

# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 5 Galatians 5

Through Paul's preaching, Christ had freed the Galatian believers from slavery to the law. Yet these same individuals were choosing to return to the unnecessary yoke of slavery. Here in chapter 5, Paul moves from the personal into the practical part of his letter. He has been making his case that salvation is the free gift of God—we cannot earn it. Jesus Himself purchased our freedom on the cross, accomplishing for us what we could not do for ourselves. By accepting God's gift of grace, we trade our yoke of slavery for that of Christian liberty, but that does not mean we can go on sinning. The transforming work of salvation begins the sanctifying process of daily working out the crucified life.

**Read Galatians 5:1–26.**          Christ has Set Us Free!

Everyone is a slave to something; whether it is something bad or good determines a person's choices as well as their direction in life.

**At a glance** From your initial reading of this passage, pinpoint the verses that have to do with the flesh and the Spirit. Since we become like the one(s) we follow and serve—identify *whose slave you are*. Please share your thoughts.

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Paul has the answer to the believer's dilemma and admonishes the people in Galatians 5:1, "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*"

1. We recognize from the above verse that the Lord died to set us free. What, then, according to this same verse is every Christian's responsibility? v. 1

The main issue at stake here for the Galatian believers is the matter of circumcision (mentioned 5 times in this chapter).

2. What emphatic statement does Paul make about this in verse 6?



Up close & personal: Paul could easily have diluted the gospel to appease his hearers and avoid persecution, but he was not willing to do that. It was offensive to many that the cross—the instrument of salvation—was an instrument of suffering and punishment. It was offensive to others that the ground leading to the cross is level to everyone, erasing all human pride and distinctions. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, “*For the message of the cross is foolish to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*” What about you—there’s room at the cross for you; what does it mean to you today?

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**Memory verse:** “*For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*” Galatians 5:5

### **Galatians 5:13–15**                      Responsible Freedom

There is a freedom that all persons have the right to because they are human beings; it is their God-given right by birth. There is also a freedom that is uniquely Christian—born of the indwelling God-given Spirit—for everyone who receives Christ by faith, who are “*called to liberty*” (v. 13). Jesus Christ gives believers the freedom to truly love others.

1. There is both a *negative* and a *positive* aspect to Christian liberty that Paul mentions; what are they? v. 13
  - a. *negative*:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. *positive*:
  
2. In verse 14, what is Paul’s summation regarding the law?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Paul refers to the same law of love mentioned in the Old Testament Law of Moses and also introduced in the New Testament by Jesus. What do they say?
  - a. Leviticus 19:18b
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Matthew 22:35–40

c. Mark 12:28–31

d. Luke 6:27–36

e. John 13:34–35

Paul goes on to contrast this love in verse 15: *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”* This biting and devouring speaks of the type of fighting common among wild animals.

4. The result of this type of behavior—the opposite of love—is found in 5:26 of this chapter; what does it say?

**Salah**

(Pause and think it over . . .) Loving others is the way to be responsible in our Christian freedom. If we would live by the JOY principle: Jesus—others—you—in that order, then we would fulfill the essence of the law. Remember, Jesus said if you will give away your life to others, you will find it!

Personal: Ask God to show you where you have fallen short in loving others, and what you can do to lovingly serve someone else this week.

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### Galatians 5:16–26

### Life in the Spirit

The liberty to love others and the freedom from the law; these are the reality of God’s Spirit at work in our lives. But there is another reality also at work—the sin nature that is continually at conflict with the Spirit in us to tempt us to disobey. The question to be answered is: which one will dominate—the flesh or the Spirit?

1. What does Paul reveal as the secret to overcoming the flesh? v. 16

2. In your own words, summarize the human dilemma in verse 17.
  
3. The law does not give the power to overcome; what gives the believer victory?  
v. 18

Paul provides an explicit list of behavior that stems from the old nature, contrasting it with the fruit [harvest] of the Holy Spirit. Fill in the charts below with the behaviors on one side and the fruitful harvest on the other. Group them by the categories mentioned.

<u>Acts of Sinful Nature</u> (Group these according to . . .)	<u>Fruitful Harvest</u> (Group these according to . . .)
Unbalanced sexual practices:	Relationship with God:
Perverted religions:	Relationship with fellow believers:
Anti-social behaviors:	Relationship with oneself:
Personal failures:	

***Be transparent***  
Be transparent Take spiritual inventory of the exercise you've just completed. Look over both lists again carefully. Underline the ones that pertain to you in both columns. How are you doing?

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If we fill our lives with the works of the flesh, there will be no room for the Spirit, and what a sad commentary that would be. *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (v. 25). Our freedom in Christ does not give us the right to do as we please, but the liberty to do as we ought—to say, “No” to sin; and “Yes” to God.

# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to *you* this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

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2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

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3. In what way have you grown closer to the Lord?

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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**Memory Verse:** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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