

## Galatians 5:13-25 Living in the Freedom of the Spirit

### I. Spiritual Freedom is Expressed in Love (13-15)

#### A. True Freedom is not a License for the Flesh (13a)

1. Freedom doesn't mean you are free to indulge in sin
2. Indulging in sin is to be a slave to sin
3. Freedom from the Law does not mean there is no Law

#### B. True Freedom Expresses itself in Through Loving Service (13b)

1. Freedom from the law is freedom to serve from a heart of love rather than a duty
2. Freedom which is born of the Spirit will desire to serve in love

#### C. True Freedom Fulfills the Whole Law (14)

1. All the law teaches can be summed up in a single word "love"
2. Jesus said the whole law hangs on two things – Love God and love your neighbor
3. When we walk in Spiritual love, we will naturally fulfill the law
4. There is no need to hang on the law. Focusing on loving one another will fulfill the law

#### D. True Freedom is Never Meant for Selfish Gain (15)

1. Freedom is not biting and devouring one another
2. Freedom is not holding malice, envy, and spite against the brethren
3. Exercising our selfish instincts does not reveal a freedom – it reveals that we are still consumed by our flesh.
4. A congregation of people who think they are free to follow selfish desires will consume one another.

### II. Spiritual Freedom is Living By the Holy Spirit (16-18)

#### A. Believers are to Walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh

1. Believers will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh as they follow the Spirit
2. Following the Spirit is a day by day, minute by minute practice. Believers must submit to His will as they are led by Him through the word of God and the renewed heart.
3. Every sin we commit finds its root in our failure to walk in the Spirit – to follow His leading

#### B. Believers Will Consistently Experience the Battle between Flesh and Spirit (17)

1. The Spirit will always be in conflict against the flesh
  - a. This is an important mark of salvation
  - b. Non-believers have no conflict living after the flesh
  - c. Believers cannot do what they desire – The Spirit pulls one way and the flesh pulls the opposite direction. Each step the believer takes in life is either in step with the Spirit or the flesh. There is no other option.
  - d. The Spirit leads but the believer must submit to Him

NOTE: That is one reason why I don't understand the concept of "re-dedication" – re-dedication is only good

for a single moment. The second the individual takes a step, he is either walking in the Spirit or the flesh.

2. Believers cannot do what they will – we are taking each step of life after the flesh or after the Spirit.

C. Believers Who are Led by The Spirit are Free from the Law (18)

1. Picture yourself walking through a minefield. The Law tells you where the mines are. Worrying and working to make sure you don't hit each mine is the slavery which Paul speaks of. Working this way is working according to the flesh, in our own strength. The Spirit is like a guide who knows exactly where the mines are. Believers are to follow Him (and to focus on following Him) rather than focusing on the mines. When believers are led by the Spirit, they will naturally miss the mines, but there is no longer any fear or worry – we are trusting in the Spirit's leading.

2. The Law is fulfilled by the Spirit's leading – which believers do out of love for God, not fear of punishment

III. Spiritual Freedom is Evident in Man's Life (19-23)

A. The Marks of Walking in the Flesh (19-21)

1. The Works of the Flesh are “manifest” – meaning obvious to all (19a)

a. Man cannot fake walking in the Spirit

b. What is inside will always come out

c. The list of fleshly works denote a pattern of life rather than a sinful misstep – for example, the believer may experience a moment of strife, anger, or envy – but these are not the habitual practice of his life. The Spirit wars against these things when they appear – also remember Jesus said to lust is to commit adultery and to hate is to commit murder.

2. Defining the Works of the Flesh (19b-21a)

a. **Adultery** – breaking the covenant of marriage by word, thought, or deed

b. **Fornication** – The Greek word is *porneia* from where we get “pornography.” This is not just the act of sex, it is any and all forms of sexual immorality.

c. **Uncleaness** – In this context, the word means moral impurity or any impure conduct in regards to sexual relations.

d. **Lasciviousness** – elsewhere in the NT, this word is used speaking of people who abandon themselves to vice. These are any immoral acts that are paraded without self-respect or shame.

e. **Idolatry** – putting anything before God

f. **Witchcraft** – although you may not fear falling into witchcraft in the modern world, the Greek word is *Pharmakeia*. This is where our words, Pharmacy and Pharmacology come from. In the ancient world drugs, potions, and medicines were

used in pagan rituals. This abusive use of drugs may be of what Paul speaks.

g. **Hatred** – this is the condition of the heart

h. **Variance** – This is strife, discord, having a quarrelsome spirit, or a spirit of rivalry.

i. **Emulations** – The word is *Zelos*. This is where we get the word “zeal.” Although in this context it refers to a selfish zeal which we would call jealousy.

j. **Wrath** – This is the outward expression of hatred.

k. **Strife** – probably also refers to selfish ambition which create factions and dissention

l. **Seditions** – closely related to the strife

m. **Heresies** – having a factious spirit against the truth

n. **Envyings** – having ill will against another because of what they are or what they have

o. **Murders** – self explanatory

p. **Drunkenness** – “bouts of drunkenness” – drunkenness weakens a person’s rational and moral control over his thoughts and actions

q. **Revellings** – a companion of drunkenness. Putting pleasure above God.

### 3. The Result of The Works of The Flesh (21b)

a. “Those who do such things” – speaks of an ongoing lifestyle, a habitual practice.

b. A man may recognize the moral evil in these things and work hard to stop, but they will always manifest themselves in the life of those living after the flesh.

c. Those who practice these things will certainly not inherit the kingdom of God.

### B. The Fruit of the Spirit (22-23)

1. Notice that these are things the Spirit produces in the Believer

2. Defining the Fruit of the Spirit

a. **Love** – This is the primary evidence of freedom in the Spirit. Paul earlier said we are to use our freedom to serve one another in love.

b. **Joy**

c. **Peace**

d. **Longsuffering** = patience

e. **gentleness** – having a gracious attitude toward others. This is used of God’s gracious kindness toward sinners.

f. **goodness** – uprightness and moral excellence of heart and life

g. **faith** – here, the word does not denote our justifying faith before God, rather “faithfulness” or fidelity

h. **meekness** – having a gentle and merciful spirit with others

i. **Temperance** – this is self control. It is in contrast with the “revellings” in the previous list.

3. There is no Law against the Fruits of the Spirit (23b)

i. Following the Spirit frees us from the law

ii. See the explanation of this above

#### IV. Spiritual Freedom Means Walking in the Spirit as We Crucify the Flesh (24-26)

##### A. The Law is not Needed to Restrain Believers (24)

1. They have been crucified with Christ – their sinful flesh died with him – it means the flesh no longer has dominion

2. The Crucifixion of the flesh happened at conversion when believers were joined with Christ in His death

3. The Passions and pull of the flesh is not absent in believers, but it can no longer reign

##### B. Believers Must Walk in the Spirit (25-26)

1. All Believers “live” by the Spirit in the sense that we have been given spiritual and eternal life

2. If we truly have this life, let us walk by the same Spirit which dwells in us.

3. Walking in the Spirit

i. Believers must walk in tune with the Spirit – the word literally means “to walk in a row with” as a soldier would do.

ii. Believers won’t be free from the flesh’s pull, but they must choose on a moment by moment basis to follow the Spirit

iii. This is how believers live a godly life free from the law

##### C. How “Walking in the Spirit” looks (26)

1. It is not selfish – desiring vain glory

2. It does not provoke one another

3. It does not envy one another