

THE BELIEVER'S GREAT LAW OF LIFE: LOVE

GALATIANS 05: 13–15

DIVISION OVERVIEW: (Gal. 05:13–6:18) Believer's Life

This passage begins the last section of Galatians. Up until now everything has dealt with doctrine; now Paul begins to deal with the practical day to day affairs of the believer. Paul has six very practical subjects to discuss. Bunching all six subjects together, a simple title would be: "The Believer's Life and Walk: Free and Spiritual."

1. The Believer's Great Law of Life: Love (5:13-15)
2. A Walk Combating the Great Enemy in Life: The Desires of the Sinful Nature (5:16-21).
3. A Walk Bearing God's Nature: The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-26).
4. A Walk Restoring the Man Who Slips (6:1-5).
5. A Walk Doing Good to One's Teacher (6:6-10).
6. A Walk Boasting in the Cross of Christ (6:11-18).

Introduction (Gal 05:13–15)

Jesus Christ has set the believer free. The believer no longer has to work and work in order to secure God's approval and acceptance. The believer is accepted by God through the work of Jesus Christ. However, there is a critical fact that must always be remembered: Christian liberty or freedom is not license, that is, being free to sin, to do as a person likes. Christian liberty is being free *not to sin*. It is being free to overcome the passions and urges of the flesh that unceasingly wage war against the better judgment of man. The believer is a person who is so conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit and His power that he is able to purge himself and to love his neighbour as himself. (See note, Rom 6:1-2.)

The point is this: the believer does not walk in sin, for he loves God and loves his neighbour. The believer walks and lives under the greatest of laws – the law of love. Love is the guiding law of the believer's life and walk.

- I. Liberty – love – is the great call of the believer (v. 13).
- II. Love is serving others (v. 13).
- III. Love is not offending, but caring for one's neighbour (v. 14).
- IV. Love is not biting and devouring one another (v. 15).

I. Galatians 05:13 Liberty vs. License; Law vs. Faith; Love

Liberty – love – is the great call of the believer. It has been well established that the believer does not live by observing the law nor by some work or act of goodness. The believer knows that he can never become perfect, no matter how much good he does. He knows that he cannot keep enough laws nor can he work to make himself like God. He knows

that he is short, far short, of God. If he is ever to be acceptable to God, it has to be because God loves him enough...

- to provide an Ideal Righteousness for him
- to provide Someone to bear his punishment for having violated the law

The believer knows that God has loved him and everyone else that much. He knows that God has loved the world so much that he sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to do both things for him and for all the people of the earth. He knows...

- that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and secured the Ideal Righteousness for him
- that Jesus Christ died for him — died bearing the judgment of the law for him

The point is this: when a person believes this about Christ — that Christ is His Saviour — God takes that man's belief and counts it as righteousness. The man becomes acceptable to God. This is what the believer knows: he is not acceptable to God because he works and becomes better and better by keeping some law or rule or ritual. He is acceptable to God because Christ has set him free from having to struggle to be good enough to be saved and always wondering if he has done enough good. Man, no longer has to work and keep laws to be saved. Living by law was always a hopeless task that left man lost and helpless (see notes, Gal 3:10-12; 3:19). Man is saved by the grace of God in giving His Son for the world: by believing that Jesus Christ is his Saviour — that Jesus Christ died for him. However, having said this, note two things.

1. There is the danger of license. A question needs to be asked: if Christ sets us free from the law, does this mean that a person can *believe in Christ* and then go out and live like he wants, doing his own thing? Can he use his freedom as an occasion to go out and indulge the flesh (sinful nature) knowing that God will forgive him? Can a person continue to seek the things of the world and give way to the flesh (sinful nature)? Can he believe in Christ and still live in worldliness? No! A thousand times no, Scripture declares!

A person who thinks and declares such an idea fails to understand belief — true belief. In the Bible belief does not mean intellectual belief, to just believe something in the mind. Belief means a *committed belief*, to believe something with one's life. To believe Christ is to commit one's life to Christ (see *Believe*, Jn. 2:24). Just think about it for a moment and it becomes perfectly clear: if a person is not willing to commit his life to Christ, he does not believe in Christ. He could not believe, not really; for if he really believed, he would beyond all question give all he is and has to the Son of God. (See Rom 6:16; Heb 5:9.)

