
- Strong's Concordance

"a yoke ...Gal 5:1, of bondage to the Law as a supposed means of salvation"
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

Digging Deeper

What did Peter say about the "yoke" of the law in Acts 15:10?

How did Jesus describe the legalistic teachings of the Pharisees? Matthew 23:3-4

What did Jesus say about His yoke? Matthew 11:28-30

2. What does the command to take a firm stand indicate about the endeavor to remain free?

FYI: "**stand firm**" is essentially a military word, mixing together the ideas of keeping alert, being strong, resisting attack and sticking together.

In short, despite the fact that we already have been saved by Christ, we must be continually diligent to remember, preserve, rejoice in and live in accord with our salvation."
- Timothy Keller (132,133)

"Jesus dies on the cross so that through faith in Him, we could live as free people. He has liberated us from the penalty and guilt of sin, divine wrath, satanic domination, the Law's curse, and the fear of ultimate judgment. And He has freed us to enjoy a new kind of life - one in which we can live by the spirit's power, joyfully obey God, love and serve others, come immediately into the Lord's presence through prayer, and grow in our walk with God." - Charles Swindoll (95)

"Today, people live in the headlong pursuit of "freedom," which they think of as doing whatever they want to do, and never denying any desire. This is a kind of liberty, a false liberty; but it is not **the liberty**. **The liberty** is our freedom from the tyranny of having to earn our own way to God, the freedom from sin and guilt and condemnation, freedom from the penalty and the power and eventually freedom from the presence of sin."
- David Guzik

3. Underline the things that are associated with a firm stand/hold:

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. NIV
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. NIV
- 1 Thessalonians 3:7-8 Therefore, brothers, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.
- Ephesians 6:11,14 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil...14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, NIV

- Colossians 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. NASU
- Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. NIV
- 1 Peter 5:12 I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. NIV

4. If the Galatians went back to the law for salvation or sanctification, rather than trusting in Christ, what were the consequences?

- 5:2
- 5:3
- 5:4a
- 5:4b

IT'S GREEK TO ME: **Fallen** NT:1601 *ekipto*; to drop away; specially, be driven out of one's course; figuratively, to lose, become inefficient
- Strong's Concordance (*See the use of this word in 2 Peter 3:17*)

"(Boice) 'to choose legalism is to relinquish grace as the principle by which one desires to be related to God.'" - David Guzik

"When we adopt legalism, we are saying that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is insufficient to save us. We must add something to His payment in order to cancel our debt to God. We might as well set ourselves up as gods."

- Charles Swindoll (96)

"It is impossible to receive Christ, thereby acknowledging that you cannot save yourself, and then receive circumcision, thereby claiming that you can. You have got to choose between a religion of law and a religion of grace, between Christ and circumcision. You cannot add circumcision (or anything else, for that matter) to Christ as necessary to salvation, because Christ is sufficient for salvation in self. I you add anything to Christ, you lose Christ. Salvation is in Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone."

- John Stott (133,134)

5. What do the following phrases in 5:5 indicate about the righteousness we receive in Christ?

- "through the Spirit"
- "by faith" (Compare Romans 10:4)
- "are waiting for the hope of righteousness"

FYI: "The biblical word *elpida*, translated 'hope' does not have the much weaker meaning that it has in English. In the Bible, 'hope' does not mean 'hope so'....It means a powerful assurance and certainty of something (see Hebrews 11:1)...This is a major problem for the reader of the English Bible. The very word that means 'total assurance' in Greek means 'not so sure' in English." - Timothy Keller (135)

6. From the following verses, underline the phrases that describe our condition (our righteousness) apart from God.

- Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; NIV
- Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. NASU
- Romans 3:10-12 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." NIV
- Romans 7:18-19 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. NIV
- Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. NIV

7. Underline the righteousness we receive in Christ.

- Romans 4:6-8 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. NASU
- 1 Corinthians 6:10-11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. NIV
- Ephesians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. NIV
- Philippians 3:8-9 ...so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, NASU
- Hebrews 10:10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. NIV

Food for Thought: "Righteousness means more than goodness; it is a completely right record and right relationship with God...We are to live today knowing we are, and always will be, an absolute beauty in the eyes of God. Put another way, we are as loved and honored by God now as we will be when we are perfectly radiant in heaven...We need to turn our minds to who we are and what we have in Christ so often that our hearts are stirred and our behavior brought into line with these unseen realities. This is something that happens in those who have faith in the Son, as the Spirit does His work."

- Timothy Keller (135,136)

Applying the Word: What difference do you think the assurance of a future “right record and relationship with God” makes in your life right now?

