

The Living Commentary Series

STANDING FAST IN LIBERTY



Lessons from Paul's Epistle to the
GALATIANS

By James Rasbeary

GALATIANS

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DEDICATION

This volume is affectionately dedicated to

BRO. TOM DAVIS

With appreciation for your encouragement and support.

“LEARN THE BIBLE WHILE YOU
ARE YOUNG, AND WHEN YOU
ARE OLD YOU WILL DRAW
FROM IT LIKE A WELL.”

DR. J. FRANK NORRIS

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PREFACE

The premise of the Book of Galatians is that salvation is the gift of God, purchased through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, and received by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. This salvation is free, full, and forever.

Anyone who adds any additional steps to God's plan of salvation is a heretic of the worst kind, teaching "*damnable heresies*," leading souls towards perdition and everlasting punishment, and under the double curse of Galatians 1:8-9. These additional steps often include, but are not limited to: baptism, church membership, the mass, confession to priests, sacraments, confirmation, communion, perseverance, praying to Mary and/or dead saints, keeping the law, speaking in tongues, charitable gifts, good works, and various other religious ordinances. Such additional, unbiblical, man-made steps would mean that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, "*once for all*," was NOT sufficient for the salvation of the soul.

The Book of Galatians proves conclusively that salvation is a purchased possession that must be personally received by faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is trusting Jesus Christ and His sufficient atonement, without any additional steps. **Salvation is 100% Jesus.** Salvation is never 50% faith and 50% baptism, church membership, or good works. Salvation is never 75% faith and 25% perseverance to the end. Salvation is never 99% Jesus and 1% you or your church. **Salvation is 100% Jesus – all the way, from the guttermost to the uttermost – or it is not salvation at all.**

Any other "gospel" is a false gospel, with no saving power.

These lessons were originally taught in the Victory Adult Sunday School class at the Lighthouse Baptist Church in Wylie, Texas. It is my hope that this study of Galatians will be a blessing and help to God's born again children, and an eye-opener to those that have been deceived by the devil's numerous false gospels.

James Rasbeary

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INTRODUCTION

(Gal 1:1-5) "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) {2} And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: {3} Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, {4} Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: {5} To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The Book of Galatians is filled with “meaty” doctrine, especially concerning the doctrine of salvation. You need to chew on it carefully in order to understand its fullness. It is the author’s hope that these lessons will unlock many of the deep spiritual truths in Galatians, while making many practical applications.

The following **ten facts** will help to set the background for our study of the Book of Galatians:

1. The Author of the Book of Galatians is the Holy Spirit of God. *(2 Pet 1:21) "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

It is important in any study of the Scriptures to understand that *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim 3:16-17). I believe in the inspiration of the Bible. It is not simply the words of men. It is the Word of God.

God has also preserved His inspired Word. *(Psa 12:6-7) "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. {7} Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."* His words are pure. God has promised to preserve them forever. Without preservation, inspiration would be meaningless, because there are no original manuscripts anywhere in the world today. We only have copies – but we also have God’s promise to preserve His words and to keep them pure. I believe that the King

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James Bible is the pure, preserved Word of God for the English-speaking world. This principle is the guiding light for our study of this Book.

When men study the Bible without faith in its divine inspiration and preservation, they have a bad tendency to edit, correct, and rewrite the Word of God. If they do not like what it says, they simply change what it to match what they believe. Like the subtil serpent in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), they ask, "...Yea, hath God said?" The devil wants us to put a question mark where God has put a period.

I would rather stand before God as a bartender than to be one of these Bible-correcting pseudo-scholars that wants to mess with the words of God, or that causes God's people to question or doubt the Bible. (Rev 22:18-19) *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things**, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: {19} **And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy**, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

We will approach the Book of Galatians *"...not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Th 2:13)*. Because it is the Word of God, it is the truth. Because it is the truth, it can make us free. (John 8:32) *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* The truths that are found in the six chapters of Galatians could bring lost sinners to salvation, as well as change the lives of believers. That is our desire – not to simply study the Book, but to learn it so that its truths can transform our lives.

Because Galatians is part of the Scriptures, it will always prove profitable for our study. (2 Tim 3:16-17) *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, **and is profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: {17} That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

- It will be profitable for **doctrine**. It is going to tell us what is right – what is true. There is a great deal of doctrine in this wonderful Book, particularly concerning salvation.
- It will be profitable for **reproof**. It is going to tell us what is wrong and false.
- It will be profitable for **correction**. It is going to tell us how to get right.
- It will be profitable for **instruction in righteousness**. It is going to tell us how to stay right.
- The truths of Galatians are going to help perfect and balance our lives, while furnishing us thoroughly for all good works.

As in most of Paul's Epistles, Galatians begins with great doctrines, and ends with practical application. We must learn to balance doctrine with application.

The Bible is a balanced Book, and when we are Biblical Christians we will live balanced lives. Too many Christians are unbalanced. Some know all of the doctrines – but do not obey the practical commands in their everyday lives. Others are doing their best to live the Christian life, but they are ignorant of the doctrines of God's Word. Let us learn all six chapters of Galatians, so that it might perfect and balance our lives, while thoroughly furnishing us for service and good works.

