

## Galatians 5

**GAL 5:1 It was for freedom [liberty] that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm [in Jesus] and do not be subject [burdened, loaded down, entangled] again to a yoke of slavery [the Mosaic Law].**

- “eleutheria” is freedom (liberty).
  - McCord “Christ liberated us for freedom”
  - “zugos” is “pair of balances, yoke” (Matt. 11:29, 30; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; 1 Tim. 6:1).
1. In the preceding chapter Paul had argued they were “sons of the free woman (Sarah).” (Gal. 4:21-31).
  2. Now he reaffirms they had been set free “for freedom.”
  3. Jesus had talked about freedom. (Jn. 8:32).
  4. Paul had talked about freedom in his other letters. (Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 10:29).

ROM 8:21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.	1CO 10:29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience?
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5. Peter spoke of freedom. (1 Pet. 2:16).

1PE 2:16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.

6. Earlier in this book Paul had emphasized they had been freed from the Mosaic Law. (Gal. 3:13, 24).

### Meaning of Freedom

1. It meant freedom from the Mosaic Law and the obligation to render obedience to its commandments. (Gal. 2:16; 3:11).
2. It meant they were free from the Mosaic Law as an impossible means of justification. (Jas. 2:10).
3. It meant they were free from the fear of condemnation. (Rom. 8:1). See Acts 2:38; 1 Jn. 1:7, 9.
4. It meant they were free from any meritorious system. (Eph. 2:8, 9).

### Folly Of Circumcision

**GAL 5:2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision [as a matter of salvation], Christ will be of no benefit [value] to you [at all].** See Gal. 1:1

- “opheleo”- help, aid, benefit, gain

1. It would appear the Galatians were on the verge of submitting to circumcision.
2. Paul gives a severe warning.
3. “Christ will be of no benefit to you” - You will not benefit from His vicarious death.

### “I Testify Again”

**GAL 5:3 And I testify** [bear witness] **again to every man who receives circumcision** [as a matter of salvation], **that he is under obligation** [a debtor] **to keep the whole** [Mosaic] **Law.**

Lit. “opheiletes” (debtor, one who is obligated)

1. Circumcision is permissible as a matter of preference, but not as a matter of salvation.
2. Circumcision bound one to keep the Law. (Gen. 17:9, 14).

GEN 17:9 God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.  
 GEN 17:14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

### “Severed From Christ”

**GAL 5:4 You have been severed** [cut off, alienated] **from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified** [be right, be saved] **by law; you have fallen from** [the] **grace** [of God].

- “severed” (katargeo) - I make ineffective, modify, abolish, sever.”
- “fallen” is from “ekpipto” - “I fall off, fall from.”

1. It is possible to be “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:26, 27), but be later “severed from Christ.”
2. The doctrine “once saved always saved” is false. (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Heb. 3:12).
3. The doctrine that one cannot fall from grace can promote godless living through false security.

**GAL 5:5 For we through the** [Holy] **Spirit, by faith, are waiting** [eagerly await] **for the hope of righteousness.**

1. The Christian lives in “hope.” (Rom. 12:12; 8:24).

ROM 12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

ROM 8:24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees?

2. “the hope of righteousness” - Lit. “hope of righteousness”
  - a. Righteousness’ hope

b. The hope that belongs to righteousness. (Matt. 5:6).

### Circumcision

**GAL 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything [has any merit], but faith working through love.**

1. Circumcision has nothing to do with salvation.

GAL 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.  
1CO 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

2. “Faith working through love” is what counts.

- “working” is from “energeo” meaning “to work, produce.

a. The Christian life is a life of faith. (Gal. 2:15, 16; Eph. 2:5, 8; 1 Jn. 5:4).

<p>GAL 2:15 "We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles; GAL 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.</p>	<p>EPH 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), EPH 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;</p>	<p>1JO 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.</p>
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b. Saving faith is constantly working for God and others without thought of merit.