Day 2

Read Galatians 5:6-12

Returning to bondage

8. What doesn't matter/ ("count" NIV)? 5:6

- To what does our faith lead? 5:6 (Compare 2 Corinthians 5:14; 1 John 4:11,19)

Digging Deeper

Why isn't physical circumcision of any value? Romans 2:25

What **kind** of circumcision is of value? Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3-4

In a sense, how have we been circumcised? Colossians 2:11

IT'S GREEK TO ME: "means anything/counts" NIV *ischuo* NT:2480 signifies...(c) "to be of force, to be effective, capable of producing results," Matt 5:13 ("it is good for nothing"; lit., "it availeth nothing") - Vine's Expository Dictionary

Food for Thought: "Faith literally energizes love...We all know that we don't feel loved by someone unless we are loved for who we are, not for what we bring him or her....When we thought our works saved us, we were serving God for what we could get from Him. We were using Him. But after the hope of the gospel settles in, and we see the grace and beauty of God, we love Him for who He is..."

As verse 5 dawns more and more on us, we live out verse 6. The more joy we have in our gracious salvation, the more we are driven by love and gratitude to do good for the sheer beauty of good, for sheer delight in God, for the sheer love of others. If we are reminding ourselves and living in light of our certain hope, we will have a heart overflowing with love."

- Timothy Keller (139,140)

"The Holy Spirit who indwells us produces good works of love, as the apostle goes on later to explain (verses, 22,23...It is not that works of love are added to faith as a second and subsidiary ground of our acceptance with God, but that the faith which saves is a faith which works, a faith which issues in loves."

- John Stott (134)

False teaching and false teachers

9. What picture does 5:7 give of the struggle the Galatians were facing with the Judaizers? 5:7

IT'S GREEK TO ME: "**hindered/cut in**" Strong's NT:1465 *egkopto*; to cut into, i.e. (figuratively) impede, detain: "was used of "impeding" persons by breaking up the road, or by placing an obstacle sharply in the path"

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Bruised and battered, they were leaving the track and strapping the weight of the Law around their ankles and chests. Now their mouths were turned down, and only gruns and groans could be heard where joy and hope once filled the air."

- Charles Swindoll (976)

10. Who was **not** the source of the “persuasion” the Galatians were following? 5:8 (Cf. 1:6)

Digging Deeper

What attitude/focus should we have when we “run.”

Philippians 3:13-14

Hebrews 12:1-3

IT'S GREEK TO ME: “**Persuasion** *peismone* NT:3988 is used in Gal 5:8, where the meaning is “this influence that has won you over, or that seems likely to do so”
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

11. What influence does corrupt teaching have? 5:9 (This proverb is also used in 1 Cor 5:6-8)

- What consequence would the false teachers face? 5:10

FYI: “In the Jewish way of thinking, **leaven** almost always stood for evil influence. Paul is saying that the legalistic commitment they have right now may be small, but it is so dangerous that it can corrupt everything.” - David Guzik

12. List the words or phrases Paul used to describe the actions of the false teachers. (You might like to compare different translations.)

- 5:7
- 5:10 (Cf. 1:7)
- 5:11
- 5:12

13. How is a person who is trusting in circumcision (or any other work) responding to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross? 5:11 (See also Romans 9:31-32) *Apparently, from Paul's comment in 5:11a, what were the Judaizers telling the people about Paul's teaching?*

FYI: “To preach circumcision is to tell sinners that they can save themselves by their own good works; to preach Christ crucified is to tell them that they cannot and that only Christ can save them through the cross...The good news of Christ crucified is still a ‘scandal’ (Greek, *skandalon*, stumbling-block), grievously offensive to the pride of men. It tells them that they are sinners, rebels, under the wrath and condemnation of God, that they can do nothing to save themselves or secure their salvation, and that only through Christ crucified can they be saved...Only if we ‘preach circumcision’, the merits and the sufficiency of man, shall we escape persecution and become popular...‘Circumcision’ stands for a religion of *human* achievement, of what man can do by his own good works; ‘Christ’ stands for a religion of *divine* achievement, of what God has done through the finished work of Christ. ‘Circumcision’ means law, works, and bondage; ‘Christ’ means grace, faith and freedom. Every man must choose.”
- John Stott (137,139)

“There is, as we have continually seen, no compromise here, it is circumcision (self-salvation) or the ‘offense (NIV ‘stumbling block’) of the cross’ (Christ-salvation).”
- Timothy Keller (141)

14. What do Paul's comments in 5:12 indicate about the seriousness of this issue? (Cf. Philippians 3:2)

- What might he have been implying? (Compare Deuteronomy 23:1)

FYI: "As an emasculated man has lost the power of propagation, so should these agitators be reduced to impotence in spreading their false doctrine."
- Wycliffe Bible Commentary

Applying the Word: Consider the phrase Paul uses throughout Galatians: "live by faith."
How would that type of living impact:

