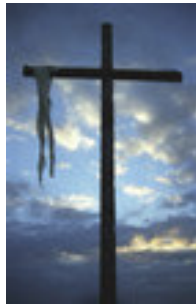


Q4. READ Gal. 5:16-26. What difference do you see between living by the Spirit (v. 16) and being led by the Spirit (v.18)?

Q5. Look at verses 19-25. What contrast do you see between the two different ways of living described?

Q6. The acts of the sinful nature are many, however Paul's description of the 'fruit' of the Spirit (vs. 22) are, in the original Greek, all connected (as if different fruit on the one tree). Why might this be so? Why call them 'fruit' as opposed to 'acts' as is so with verses 20 and 21?



Q7. Consider the areas listed in verses 20 and 21 of sex, religion, society and alcohol— Why are these areas of life so susceptible to corruption by our sinful nature?

Q8. If, as the bible teaches, the Spirit of God comes to make his dwelling in those who have faith in Christ, which of the 'fruit' He produces are you most in need of in your life?

READ John 14:16,17; 16:13-15 and give thanks in prayer

#5.2 In Step with The Spirit

Galatians 5:16-26

Introduction

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

**Galatians-
Freedom in
Christ**

Recap

In 5:6-12, the apostle Paul dealt again with the "Law-keepers" who insisted on legalistic practices such as circumcision if the Galatians were to be truly assured of being God's people. Paul wrote: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (5:6). Religion focuses on what one must DO in order to be right with God. The Christian gospel, as we have seen, says that God has already DONE all that is needed for us to be in a right standing with Him, and faith is all we need to receive that new status and to be assured of salvation. This is the good news of God's GRACE. Paul has urged the Galatians to rest on this grace and live according to the "law of the spirit". If, then, we are free from the demands of the Law as regards our righteousness, the question remains—as it did for Paul's critics— how shall Christians live as free people? As lawless people? Do we have any regard for the Law of the Old Testament? What role might the Spirit of God play in this?

What price freedom?

Chapter 5:1 tells us "it is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (from the demands of the Law in regard to righteousness). In Paul's letter, we are clear about what Paul says we are to be free from:

- ⇒ We must never return to a religion that requires us to do this or do that in order to be acceptable to God.
- ⇒ We no longer need be burdened by guilt for fear of condemnation because of sin.
- ⇒ We must trust Christ alone and what he has done on the cross for everything we need for our status before God, and not our own human effort.

We are clear at this point as to what the Gospel of Grace frees us from. But the question remains, “what are we freed to.”

Freedom from an oppressive system needs a pathway forward and a power to change us from our great potential to abuse freedom. Paul says in Galatians 5:17, 18:

17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Freedom from the schoolmaster or guardian that is God’s laws needs the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit who can help us do what we cannot do of ourselves.

Q1. Ironically, Paul’s definition of freedom from being law-keepers, returns us to those very laws we are freed from keeping. Look at Gal. 5:13-15. What relationship should Christians have with the Old Testament commandments and laws?

Q2. Someone has said: “We are given liberty, not license. We are however, licensed to love. And, we are to love the law of the Spirit of God.” What does this mean in the light of Galatians ch. 5?

Q3. The great reformer, John Calvin, wrote: The great reformer, John Calvin wrote in his major works: “Christian freedom, in my opinion, consists of three parts:



1. The first: that the consciences of believers, in seeking assurance of their justification before God, should rise above and advance beyond the law, forgetting all law righteousness...
2. The second part, dependent upon the first, is that consciences observe the law, not as if constrained by the necessity of the law, but that freed from the law's yoke they willingly obey God's will...
3. The third part of Christian freedom lies in this: regarding outward things that are of themselves "indifferent", we are not bound before God by any religious obligation preventing us from sometimes using them and other times not using them, indifferently... Accordingly, it is perversely interpreted both by those who allege it as an excuse for their desires that they may abuse God's good gifts to their own lust and by those who think that freedom does not exist unless it is used before men, and consequently, in using it have no regard for weaker brethren... Nothing is plainer than this rule: that we should use our freedom if it results in the edification of our neighbor, but if it does not help our neighbor, then we should forego it."

(The Institutes of the Christian Religion)

What, in your own words, is Calvin saying about our freedom and the Law of God?

