



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

GALATIANS LESSON 5

In Galatians chapter 5, Paul now moves into the practical application of his continuing argument, reminding us that right doctrine should produce right living. Chapters 1-2 appeal to the Galatians' reasoning; chapters 3-4 appeal to their choice; and chapters 5-6 appeal to their action. Paul will continue to prove that a believer is free from bondage when they accept Christ and are called to live by grace, through faith. Paul points out the consequences of trusting in circumcision, or anything else apart from Christ. John MacArthur explains it this way: "The person who trusts in circumcision forfeits benefits from Christ's work on his behalf, places himself under obligation to keep the whole law, falls from God's grace, and excludes himself from God's righteousness."

Paul also addresses the issue of Christian liberty and what freedom actually means. The Judaizers were afraid that if their "rules and standards" were abandoned, the church would go haywire, removing all order and moral responsibility. Paul deals with this extreme in our chapter. There are some exciting things to discuss this week. I pray that you approach the Word prayerfully, with an open and teachable heart.

First Day

1. Begin today by reading Galatians 5:1-26. Observe the facts you find. Are there any repeated words or phrases? What is Paul's tone? Be a detective as you search for facts that help you see what's going on.

2. Are there any commands? Any promises?

3. Summarize Paul's point in verses 1-15.

4. Summarize Paul's main point in verses 16-26. How does it relate to the first section?

5. What verse or specific point spoke to your heart?

We'll end here for today. I pray that each of us will examine ourselves and see if we are living in a prison of legalism, expecting others to follow suit. I pray that we will never get caught up in the lie of trusting in what we do, rather than in Jesus Christ. We are free in Christ! That's our **"Reason to Rejoice"**!

Memory Verse of the Week: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

Second Day

Review your memory verse. Are you standing fast or are you entangled?

Galatians 5:1 is considered a transitional statement. It is a conclusion to the previous chapter and an introduction to this new section.

1. Read Galatians 5:1-12. In verse 1, what does Paul tell us to do? What does he tell us not to do? Explain in your own words what he means.
2. Why did Christ die, according to verse 1?
3. Why does Christ "profit them nothing" if they go back to believing they must be circumcised? (5:2)
4. According to verse 3, if they believe they have to keep one part of the Law, what else are they required to do? (Is that possible?)
5. In verses 5-6, how are faith, hope, and love related?
6. What do you think it means to "fall from grace" in verse 4? Is Paul saying the Galatian believers lost their salvation?

We must remember that Paul is not saying that the Law is evil. Irving Jensen writes, "What Paul did consider evil was a Christian's returning to the bondage of the Law, thus forfeiting the blessings of freedom in Christ." (Galatians 5:1) When we abandon grace for the Law, we always lose. The fact that we are now under grace does not mean that we become rebels. Wiersbe writes, "It simply means that we no longer need the external force

of the Law to keep us in God's will, because we have the internal leading of the Holy Spirit of God (Romans 8:1-4)." Jesus died to make us free, not to make us slaves.

I don't believe that Paul is saying they were in danger of losing their salvation when he says they fell from grace, because he continually refers to them as "brethren." It means they "fell out of the sphere of God's grace." When we do this, we rob ourselves of all the blessings we've received in Christ by choosing the Law instead. In verse 5, Paul gives us a picture of one who is living in the grace of God. It's living by faith, depending on the Holy Spirit.

Paul now begins to ask them questions to force them back on track, hoping they would see the error of their ways. He uses an athletic analogy that they all would understand to make his point.

7. In verses 7-8, Paul tells them that they had been running well. What fell in their path? Explain Paul's point. (Was God responsible?)

Remember that "legalism does not mean the setting of spiritual standards; it means worshiping these standards and thinking that we are spiritual because we obey them." (Wiersbe)

8. How is legalism like leaven? How does leaven work? Read Matthew 13:33, 16:11-12, and 1 Corinthians 5:6-12 to help in your answer.

9. A legalistic person may have right motives, but wrong methods. Can you give an example of this?

10. Are you very vocal about your own personal convictions, attempting to convince others that they must "do" certain things to be spiritual? Are you acting as leaven?