The first thing we must understand and accept about the Book of Galatians is that it is the inspired, preserved, inerrant Word of God. This will be the guiding principle for our study.

2. The holy man that God used to write His words was the Apostle Paul (1:1).
3. The timing of the Epistle is generally considered to have been sometime between 49 and 57 A.D. It is generally accepted to have been one of his earliest Epistles, and many believe that it was his first. I believe that it was written after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, and that Galatians 2:1-10 is a reference to that great event.
4. The Epistle was written to the churches of Galatia.

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(Gal 1:1-2) "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) {2} And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia..."

Galatia was the central part of the region of Asia Minor, in modern day Turkey. It was not a city, like Ephesus, but a geographic region, a province. The region included administrative provinces such as Pisidia, Phrygia, and Lyconia. The Galatians were of Celtic descent, and had settled in the region around 300 B.C., after being driven out of Gaul (France). It was a kingdom until 25 B.C., when it became a Roman province.

The Epistle was not sent to one church, but to the churches of Galatia. We do not know how many churches there were at this time.

5. Paul and Barnabas' first missionary works were in the region of Galatia (Acts 13-14). This included:

- 1) Perga in Pamphilia (Acts 13:13).
- 2) Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:14-51).

Many Gentiles were saved here, but the unbelieving Jews were fierce in their opposition to the Gospel, causing Paul and Barnabas to be expelled from the city.

- 3) Iconium (Acts 13:51 – 14:6).

Here, they again won many Gentile converts, but were run out of town by the unbelieving Jews. The entire city was divided by the Gospel.

- 4) Lystra and Derbe, of Lyconia (Acts 14:6-21).

It was in Lystra that Paul healed a crippled man. The Gentiles of Iconium assumed that Paul and Barnabas were gods visiting in the form of men, calling Barnabas "Jupiter," and Paul "Mercury." The unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul to Lystra, and persuaded the people to stone Paul. *(Acts 14:19-20) "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. {20} Howbeit, as the disciples stood round*

about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."

After this, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe. Then, they returned through the cities of the Galatian region, strengthening the churches that they had started. (Acts 14:21-23) *"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, {22} Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. {23} And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."*

Many believe that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians soon after his return to Antioch. He marvelled that they were "*so soon removed*" from the Gospel that he had taught them (Gal 1:6).

Later, at the end of Paul's third missionary journey, he returned through the region of Galatia, strengthening the churches. This gives us the hope that this Epistle was successful in turning at least some of these churches back to the Gospel of grace. (Acts 18:23) *"And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."*

6. Immediately after their first missionary journey through the region of Galatia, **the great controversy of legalism** began to trouble the churches. ***Legalism is the addition of works to God's plan of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.***

(Acts 15:1-6) *"And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. {2} When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. {3} And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and*

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Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. {4} And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. {5} But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. {6} And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter."

The Bible does not call these false teachers "brethren" or "believers." I do not believe that they were saved. They came under the guise of Christianity, as wolves in sheep's clothing. (Mat 7:15-16) *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. {16} Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"*

These false teachers began to sneak their heresies into the churches. (2 Pet 2:1-2) *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, **who privily shall bring in damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. {2} And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."*

7. If Satan cannot destroy the church with persecution, he will attempt to corrupt it with false doctrines. Since he could not beat the churches, he joined them. He has in this world today:
 - False Christs and false prophets - (Mat 24:24) *"For there shall arise **false Christs**, and **false prophets**, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."*
 - False apostles, ministers, and workers – (2 Cor 11:13-15) *"For such are **false apostles**, **deceitful workers**, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. {14} And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. {15} Therefore it is no great thing if **his ministers** also be*

transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

- False brethren - (Gal 2:4) *"And that because of **false brethren** unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"*
- False teachers - (2 Pet 2:1) *"...even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies..."*
- False, corrupted bibles - (2 Cor 2:17) *"**For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God:** but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."*

Everyone that claims to be of God is not necessarily of God. Not every group that calls itself a church is necessarily a New Testament church. There are false churches, false teachers, false prophets, and false ministers that are literally doing the devil's work – and they themselves will believe that they are serving God. Christians need to learn the Word of God, so that we can have the wisdom needed to discern truth from error:

- (1 John 4:1) *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."*
- (1 John 4:6) *"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."*

Satan is the original heretic, and the father of all false doctrines and false religions. (John 8:44) *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it.**"*

The original heresy concerned the wages of sin. (Gen 3:4) *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die..."* God said that the wages of sin was death (Gen. 2:17 and Romans 6:23). Satan denied the penalty of sin, and people still believe his lie today. Satan says, "Sin is not as bad as God says it is. Sin's

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penalty is not death and hell. It is not *that* bad.” And people are dying and going to hell every minute because they have believed Satan’s original lie.