2. There is the restraint of love. A person who thinks that belief in Christ frees him and gives him license to sin does not understand what love is. This is the subject of the present passage. The true believer is freed from having to secure God's approval by law, but love is the one restraint that is placed upon him. The believer needs no restraint but love. There are at least two reasons for this.

=> God has loved him, so the person who truly sees the love of God is drawn to love God and to love all God's creatures.

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

=> Love embraces all the commandments of God. Jesus Himself said so, and the fact is clearly seen in the points of this passage.

Mat 22:36-40 *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

II. Galatians 05:13 Love is Service

Love is serving one another. A believer is *free* in Christ: he is set free of all law, restraints and works. He is under nothing, absolutely nothing but Christ. He lives in Christ, moves and has his being in Christ. The love of Christ is his law and restraint. Why? Because Christ loved the believer, served and gave Himself for the believer, and the believer knows it. Therefore, the believer loves Christ with all his heart and life. He wants to please Christ and do all he can to serve Him. And this is just the point: how can the believer serve Christ? By doing exactly what Christ did: loving and serving others.

"Serve one another in love."

A person who loves does not act like a *lord over people*; he...

- serves and helps
- shows kindness and gentleness
- expresses concern and care
- demonstrates sympathy and empathy

The person who truly loves identifies with a person, gets down where they are, even below where they are, and ministers to them. Love serves — always reaches out to do whatever it can for the other person. It never withdraws from the other person, feeling that he or she...

- does not deserve the effort or help
- is not worth the effort or help
- is less than what he should be
- is too derelict, immoral, uneducated, unrecognized, below others

Mat 20:28 *"Just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Mark 10:43-44 *“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”*

Luke 10:36-37 *“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”*

Luke 22:27 *“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”*

John 13:4-5, 14 *So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him... “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.”*

John 21:16 *Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

Gal 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Gal 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Phil 2:7 *But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

III. Galatians 05:14 Love is Caring

Love is not offending but caring for one's neighbour – caring as much as one cares for oneself. It must be admitted:

=> If a person cared for everyone else as much as he cared for himself, he would need no law. He would be living and doing exactly what he should.

This is the reason love fulfils all the law. Love does not take advantage of other people. Love will not use other people to fulfil one's own purpose, greed or lust. Love will not hurt someone else any more than we would want someone to hurt us.

Love involves some very practical acts that are clearly spelled out in Scripture (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

=> Love is patient (endures).

=> Love is kind.

=> Love does not envy (is not jealous).

=> Love does not boast (does not brag).

- => Love is not proud (vainglorious, arrogant, prideful).
- => Love is not rude (unbecoming, indecent, unmannerly).
- => Love is not self-seeking (is not selfish; does not insist on its own right and way).
- => Love is not easily angered (not touchy, fretful, resentful).
- => Love keeps no records of wrongs (harbours and plans no evil thought; takes no account of a wrong done it).
- => Love does not delight in evil (wrong, sin, injustice), but rejoices with the truth (justice and righteousness).
- => Love always protects.
- => Love always trusts (exercises faith in everything; is ready to believe the best in everyone).
- => Love always hopes (keeps up hope in everything and under all circumstances).
- => Love always perseveres (without weakening; it gives power to endure).

Rom 13:8-10 *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

Gal 5:14 *The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself."*

James 2:8 *If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right.*

IV. Galatians 05:15 Love is not Biting and Devouring

Love is not biting and devouring one another. A T. Robertson says that the picture is that of a fight between a dog and cat or a fight between wild animals (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 311). Biting and devouring refers to much more than just feuding and fighting. Men bite and devour each other when they violate each other. For example, nothing takes a hunk out a person any more than the biting or devouring that takes place between a wife or husband. However, love respects the other person – no matter who he is or what he has done. Love does not bite or devour others in any way whatsoever. Love does not...

- snap
- exploit
- accuse
- censor
- expose
- abuse
- gossip
- criticize
- slander
- condemn
- take
- misuse
- covet
- hurt

James 4:1-2 *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.*

1 John 2:9 *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.*

1 John 3:15 *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

1 John 4:20-21 *If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Prov 10:12 *Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. ■*