11. Are you running well or has something fallen in your lane that has hindered you from obeying the truth? (Maybe it's a particular sin or adherence to an unbiblical conviction. Maybe it's a person you are hanging out with.) Is there anything that's "tripping" you up?
12. Do you value your freedom in Christ? How can you show that you do?

In verse 10, Paul tells us that he believes the Galatians will do the right thing, and that the Judaizers will face God's judgement for what they were teaching. In verse 11, Paul reminds them that he himself had been falsely accused of endorsing circumcision when he had Timothy circumcised in Acts 16:1-3. Timothy's mother was a Jew, but his father was Greek. To the Jews, Timothy was a Gentile, but to the Gentiles he was a Jew. Paul circumcised him to make his identity clear so he wouldn't hinder Paul's ministry as he shared the Gospel. The Judaizers had seen this as an indication that Paul really believed in the "faith-plus-works" mentality. The fact that he was being persecuted by the Judaizers proved that he was not on their side. In verse 12, we sense Paul's love for the Galatians as he expresses his desire for the false teachers to "mutilate themselves" or "operate on themselves." Paul may be implying that he wishes they would cut themselves off from the Galatian believers and stop spreading their false doctrine. He wasn't being vindictive, just passionate in his love for them.

That's it for today. I think Paul made his point, don't you? Tomorrow we'll be looking at liberty versus license. Should be exciting. See you then!

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Are you entangled with anything?

1. Please read Galatians 5:13-26. How many times is the phrase "one another" used?

Paul now approaches the very subject that the Judaizers seemed to be afraid of. So ... if Christians don't have to keep the Law, what will happen to the church? Who will govern and control their actions? Paul reminds them of the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, which enables and empowers them to live the Christian walk.

2. We are called to liberty, or freedom. What are the limits of that freedom, according to verse 13?
3. When is something a liberty or a Law? (Give examples of both.)
4. What are some examples of using our liberty as a license, or an opportunity, for the flesh?
5. How does "love" keep us from abusing our liberties? How is this the guiding principle of freedom?
6. What else do you learn about liberty from the following verses?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:12

- b. 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
 - c. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
 - d. 1 Corinthians 10:14-33
 - e. Romans 14:1-23
7. Why can't we exercise a particular freedom if it offends or stumbles someone else? If we do, how can we be guilty of hindering the Gospel of Christ?

Here in Galatians, as well as in Corinthians, Paul points out that a Christian's goal must be higher than pleasing themselves. We can't make decisions based solely on what's right for us. We are being watched by both believers and unbelievers alike. Sometimes love must override our desire to exercise a certain freedom. There are things that we may feel perfectly entitled to participate in, own, or believe, but are called to renounce for the sake of others. What we do always affects others.

8. You know what question I'm going to ask. Time to search your heart and examine your lifestyle. Are you doing something or participating in some activity that is stumbling another? (Read John 15:13)

9. Has God ever asked you to give up something that you considered perfectly harmless for the sake of someone else? Can you share it with your group?

10. As a mom, are you practicing any liberties in your home that could be a stumbling block to your children? What should you do?

11. Perhaps you are asking yourself, "Why should my freedoms be limited by someone else's conscience? Just because they have a problem with it, why should I?" How do 1 Corinthians 10:24 and 31-33 answer that?

12. Last question. Whom do we ultimately sin against when we cause someone else to stumble? Read 1 Corinthians 8:11-13.

Wow ... a lot of food for thought. I pray that God is ministering to your heart. I pray that each of us is challenged and encouraged as we search our hearts this week.

Fourth Day

Study your verse. Are you guarding your liberty?

1. Please read Galatians 5:13-26 again. Write a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. Why are they at war with each other?

2. How would you define what it means to "walk in the Spirit"?

John Stott defines the word "flesh" as "our fallen human nature which we inherited from our parents and they inherited from theirs, and which is twisted with self-centeredness and therefore prone to sin."