His next heresy concerned the means of achieving salvation. He convinced Cain of this heresy, and the first false religion was started. (*Gen 4:3-5*) *"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. {4} And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: {5} But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."*

God’s means of salvation is through the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God, pictured by the Abel’s offering of a firstling of his flock. Cain, “*who was of that wicked one*” (*1 Jn. 3:12*), rejected the bloody sacrifice that God had ordained, and brought a basket of fruit – the work of his own hands, produced by the ground that God had cursed. Cain’s religion was that of **works** – a self-righteous attempt to come to God on his own terms. God rejected Cain’s offering, and He will reject any attempt made by man to come on his own merits. The only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ. (*John 14:6*) *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Right from the beginning, we can see Satan’s attempt to corrupt the Gospel of God. He wants to blind men’s eyes to the truth, lest they should see, believe, and be saved. (*2 Cor 4:3-4*) *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: {4} In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

Within about twenty years of the Ascension of Christ, Satan began to mess with the Gospel among the churches. He snuck in some of his men, who privily brought in their “*damnable heresies*.” **A damnable heresy is a heresy connected with the doctrine of salvation.** In other words, a damnable heresy leads to damnation and hell instead of salvation and heaven. Unfortunately, millions of people have been deceived into believing “*damnable heresies*” that masquerade as the Gospel.

These false teachers, whom we call “Judaizers,” began to cause trouble in the churches. (*Acts 15:1*) *“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”* They added an exception to salvation. They added a step to salvation for the Gentiles.

Now, a Gentile is anyone that is not a Jew. In the New Testament, Jews are often referred to as “*the circumcision*,” while Gentiles are called “*the uncircumcision*” (see Acts 10:45; 11:2; Romans 3:30; Gal. 2:7-12). This rite was the mark of difference between the Jews and Gentiles, a sign of God’s covenant with Israel (see Gen. 17:10-13). Circumcision was the initial rite of admission for Gentile men who desired to convert to the Jewish faith.

These Judaizers told the new Gentile converts that they had to become Jews before God would save them. They had to submit to circumcision, and then begin to live by the laws of Moses. In other words, they taught that Gentiles had to become Jews before they could become Christians, because God does not save Gentiles. He only saves Jews. This was a satanic perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

8. Satan tried to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel by adding to it.

Salvation is simple. (*Eph 2:8-9*) *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

- It is by grace, which makes it a free gift.
- It is through faith in Christ, not through religious or moral works.
- It is provided by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.
- It is the GIFT of God.

Ninety-nine times, the Gospel of John says to “*believe*.” The only difference between a lost sinner and a saved sinner is that the saved sinner has believed on Jesus Christ for salvation. But it is an eternal difference. (*John 3:14-18*) *“And as Moses lifted up the*

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*serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: {15} That whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have eternal life. {16} For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} **He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."***

Salvation requires repentance and faith. A sinner must repent towards God in order to put his faith in Christ. (*Acts 20:21*) *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**"* Repentance is NOT a work, but a change of the mind and heart, caused by acknowledging the truth.

Here is the BIBLE definition for repentance: (*2 Tim 2:25*) *"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth..."*

When a sinner comes face to face with the truth of the Gospel, he can do several things:

1. He can choose to deny the truth. He can refuse to even acknowledge the truth. Such a person cannot be saved until he has a change of mind concerning the truth.
2. He can choose to acknowledge the truth, and yet refuse to receive Christ. This person knows the truth, but he is not saved until he makes the decision to receive Jesus Christ.
3. He can choose to acknowledge the truth, and receive Christ as Savior. Then, and only then, is he saved.

Some will face the truth, but they will not **repent** towards God. They will not acknowledge the truth. Their lack of repentance will usually be rooted in one of three areas:

- They will not repent of their **unrighteousness**. They will not acknowledge their sinfulness in the eyes of God.

They will not acknowledge that their works are sinful in the eyes of God. Sinful behavior is excused or justified.

- They will not repent of their **self-righteousness**. They will not acknowledge that their own goodness is totally insufficient – that they have “*come short of the glory of God.*” This is usually the problem among folks that are considered to be moral, though not religious. They are trusting in their own goodness to make them acceptable in God’s sight.
- They will not repent of their **church-righteousness**. They will not acknowledge that their religion or church is unable to provide salvation. They are trusting in their church, or creed, or priest, or baptism. They are unwilling to acknowledge the truth that religious works cannot atone for their sins.

Salvation is not simply knowing some facts about Jesus Christ. It is not merely head knowledge. It is a decision of the will. It is acknowledging the truth, and receiving Christ as Savior.

I have been a soul-winner for years. I have talked to many thousands of people about Jesus Christ. Many – far too many – simply refused to acknowledge the truth concerning their need for salvation. Many others have acknowledged that they needed salvation, and that they believed that Jesus Christ died for them on Calvary and rose again. But when put on the spot to make a decision, they refused. “Some day,” or “not now,” are common excuses that have been made. Thankfully, many others have seen the truth of salvation, acknowledged the truth, and gladly opened their hearts to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

God’s salvation is free, complete, and forever. It is for “*whosoever will.*” It is NOT through works, religion, morality, or good deeds. It is for any and all who will receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior by faith – plus nothing, and minus nothing.

Satan came along and tried to corrupt that simplicity. (2 Cor 11:3-4) “*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* {4} For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye

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receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, **or another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

He added an exception to salvation - another step, another requirement. "*Except ye be...ye cannot be saved.*" In the beginning, the addition was circumcision and the laws of Moses. But it does not matter what the exception is. Anything other than God's requirement of believing in Christ is a satanic addition. Anyone that adds *any* exception to salvation is presenting a false, perverted gospel. It does not matter if the exception or addition is circumcision, Judaism, church membership, baptism, communion, "Lordship salvation," good deeds, or "holding on to the end." **Any addition is a satanic addition.**

9. The Judaizers met stiff resistance from Paul and Barnabas, who brought about the great Jerusalem conference to settle the matter.

