

LESSON 11: GALATIANS 5:13-6:18

Life by the Spirit

1. What is the difference between liberty and license?
2. Contrast what Paul says about “the whole Law” in 5:3 with what he says in 5:14. Can we rightly say that “the law is abolished”? Or are we liable still to keep “the entire law”? In short, try to explain in your own words Paul’s important point in all this?
3. Give examples of people devouring and destroying one another, and suggest how these situations could be changed by love.
4. Read the following two questions first, then read vv. 1-18 again with both these questions in mind. First, according to Paul, what ways can spiritual freedom be lost?
5. Second, what deliberate choice must Christians make if they are not to be hindered in their spiritual freedom? Why?
6. Read vv. 19-21 in more than one translation. With what various aspects of life do these works of the flesh have to do?
7. Which are overt actions and which are sins of the mind? And is the list exhaustive?
8. Why, do you think, is the term “fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22) (rather than works of the Spirit) set

in contrast to “works of the flesh” (v. 19)?

9. What has happened to the old life of the one who now belongs to Christ (v. 24)?

10. What is the challenge of the Christian life if vs. 24-26 are true of us?

11. Briefly summarize the contrast between what the flesh habitually practices and what the Spirit produces in a person’s life. How do we “provoke” one another (v. 26)?

12. Describe the appropriate action to be taken when a fellow Christian lapses into sin (6:1; see also Matthew 18:15-17). Compare these with Proverbs 17:9 and 19:11. When is it appropriate to overlook an offense and when not? And why might it be difficult to effect this “gentle” restoring in practice? What effect would heeding the warning in the second part of this verse have in forming your attitudes?

13. Throughout Galatians, Paul has attacked those who would subject the Galatians to Jewish traditions and laws. What is the effect and meaning of his phrase, “the law of Christ” (6:2)? (See 2:16,19; Ephesians 2:14-16; John 13:34,35; Galatians 5:14-23; James 1:25-27; 2:8-13; Matthew 22:36-40). How is the law fulfilled, practically-speaking? And in what consists our Christian witness?

14. Why do you think that we are so often unwilling to allow others to bear our burdens? What impact does this inability have on us, our relationships, the Church?

15. What is Paul getting at in verse 3? Are we to go about thinking of ourselves as “nothing”? (See also Romans 12:3.)

16. How do we test our own work (v. 4)? Why, and in what ways, do we get into trouble when we compare ourselves to others?

17. In verse 2, Paul writes that we must “bear each other’s burdens,” while in verse 5 he states that “each one should carry his own load.” How do you understand the import of these two verses, taken together?

18. In case one might be tempted to take v. 5 as an excuse for just taking care of oneself, what does v. 6 indicate about our responsibility to others? What mutual sharing is implied?

19. How are vv. 7-8 a warning about how to use your resources? Paraphrase in economic terms what Paul has spelled out in agricultural terms. What are some important principles for Christian living that are spelled out in these verses?

20. What is the connection between Paul’s point in vv. 7-8 and his point in vv. 9-10. In what areas may we be guilty of giving in to our own flesh when the time, money, energy, and thought which God has given to us could be used for the things of the Spirit? What might cause us to “become weary in doing good” (v. 9)? How then can we be of practical assistance to one another? (See Acts 2:42 and Hebrews 10:24-25.)

21. What opportunities are yours right now to fulfill the admonitions of verse 10?

22. Contrast Paul’s motivation with that of the false teachers as he closes this letter. Compare 5:11 with 6:12 and explain, again, Paul’s understanding of how their teaching abolishes “the offense of the cross.”

23. Sum up Paul's argument in v. 13a? What is the organizing principle of the community of God's people?
24. What is the only thing in the world worth boasting about (v. 14)? Why? Re-read verse 3 and compare it with this verse. How might both these verses taken together deepen our understanding of Paul's point that we are "nothing."
25. What is Paul's point in v. 15? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. What is "new" about the new creation? How has it been brought to bear in our lives? What are the marks of this "new creation," and what marks are no longer necessary?
26. To the Galatians who are under pressure to accept the marks of circumcision, how does Paul conclude his letter, 6:17? Explain this remarkable verse (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-25 for a list of these marks). What was Paul getting at here, and how are we to apply and understand this verse? How does this answer those who challenge the validity of Paul's commitment to Christ (compare with v. 12)?
27. What are the three elements of Paul's benediction upon the Galatians, 6:16,18? How is Jesus Christ the source of these three?