- Your focus
- Your choices
- Your relationships
- Your problems

Day 3

Read Titus

False teaching and false teachers

15. Mark the word *truth* in the following and underline what happens to it under false teaching.

- Acts 20:28-30 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. NIV
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. NIV
- Titus 1:10-14 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain...For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.. NASU

16. Although the form of false teaching threatening the Galatian church was legalism, what other extreme did it take? Jude 4

17. What kind of atmosphere can false teaching produce? 1 Timothy 1:3-5; 6:3-5

18. Underline the methods used by false teachers in the following.

- Mark 13:5-6 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. NIV
- Romans 16:17-19 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. NIV
- Colossians 2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. NIV

19. How far will these false teachers go in distorting the truth?

- Matthew 24:10-13
- 2 Peter 2:1-3

20. What deep will the deception be someday? 1 Timothy 4:1-2

21. Underline how we can recognize and avoid false teaching.

- Matthew 7:15-20 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. NIV
- Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. NIV
- 2 Tim 2:15-17 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. NIV

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. NIV
- 2 Peter 3:17-18 Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. NIV
- 1 John 4:1-3 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.
- 2 John 7-9 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. NIV

Applying the Word: *What are some of the best ways you can keep yourself from the deception of false teaching?*

Day 4

Read Galatians 5:13-18

Freedom and love

22. What other error did Paul warn against in 5:13a? (Compare 1 Peter 2:16)

FYI: "We have seen throughout Galatians that it is extremely easy to lose our freedom by slipping back into legalism and works-righteousness...But now, Paul addresses the other main error that Christian can fall into - not legalism, but license...[Paul] knows that when he speaks of being 'free from the law,' some immediately think he means that people are now free to determine their own standards of behavior..."

The gospel...neither leads us to live a guilty life (since God has lovingly accepted us), nor an unholy life (since the God who has accepted us is perfectly holy)." - Timothy Keller (141)

"It is easy to think **liberty** is "the right to sin," or "the privilege to do whatever evil my heart wants to do." Instead, this **liberty** is the Spirit-given *desire* and *ability* to do what we should do before God." - David Guzik

23. What focus counteracts the flesh? 5:13b,14

IT'S GREEK TO ME "Serve" Strong's NT:1398 *douleuo*; to be a slave to (literal or figurative, involuntary or voluntary) - Strong's Commentary

"A wonderful test of our spiritual state is simply how we treat other people." - David Guzik

"Love arises from gospel faith and hope (v 5-6), and overflows into loving and serving our neighbors, rather than using them to serve ourselves...Paul says that if you know God's love for you in Christ...why would you use your freedom to 'indulge the sinful nature' (v 13), which left you an enemy of His, unforgiven and unfulfilled? The gospel devours the very motivation you have for sin."
- Timothy Keller (143)

24. What atmosphere was the Galatian church experiencing because of the false teaching? 5:15

Walk by the Spirit

25. What gives us victory over sinful desires? 5:16 (Compare Romans 8:3-6; contrast 1 Corinthians 2:14)

IT'S GREEK TO ME "walk/live" NT:4043 *peripateo*; to tread all around, i.e. walk at large...figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or votary)
- Strong's Concordance

peripateo is used...(b) figuratively, "signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life
- Vines Exoisuti

'Life by the Spirit is neither legalism nor license - nor a middle way between them. It is a life of faith and love that is above all of these false ways.' (Boice)"
- David Guzik.

FYI: What does the Holy Spirit do in our lives?

- A. Teaches and reminds us of what we've learned (John 14:26)
- B. Seeks to testify about Jesus rather than Himself (John 15:26)
- C. Convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-13)
- D. Guides us into all truth (John 16:13)
- E. Glorifies Christ (John 16:14)
- F. Dwells within every believer (Rom. 8:11)
- G. Reveals the Lord's plans for us (Rom. 8:14)
- H. Assures us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:15-16)
- I. Equips us with spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4, 7-8)
- J. Gives power, especially for evangelism (Acts 1:7-8)
- K. Intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26)
- L. Seals our salvation (Eph. 1:13)

- Charles Stanley <http://www.intouch.org>

26. What phrase describes the kind of desires the flesh gives? 5:17a

- What phrase describes the desires the Spirit gives?

27. What picture does Paul give of the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit? 5:17b

28. From Paul's personal description in Romans 7:18-25:

- How well would you say Paul understood this battle? 7:18,19
- Where did Paul find the answer for this warfare? 7:25

29. From what does being led by the Spirit free you from? 5:18 (See Romans 3:21,22; 6:15-18; 8:4)

Applying the Word: Identify a sin you are struggling with. What earthly desires fuel that sin? How does the truth of the gospel (all that Christ has done and all that you are in Him) negate ("put to death") or override those desires?