(Acts 15:2) "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

Peter testified against the Judaizers, and made his position plain: *(Acts 15:7-11) "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. {8} And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; {9} And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. {10} Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? {11} But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*

Pastor James decided the matter, and letters were sent warning the Gentile Christians of the legalists that would try to subvert their souls.

(Acts 15:19-31) "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: {20} But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and

*from things strangled, and from blood. {21} For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. {22} Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: {23} And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: {24} **Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:** {25} It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, {26} Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. {27} We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. {28} **For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; {29} That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. {30}** So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: {31} **Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation."***

10. These Judaizers were carrying out their insidious work among the Gentile converts in Galatia.

They attacked Paul's credibility, while perverting his message. That is exactly how such men still operate today. They discredit the messenger, and then attack his message.

They had a great deal of success, which caused Paul great heartache. In this Epistle, therefore, he first vindicated his ministry and calling, and then asserted the great Bible doctrines concerning justification by faith in Christ alone.

*(John 1:10-14) "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. {11} He came unto his own, and his own received him not. {12} But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. {14} And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of **grace** and truth."*

Chapter One

THE PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL

(Gal 1:3-12) "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, {4} Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: {5} To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. {6} I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: {7} Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. {8} But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. {9} As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. {10} For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. {11} But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. {12} For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Jesus warned His apostles to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. *(Mat 16:6,12) "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees...Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."*

Within a few years of Christ's ascension, the legalists tried to put the leaven of the Pharisees into the bread of life. *(Acts 15:5) "**But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees** which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."* The legalists, or Judaizers, had begun to teach the Gentiles that they could not be saved without first submitting to the rite of circumcision and the law of Moses. In other words, they taught that God would not save Gentiles as they were. They taught that God would only save Jews, and therefore Gentiles

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had to convert to Judaism before they could be saved and become Christians. They added an exception to God's plan of salvation.

This heresy had crept in to the churches of Galatia, shortly after Paul had returned to Antioch after his first missionary journey. The Gentile converts of these churches were deceived, and their churches had turned from Christ to "*another gospel.*" They had "*fallen from grace*" (5:4). That does not mean that they, as individuals, had lost their personal salvation, if they were truly saved. You cannot fall from salvation (Jude 24). It means that *as churches* they had fallen from the gospel of grace to a gospel of works, and were seeking to be "*justified by the law*" (5:4).

Paul dealt with these churches in no uncertain terms. His Epistle contains almost no commendation at all, but is rather filled with alarm, shock, dismay, frustration, disappointment, and warning. Look at some of the statements that Paul made to the Galatian churches:

- (Gal 1:6) *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:"*
- (Gal 3:1) ***"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"***
- (Gal 3:3) ***"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"***
- (Gal 4:9-11) *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} **I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.**"*
- (Gal 4:19-20) *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, {20} I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; **for I stand in doubt of you.**"*
- (Gal 5:12) *"I would they were even cut off which trouble you."*

Paul was standing in the gap for these churches, trying desperately to turn them back to the true gospel of grace. I have hope

that he did, based on his visits to some of the churches of Galatia during his third missionary journey.

In this chapter, notice first the Presentation of the Gospel, and then the attempted Perversion of the Gospel.

I. THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL.

I have been told that Treasury Department workers who are trained to find counterfeit money do not train with counterfeit money. They train with *real* money. They study it, feel it, and get to know it so well that they can immediately identify counterfeits when they see them. Even so, let us consider the true gospel as revealed in the Word of God, that we might quickly identify the counterfeits when we see them.

The word “gospel” means “good news.” But it is not just any good news. *The gospel refers specifically to the good news of God’s salvation for sinners.*

Two basic questions have to be answered in relation to the gospel:

1. What is the gospel?
2. How does one access the salvation that is promised by the gospel?

† What is the gospel?

The gospel is defined for us in 1 Corinthians 15:1,3-4: *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand... {3} For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; {4} And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures..."*

The gospel has three essential elements:

1. Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

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This identifies the need for salvation – it was for “*our sins*.” There would not be a need for salvation except for the universal sinfulness of mankind.

- (Rom 3:23) *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..."*
- (Rom 5:12) *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..."*

No one will get saved without first recognizing that their sins were the reason that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary. Jesus did not just die for murderers, bank robbers, thieves, and adulterers. He died for my sins. He died for your sins. The first truth of the gospel is that all have sinned, the whole world is guilty before God, and each and every person needs the salvation of Jesus Christ!

This verse also reveals the way in which salvation was provided. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, died for our sins. He was our Substitute. He took my place, and died in my stead. He bore my sins in His own body on the cross, suffered what I deserved, and died to pay the wages of my sins.

2. Christ was buried.

After Jesus died, His body was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimethaea. His body was in that tomb for three days and three nights, while Jesus was in Paradise in the heart of the earth with a certain ex-thief (Lk. 23:43).