3. Faith in Jesus is more than mental assent. (Jas. 2:19; Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

<p>JAM 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.</p>	<p>ROM 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake,</p>	<p>ROM 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;</p>
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### “You Were Running”

**GAL 5:7 You were running [the Christian race] well; who hindered [stopped, hindered] you from obeying the**

## truth?

- “egkopto” [eng\_kop’ to]- “hinder, thwart, prevent.”
- NIV “You were running a good race.
- Amp. “You were running the race nobly.”

1. The Christian life is a race. (1 Cor. 9:24-27; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 3:14).

<p>1CO 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 1CO 9:25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 1CO 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 1CO 9:27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.</p>	<p>GAL 2:2 And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.</p>	<p>PHI 2:16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.  PHI 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.</p>
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2. They had been doing well until they started letting the Judaizers influence them.

3. “obeying the truth”

a. **There is such a thing as truth and it must be obeyed.**

b. Some scriptures speaking of the truth. (Jn. 1:17; 3:21; 4:24; 8:32, 45; 17:17; Rom. 1:18, 25; Gal. 2:5, 14; 4:16; Eph. 4:15; 6:14; Col. 1:5; 1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; 4:4; Tit. 1:1, 14; Heb. 10:26; Jas. 1:18; 5:19; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 2:2; 1 Jn. 1:6, 1:8; 2:4, 21; 3:19; 2 Jn. 1:2, 4; 3 Jn. 1:3, 4, 8, 12).

**GAL 5:8 This [evil, false] persuasion did not come from Him [God, Christ] who calls you.**

1. They had been called by the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:14, 15).

2. The gospel did not teach legalism, but opposed it.

## “A Little Leaven”

**GAL 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump[batch] of dough.**

- “zume” - yeast, leaven

GAL 5:9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." NIV

Gal. 5:9 "A little yeast will make all the dough rise." Gspd.

Gal. 5:9; "But it take only one wrong person among you to infect all the others."

1. A few (one or more) can corrupt the whole church.
2. False teachers are a serious threat to the church then and now. (Matt. 7:15; 1 Jn. 4:1; Acts 20:28-30).

### **Paul Expresses Confidence**

**GAL 5:10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view [contrary stance]; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment [penalty], whoever he is.**

- McCord "that you will think no other way"

1. "The one" is more than one. (Gal. 1:7; 5:12).

GAL 1:7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

GAL 5:12 Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

2. If there is one or a dozen, they are accountable to God.
3. There may have been a ringleader among the Judaizers, but the language here does not necessarily teach such.

### **Denies Preaching Circumcision**

**GAL 5:11 But I, brethren [brothers], if I still preach circumcision [as some accuse me of doing], why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block [obstacle] of the cross has been abolished.**

- "skandalon" - temptation, that which offends, stumbling block"

1. Paul denies he preached circumcision.
2. He was persecuted because he did not preach circumcision.
3. The fact he did not preach circumcision was a stumblingblock to many Jews.
4. Paul preached Christ. (Gal. 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2).
5. The cross was a stumbling-block to the Jews. (1 Cor. 1:23).
6. They objected to the cross for several reasons, but one reason would be the cross excluded circumcision.

#### **Note:**

1. Paul might have been accused of preaching circumcision because Timothy was circumcised. (Acts 16:3).

2. Paul had not taught Jewish Christians to abandon the practice of circumcising their own children.

3. It is possible some had used 1 Corinthians 7:18.

1CO 7:18 Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised.

a. One would ready have to twist this verse to make it promote circumcision.

b. Paul is affirming that circumcision is a matter of indifference spiritually.

4. Paul had not taught circumcision. (Gal. 2:3).

GAL 2:3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

**GAL 5:12 Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate [castrate, emasculate] themselves.**

• “apokopto” - I cut off, make a eunuch of, castrate.”

GAL 5:12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! NIV

**McCord** “would cut themselves off.” **Moffatt** “O that those upsetting you would get themselves emasculated.”

1. This was abhorrent to a Jew for such a person was cut off and could “not enter the assembly of the Lord.” (Deut. 23:1).

DEU 23:1 "No one who is emasculated, or has his male organ cut off, shall enter the assembly of the Lord.