We are not "under the Law" when we are led by the Spirit (vs 18) because we are no longer controlled by an outward discipline of rules, but by an inner discipline of the Spirit. Paul now gives some behaviors that will be evident of those who walk after the flesh. Notice in verse 21 that Paul refers to those who "practice" or continually and habitually do these things, rather than those who commit an act of sin.

3. How then, according to verse 18 and 24, do we overcome the flesh?

4. What does it mean to "crucify the flesh"? Can you give any Scriptures to support your answer?

5. Warren Wiersbe divides the work of the flesh in three categories. Which sins are in each category? Define any you are unsure of.

a. Sensual sins:

b. Superstitious sins:

c. Social sins:

6. Search your own heart. Are you currently practicing any of these sins? Do any of them (especially in the social category) ever appear in your heart or attitude?
1. Are you jealous or envious of anyone?
 2. Are you selfish and self-seeking?
 3. Do you hate any one?
 4. Do you always cause problems?
 5. Do you have a bad temper?
7. What are some practical ways that we can keep ourselves "in the Spirit" or be continually "led by the Spirit"?
8. Do you walk in the Spirit? Does He lead you and direct your steps? Is there an area of your life that you need to surrender and allow the Holy Spirit to take control over?
9. What is the consequence for those who continually practice such sin? (vs 21)

Yikes! That's pretty heavy. Let's give ourselves over to the Spirit, shall we? God bless you, ladies!

Fifth Day

Write your verse from memory. How has it ministered to your heart this week?

Today we will be looking at the fruit of the Spirit. We must remember that we cannot produce fruit on our own. We can fake it, but it isn't real fruit unless we've surrendered to the Spirit and allowed Him to do a work in our lives.

1. Read Galatians 5:22-26. We can't discuss fruit without reading John 15:1-17. According to John 15, what one thing must we do in order to bear fruit?

2. How important is bearing fruit, according to John 15:16?

3. How much fruit should we bear? What does God do in our life to cause us to bear as much fruit as possible?

4. What are some ways that God prunes us?

Jesus tells us that we are to "**abide**" in Him. The word "abide" means to remain in, to reside, or to live in. We are a Christian if we "live in" Christ. We are called to live in Him and He will live in us. He is the vine and we are the branches. We must stay connected with Him. He is our life and source of strength. If we abide in Him, we will bear fruit. Different types of fruit are mentioned in Scripture. Winning souls, holy living, and good works are a few examples (Romans 1:13, 6:22; Colossians 1:10). Here in Galatians 5, Paul is talking about the inward character of a man who is being Spirit led. Fruit is the evidence of a Spirit-filled life. Let's **define** each and **examine** our hearts to see if the fruit is growing in our hearts.

Love: Agape Love: divine, willing, sacrificial, self-giving love.
Do you love others like Christ does?

Joy : Inward peace and sufficiency that isn't affected by outward circumstances.

Do you have the joy of being right with God?

Peace: Tranquility of heart which derives from the knowledge that our lives are in the hand of God.

Are you experiencing God's peace?

Longsuffering: Reproducing God's forbearance with others.

Are you patient with the shortcomings of others?

Kindness: To act as a gentleman, with gentleness and consideration.

Are you kind to others?

Goodness: Moral and spiritual excellence, the state of being good.

Is your life morally good?

Faithfulness: Reliable, trustworthy, confidence in God.

Are you a faithful believer?

Gentleness or meekness: Power under control.

Are you humble and meek, or pushy and proud?

Self-control: Self-mastery over one's desires and love of pleasure.

Do you allow the Spirit to control your emotions, or your flesh?

It's interesting to note that all nine of the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit are also commanded of believers in the New Testament. Also in every case, Jesus can be seen to be the supreme example and the Holy Spirit to be the source.

5. Why is a believer commanded to bear fruit? Read John 15:8. Are you bearing fruit? Is God being glorified?

God will continually prune us, removing all unnecessary or dead things that will hinder our growth. A good thing to remember is that although pruning may hurt, it never harms us. It is always for our good.

6. Are you being pruned right now? Read Jeremiah 29:11-13 for encouragement. He prunes us because He loves us! Hang in there!