3. Christ rose from the dead the third day according to the scriptures.

The resurrection of Christ is an absolutely necessary part of the gospel. If Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead, we would not have salvation. We would have a dead Saviour. A dead Saviour cannot save sinners.

(1 Cor 15:13-19) "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: {14} And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also

*vain. {15} Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. {16} For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: {17} **And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. {18} Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. {19} If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."***

If Jesus was not the Saviour, then there is no salvation. We are of all men most miserable. There is no hope!

But we do not have a dead Saviour! We have a living Saviour, Who arose victorious over death, hell, and the grave! (1 Cor 15:20-22) *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. {21} For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*

You cannot be saved without believing in the resurrection of Christ. You cannot cut out this essential part of the Gospel!

The gospel is the message of salvation through the substitutionary death of Christ for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead. That is ALL that is necessary to provide salvation for sinners. We do not need the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ plus baptism, or plus church membership, or plus anything. What Jesus did is sufficient for our salvation!

When men add any extra steps or any exceptions at all, they are saying that what Jesus did was not enough. This is an insult to the cross of Christ. Jesus is enough for every person who ever lived or will live! Jesus does not need the baptistery's help, the priest's help, or the Pope's help. He does not need the church's help, Mary's help, or your help. He does the saving *"by himself" – (Heb 1:3) "...when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..."* His death, burial, and resurrection, according to the scriptures, provides all the salvation that this world will ever need!

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† How does a sinner receive the salvation that has been provided through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ?

Jesus said, "...*Repent ye, and believe the gospel*" (Mark 1:15). Repentance and faith go together in salvation. I cannot put my faith in Jesus Christ as Savior until I first acknowledge the truth of the gospel, including recognition of my guilt before God. I have to acknowledge that I cannot get to heaven without God's salvation; otherwise, I will not be able to trust Jesus completely for salvation. I have to repent of my unrighteousness, self-righteousness, and church-righteousness, so that I can receive HIS righteousness.

What does it mean to "believe?" It means to trust completely – to trust with ALL your heart. (Eph 1:13-14) *"In whom ye also **trusted**, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye **believed**, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

Not too long ago, I was witnessing to a Polish lady that had come to our church through our bus ministry. She had been talked to by several people, but she had claimed that she was saved. Knowing her religious background (Catholic), I was sure that her idea of being saved was not the Bible idea of being saved. I began to explain to her the Roman's Road to salvation, emphasizing our lost condition and the need to trust Christ completely. Her eyes lit up and she said, "I see my problem. I am not trusting Jesus with *all* my heart." Within a few minutes, I led her in the sinner's prayer, adding, "I trust you as my Savior with *all* my heart."

Saving faith is trusting faith. It is trusting that what Jesus Christ did for me on Calvary was **sufficient** for my salvation. I am not trusting my self-righteousness or my church-righteousness. I am trusting Jesus Christ alone for my salvation. I am trusting Him with all my heart (see Acts 8:37).

Believing is receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. It is never just head knowledge. It is never just a mental acknowledgement of the facts. Believing is an act of the will, a decision to trust and receive. I decide to trust Jesus Christ completely, and by doing so, I am receiving Him as my Savior.

Notice that believing on His name and receiving Him are the same. *(John 1:11-13)* "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. {12} But as many as **received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to **them that believe on his name**: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Not too long ago, my father drove to my house on my birthday in his Pontiac Grand Am. He said, "This is my birthday present." He had bought himself a new car, and he wanted to give me his old one, which was completely paid off. I heard what he said; I saw the car there; I believed his promise; I accepted his gift. It became mine when I made the decision to receive it.

Salvation is the same way. God says, "Here is salvation, all bought and paid for. It is my gift of love for you. There are no strings attached. You simply have to receive my Son as your Savior, and you will have everlasting life." And when I was fifteen years old, I heard God's word, I believed His promise, and I made the decision to receive God's gift of eternal life in His Son.

I am *not* saying that there are steps in salvation. There are not. Repentance, faith, and receiving Christ all go together. I acknowledge the truth of the gospel, and by faith receive Christ as my Savior, which means that I am making the decision to trust Jesus Christ alone as my personal Saviour. When I believe, God immediately saves my soul. I am immediately born again. The power of God is unleashed through my faith in the gospel of Christ. *(Rom 1:16)* "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

That is the gospel.

- † **Do not add anything to it.** Do not add baptism, good deeds, speaking in tongues, church membership, praying the rosary, penance, pilgrimages, tithing, perseverance, the sacraments, or confession to priests.
- † **Do not take anything from it.** Do not take off the resurrection. Do not take away repentance. Do not teach a universal salvation that does not require a personal decision.

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Do not add Calvinist doctrines that deny man's responsibility to repent and receive Christ.

Preach the gospel of the grace of God. Preach that men are sinners – lost, guilty, and condemned. Preach that God loves us and sent His Son to die on the cross of Calvary to pay for our sins and provide salvation. Preach the truth of the empty tomb and the resurrected Savior! Preach the truth that salvation is all of grace, 100% free, and that it is available to all. Preach the truth that man is responsible for his obedience to the gospel – to repent and believe on Jesus Christ for salvation.

