

Walking in Freedom – The Battle Within (Part 2: Life in the Spirit Series)

Galatians 5: 16-17 ¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.

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Walking in Freedom – The Battle Within

“What is Freedom?”

- ▶ The Absence of Constraint or Oppression
 - ▶ Political and Legal Freedom
- ▶ The Power to make choices
 - ▶ Personal (Free Will) and Moral Freedom
- ▶ Freedom vs. Responsibility?

Freedom does not give us freedom from consequences

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2 Corinthians 3:17 - “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

John 8: 34- 36 “Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Freedom in Christ must be guarded – Galatians 5: 1-6

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Freedom in Christ must be guarded

- ▶ The fact is that Jesus has made us free!
- ▶ Circumcision represents the entire system of legalism
- ▶ Stand firm - It takes effort to not fall back into legalism
- ▶ The system of grace and system of law are incompatible
- ▶ True freedom is living by faith expressing itself through love

Legalism is a dangerous “Yeast” Galatians 5:7–12

⁷ You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ **“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.”** ¹⁰ I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. ¹¹ Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹² As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Legalism is a dangerous “Yeast”

- ▶ Stay focused on our Spiritual journey
- ▶ False teachers were spreading legalism
- ▶ Distractions and false teachings can derail us
- ▶ Paul uses a bread metaphor to illustrate the impact of small compromises on our journey
- ▶ A distorted gospel is no gospel at all!
- ▶ Paul was very intense in his language here

Freedom is NOT a license to Sin – Galatians 5: 13-15

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Freedom is NOT a license to Sin

- ▶ Do not confuse freedom of the gospel with freedom of the flesh
- ▶ True freedom (from Christ) leads to love and service, not self-indulgence
- ▶ Serving each other in love is the antidote for using freedom to indulge the flesh'
- ▶ Love your neighbor as yourself
- ▶ Use your freedom to build others up, not tear down

The Flesh vs the Spirit – Galatians 5: 16-18

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in **conflict** with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The Flesh vs the Spirit

- ▶ **SARX** = Greek word translated to flesh: means all the evil that man is and is capable of apart from the intervention of God's grace in his life.
- ▶ If we walk in the Spirit, we naturally will not fulfill the lust of the flesh
- ▶ There is constant conflict between the flesh and the Spirit
- ▶ Daily surrender is required!

The works of the flesh are evident – Galatians 5: 19- 21

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The works of the flesh are evident

- ▶ Sexual sins: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, orgies
- ▶ Spiritual sins: idolatry, witchcraft
- ▶ Relational sins: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition
- ▶ Social sins: envy, drunkenness
- ▶ If you are walking in the Spirit, you won't need a LIST!
- ▶ Paul is not talking about a one-time fall but rather a continuous lifestyle without repentance.

The Fruit of the Spirit Is the Evidence of a Changed Life - Galatians 5: 22–23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

The Fruit of the Spirit Is the Evidence of a Changed Life

- ▶ Internal: Love, Joy, Peace
- ▶ Relational: Patience, Kindness, Goodness
- ▶ Personal strength: Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control
- ▶ These fruits are NOT multiple choice! 😊

Crucify the Flesh and Keep in Step with the Spirit – Galatians 5: 24-26

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Crucify the Flesh and Keep in Step with the Spirit

- ▶ God is calling us to put to death our sinful nature
- ▶ Be attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives
- ▶ Pride and envy can destroy relationships and hinder our spiritual growth

Walking in Freedom – The Battle Within

- ▶ **We are free in Christ—not to indulge, but to love.**
- ▶ **We are in a battle—between flesh and Spirit.**
- ▶ **We are called to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, not performance.**

John 4:23 “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”

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Reflection Questions

- ▶ Are you living in grace or do you feel under pressure to perform?**
- ▶ Are you walking in the Spirit - or giving freedom to the flesh?**
- ▶ Are the fruits visible in your life - or are the works of the flesh dominating?**

Ephesians 5:15 “Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise”



Questions?

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