2. He used similar language is Philippians 3:2.

PHI 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

### **Liberty Not License To Sin**

**GAL 5:13 For you were called to freedom [liberty], brethren; only do not turn your freedom [liberty] into [for] an opportunity for the flesh [to do evil], but through love serve one another.**

• “eleutheria” - freedom, liberty “aphormen” - advantage, opportunity

1. “Do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh”

a. Freedom does not mean we have no restraints.

b. See Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 2:16; Rom. 1:18-31.

2. “through love serve one another”

a. Freedom should be used to serve others.

b. Service should be motivated by love - not greed, power, selfishness, etc.

**GAL 5:14 For the whole [Mosaic] Law is fulfilled [in regard to human relationships] in one word, in the statement [the word] You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

1. Loving "neighbor" was the second greatest commandment. (Lev. 19:18).
2. Jesus taught the greatest commandment was loving and obeying God. (Matt. 22:37-39).
3. See Romans 13:8-10.

ROM 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.  
 ROM 13:9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."  
 ROM 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

- a. The word "plesion" (neighbor) means "one near".
  - b. The word, to the Christian, basically had in mind any man in need. (Lk. 10:25-37). See Gal. 6:10.
4. The Christian is called to even a higher than loving neighbor as self. (Jn. 13:34, 35; 15:12).

### Another Warning

**GAL 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed [devoured] by one another.**

- "dakto" - bite
  - "katesthio" - "eat down, devour."
1. Christians should live for one another and for God.
  2. They must not seek to destroy one another.
  3. Gossip, lies, criticism, exclusion, bitter and harsh words, acts of hatred, discouraging words all can destroy others.
  4. We should avoid these things, but we should also develop a hard shell because some will seek to destroy us.

**5. What causes Christians to violate this commandment?**

<b>Selfishness</b>	<b>Dislike</b>	<b>Greed</b>	<b>Power</b>
<b>Differences</b>	<b>Expectations of how to handle differences</b>	<b>Personal injury</b>	<b>Injury to others</b>

**GAL 5:16 But I say, walk [live] by the [Holy] Spirit, and you will not carry out [gratify] the [sinful] desire of the flesh.** See Gal. 5:22,23

- "peripateo" - walk, live

- “teleo” - “I finish, complete, accomplish, carry out, fulfill, keep, pay, gratify.”
- Rom. 8:9; Acts 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 1 Jn. 3:24.

GAL 5:16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. **NRSV**  
 GAL 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. **NIV**

1. He has in mind Galatians 5:15.
2. He has in mind Galatians 5:17.
3. He has in mind Galatians 5:19-21.

**GAL 5:17 For the flesh [man’s carnal nature] sets its desire [lusts] against the [Holy] Spirit, and the [Holy] Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.**

1. Man is not free to do as he please, but he is to do the will of the Father. (Matt. 7:21). See Jere. 10:23
2. The Christian is guided by the Holy Spirit, but not directly.
  - a. If directly, we would all be infallible.
  - b. If directly, we would not have conflicting and contradicting views.
3. The Holy Spirit works in us by the word. (Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16).

<p>EPH 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, <b>but be filled with the Spirit,</b>          EPH 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;</p>	<p>COL 3:16 <b>Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,</b> with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.</p>
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4. The Holy Spirit works in us by the example of others who are obeying the words of those obey the Spirit and His words.
5. He does not give us miraculous powers, strength, knowledge, etc.
6. We cannot blame our limitations, weaknesses, sins, ignorance, etc. on the Holy Spirit.

**GAL 5:18 But if you are led [guided] by the [Holy] Spirit, you are not under [subject to] the [Mosaic] Law.**

- “ago”- “lead, bring, go”
1. It was not scripturally possible to be under a faith system and be under the Mosaic Law.
  2. The Mosaic law did not exclude faith (it blessed it), but it was not a faith system.
    - a. Hebrews 11 shows the importance of faith under the Old covenant.



- b. The fact still remains that those who violated the law were lost. (Jas. 2:10).
  - c. Only the blood of Jesus could save them or any other. (Heb. 9:15-17, 22).
3. See Galatians 5:4 showing the consequences of seeking justification by the Law of Moses.

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