Galatians 1:3-5 gives a clear statement of the nature of the true gospel of God: *(Gal 1:3-5) "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, {4} Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: {5} To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

- Salvation was **Planned** by God. It was provided *"according to the will of God."*
- Salvation was **Provided** by God - *"...Who gave himself for our sins..."*
- Salvation is **Performed** by God. Verse 4 says, *"that **he** might deliver us from this present evil world."* He does the delivering.

Salvation has a three-fold deliverance:

- 1) First, God delivers us from the *penalty* of sin – *"the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). That takes place the moment that we get saved. (John 10:28) *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*
- 2) Then, God wants to deliver us from the *power* of sin through the process of sanctification.

God wants to deliver us from the power of sin, but that is going to be up to us. We have to decide who our master is going to be.

(Rom 6:11-13) "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {12} Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. {13} Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

(Rom 6:16-18) "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? {17} But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. {18} Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

We have to obey God's Word from the heart, and choose whom we will serve. You can be saved and still be bound by the power of sin, but that is not God's will. God wants to deliver us from the power of sin. He wants to transform us into the likeness of Christ, and that simply does not happen over night. It takes time, it takes our obedience, and it takes His power.

- 3) Then, God will one day deliver us from the *presence* of sin.

The ultimate purpose of salvation is "*that he might deliver us from this present evil world.*" One day, we are going to lay aside these sin-stained, corrupt bodies. One day, we are going to lay aside our sinful natures. We are going to trade our corruptible bodies for incorruptible. *(1 Cor 15:51-54)*. That will be the day that salvation is complete – the day of total victory over sin, death, and the grave! *(1 Cor 15:55-57)* "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? {56} The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. {57} But thanks be to God, which giveth us **the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Who performs salvation? God does. Man does not and cannot deliver himself. You cannot deliver yourself from the penalty of sin. You cannot deliver yourself from the power of sin, and you cannot

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deliver yourself from the presence of sin. Only God can do this, and yet man is deceived into believing that he can deliver himself by his good works, or he believes that a religion of sinful men can deliver his soul.

That is why it is vain to trust in anyone or anything except God Himself for salvation. He and He alone, can deliver us from the penalty, power, and presence of sin!

II. THE PERVERSION OF THE GOSPEL.

(Gal 1:6-7) "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: {7} Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Paul marvelled that they were *"so soon removed...unto another gospel."* But the fact is that there is not another gospel. There is only one gospel – *"the gospel."*

They had abandoned God – *"him that called you into the grace of Christ."* God was not with this false gospel. Most of the world claims to have God on their side, but God only stands on the side of the truth. He only stands on the side of His gospel.

"But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." "Pervert" means "to turn from truth; to turn from the right; to corrupt." When something is perverted, it is changed from its original purpose into something else entirely.

These Judaizers could not hurt the truth. You cannot hurt the truth. *(2 Cor 13:8) "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."* The truth is what it is and no one can change it. But the Judaizers perverted their message. They took the Gospel truths and perverted them into another gospel, which was not the gospel at all. It was a lie. It was a *"damnable heresy."*

There are many still around today that are preaching and teaching *"another gospel."* It is not the true gospel of the Bible. It is another gospel, *"which is not another."* It is a lie, designed by Satan to further blind men's minds from the truth of salvation in Jesus Christ. *(2 Cor 4:3-4) "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

{4} In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Satan wants to hide the true gospel, while blinding men with faith in a false message, a damnable heresy.

When men try to pervert the gospel of Christ, they change one or more of the following elements of the true gospel:

1. They pervert the doctrines of Christ, the Person of salvation.

They deny His deity, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death, and His bodily resurrection. They deny the fact that He is God in the flesh.

Not everyone that claims the name of Jesus worships the Jesus of the Bible. Some have "*another Jesus*" – (2 Cor 11:3-4) "*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. {4} For if he that cometh preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."*

Religious and non-religious people will claim "Jesus" – but usually they have "*another Jesus*," who is not God in the flesh, was not virgin-born, did not live a sinless life, did not die for man's sins, did not rise again from the dead incorruptible, and is not seated at the right hand of the Father. Their "Jesus" is not the Son of God.

A man can carve a statue and call it "Jesus." He can worship it, love it, and sincerely believe in "Jesus." But he is worshipping vanity. That statue is not Jesus. In the same way, men can produce mental idols or religious ideologies and call them "Jesus," and be sincere – but they are also worshipping vanity.

Jesus is a Person, and He must be accepted for Who He is. He is the Son of God and God the Son. He was virgin-born. He did live a sinless life. He did die vicariously to pay for the sins of the whole world. He did rise from the dead after three days and three nights. He did ascend back to the right hand of the Father, and He is the only mediator between God and men.

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God's salvation is wrapped up in a Person – His Son. You must have HIM in order to have eternal life. *(1 John 5:11-12)* "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. {12} He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

2. They pervert the means of salvation.

They deny the sufficiency of Christ's atonement on the cross of Calvary. They deny the necessity of His shed blood. They offer Cain's fruit basket instead of Abel's lamb.

3. They pervert the method of salvation.

God saves us by grace through faith in Christ. *(Eph 2:8-9)* "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Their false gospel changes the methods and means of salvation from grace to some form of works. They add to God's salvation, or they take away from God's salvation. They add works, or they take away man's responsibility to believe.

4. They pervert the availability of salvation.

Some will confine it to their own church or particular religion. The Judaizers said, "You Gentiles have to become Jews before God will save you." Religious groups today are saying the same thing.

As a Baptist, I do **not** believe that one must be a Baptist to be saved, although I believe that you have to be saved to be a true Baptist (since we only baptize believers). I know that there are people in many religious denominations who are truly saved – not because of their denomination, but because at some point they heard the true gospel and believed on Jesus Christ as Savior.

But many denominations and cults deny that anyone outside of their religion can be saved. Ask your local Catholic priest if you can go to heaven without the Catholic Church. If he is honest, he will tell you "no." Ask the local Church of Christ pastor if you can be saved without his church's baptism. If he is honest and consistent with his church's beliefs, he will say, "no."

Out soul winning, I have led many people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ that never came to my church. Some have remained in false churches because of family ties, traditions, or an unwillingness to change. They should get out of those denominations, but many do not. They did not get saved by becoming a Baptist. They got saved by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior.

Some will confine God's salvation to the "elect," denying man's opportunity and responsibility to choose to receive Christ. But God's salvation is available to anyone, anywhere, anytime. It is a "*whosoever will*" salvation.

5. They pervert the effects of salvation.

Specifically, they preach a salvation that is not eternally secure. They preach a salvation that is temporary, and which does not really save at all. In their Gospel, God gives us *temporary* life instead of *everlasting* life. Any religion that preaches that a man has to "hold on to the end" or "persevere to the end" in order to achieve salvation is preaching "*another gospel*." **You are not trusting in Christ with all your heart if you believe that it is up to you to keep yourself saved.**

The heresy that we must maintain our salvation, or work out our salvation by holding on and doing good works is an insult to Calvary. They teach that Jesus only made the down payment, and that we must "keep up the installments," or our salvation will be repossessed! The Catholic Church teaches that Christ's death only atoned for Adam's original sin. Charismatics, Pentecostals, and others teach that His death was only sufficient up to the time at which you get saved. After that, you are on your own! Both are damnable heresies.

The true gospel has an immediate, permanent effect – God immediately gives us eternal life and secures us permanently in Christ.

Any doctrine of salvation has to match John 3:16. If what someone says does not match the plain statements of Jesus to Nicodemus, they are teaching "*another gospel*." They are teaching

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“damnable heresies.” (John 3:16) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

The Pentecostals love to say, “Obey Acts 2:38,” which says: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* This verse, taken out of context and misinterpreted, is used to teach the necessity of baptism for salvation, and speaking with tongues as the proof of salvation. This is a heresy that does not match what Jesus said in John 3:16.

Why don’t they say, “Obey Acts 3:19, or Acts 13:39, or Acts 15:11, or Acts 16:31?” The reason is simple – those verses do not include baptism or the *“gift of the Holy Ghost.”* They do not match the *“damnable heresies”* of the Pentecostal religion, so they are ignored for the more obscure wording of Acts 2:38 (which, when interpreted *properly*, matches John 3:16).

Either Jesus told Nicodemus how to have eternal life, or He left parts out. Either Jesus told Nicodemus the truth, or He did not share with him all that he needed to know about salvation. John 3:16 says nothing about baptism, church membership, perseverance, the elect, sacraments, confirmation, confession to priests, prayers to Mary, obedience to a religion, speaking in tongues, or keeping the law of Moses.

Jesus told Nicodemus, “If you believe in the Son, you will never perish, but you will have everlasting life.” That is the true gospel. Anything else is a cheap, lying imitation.

Notice the fearful pronouncement on those who would dare to teach a false gospel – (Gal 1:8-9) *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **let him be accursed.** {9} As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.**”*

I would rather stand before God as a bartender than to stand before Him as one who preached a perverted gospel. God said twice, for emphasis: *“Let him be accursed!”*

Standing Fast in Liberty

I find the “converts” of these gospel perverts in the fearful words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

(Mat 7:15-16, 21-23) "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. {16} Ye shall know them by their fruits... {21} Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

These people are going to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment and be surprised. They thought that they were going to heaven. They thought that they knew the Lord. They preached and worked in His name. They did “*many wonderful works.*” They thought that they were saved, but they were not! They had believed “*another gospel,*” preached by false prophets in sheep’s clothing.

These beguiled souls will hear the fearful pronouncement of the Lord Jesus Christ, “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” Matthew 25:41, 46 gives the rest of the sad story: “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*”

Have you believed a false gospel? Is your Jesus the same as we find in the Word of God? Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with ALL your heart? Are you trusting in the sufficiency of His death, burial, and resurrection?

Or are you trusting in a legalist gospel, a message of works – church membership, baptism, good works, being a good person, persevering, etc? You cannot trust in Jesus Christ with ALL your heart if you are also trusting in something or someone else!

I encourage you to repent of your unrighteousness, self-righteousness, and church-righteousness, and to trust Jesus alone so that He can give you HIS righteousness!

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(Gal 2:16) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Chapter Two

PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND AUTHORITY

(Gal 1:11-19) "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. {12} For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. {13} For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: {14} And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. {15} But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, {16} To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: {17} Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. {18} Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. {19} But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

The Judaizers had not only turned the Galatians away from the true gospel of Christ, but also away from Paul. In order to discredit his message, they attacked him personally. They claimed that Paul was a false apostle, and that his authority and message were not from God. They attacked his credentials as the Apostle of the Gentiles. The evidence against Paul's apostleship was:

1. He was not of the original twelve apostles chosen by the Lord.
2. He did not meet the qualifications that the first church had decided before Pentecost, when they chose a replacement for Judas. *(Acts 1:21-22) "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, {22} Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that*

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same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

He had not companied with them during the Lord's earthly ministry. He was not baptized by John the Baptist. He was not a witness of the resurrection prior to the Ascension. He was not a witness of the Ascension of Christ.

On this basis, and because of their own personal bias against Paul's ministry, they stirred up trouble against him wherever they went. In these chapters, as well as in other places throughout his Epistles (especially 2 Corinthians), Paul was forced to defend his authority and his apostleship.

Paul was a unique man with a unique calling. He is sometimes called the Independent Apostle, because his calling and ministry were separate from those of the twelve.

Let us consider two questions concerning the apostles:

1. How many apostles were there?

The original twelve were chosen directly by the Lord Jesus, and were given the title of apostles by Him. (Luke 6:13-16) *"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: **and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;** {14} Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, {15} Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, {16} And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor."*

After Judas' betrayal and suicide, Matthias was chosen by the church to fill the twelfth apostleship (Acts 1:23-26). I believe that the church "jumped the gun" in appointing Matthias. I believe that he was the choice of men, but not the choice of God. God did not direct them to make this appointment, and I do not find that the church had the authority to appoint apostles. Only Jesus Christ could do so. Matthias was appointed by men; Paul was appointed by Christ. No other men were ever chosen to be apostles after this. When the apostle James (the brother of John) was martyred by Herod, they did not try to appoint another to replace him (Acts 12:1-2).

The Bible is clear that there were only to be twelve true "*apostles of the Lamb*." The heavenly Jerusalem will have twelve foundations named after these twelve: (*Rev 21:14*) "*And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of **the twelve apostles of the Lamb***." Who will be the twelfth name on those foundations? I believe that Paul was the divine replacement for Judas. He was the twelfth and final apostle.

The Lord Jesus is Himself called "the Apostle" in Hebrews 3:1. In one instance, Barnabas and Paul were called "apostles" (*Acts 14:14*). It is possible that Barnabas was called this because of his partnership with Paul at the time. Despite the usage of the word in these two verses, every other time the term "apostle" is used it refers to either the original twelve, the eleven with Matthias, or Paul.

2. What was the purpose of the Apostles?

The apostles were part of the foundation of the early church, with Christ as the chief cornerstone. (*Eph 2:20*) "*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone...*" They were an essential part of Christianity's beginning. The first century is usually referred to as the Apostolic Age.

It is clear that as part of the "foundation," the job of the apostles and prophets was to provide wisdom, guidance, and leadership during the transition time before the New Testament was completed. They were essential for settling doctrine in the early churches:

- (*Acts 2:42*) "*And they continued stedfastly in **the apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*"
- (*Acts 15:5-6*) "*But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. {6} And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*"

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- *(Acts 16:4) "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem."*

You must remember that Christianity was still brand new. Those early years were tumultuous, difficult times. The church was persecuted, and then exploded with growth. The first church multiplied into countless churches, scattered abroad. Then, Gentiles entered the picture after the salvation of Cornelius in Acts 10. The early churches were predominately Jewish and there were many questions concerning Christianity and the old Jewish traditions. The apostles were given special wisdom to guide the churches through this time, made vital doctrinal decisions, and settled important problems. They gave themselves to the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6:4). Of the 27 Books in the New Testament, 22 were written by apostles (Mark, Luke, James, and Jude being the non-apostolic writers).

However, the apostolic office was never meant to be a permanent fixture of the New Testament Church. After the completion of the New Testament, prophets and apostles were no longer needed (Eph. 4:11-12). *(1 Cor 13:9-10) "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. {10} But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."* Now, we have evangelists, pastors, and teachers to help perfect our faith in the completed Word of God.

Men who claim to be apostles today are lying. The office of apostleship died in the first century, and was replaced by the authority of the completed New Testament.

Consider Paul's inspired defense of his apostleship and authority:

I. PAUL HAD A DIVINE PURPOSE.

(Gal 1:13-16) "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: {14} And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. {15} But when it pleased God,

who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, {16} To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen..."

Paul understood that God had a divine purpose for his life that went all the way back to his mother's womb (vs. 15). That divine purpose was to reveal His Son in Paul, that Paul might preach the name of Jesus Christ among the heathen. God's purpose for Paul's life was to save him, call him, equip him, transform him, and then send him forth to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles.

I believe that God creates us for a purpose. I believe that God forms and fashions our bodies in the wombs of our mothers. He covered us, made us, and continually fashioned each of our members. *(Psa 139:13-16) "For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. {14} I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. {15} My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. {16} Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."*

Furthermore, I believe that God gives each of us a unique soul. He gives us the foundational aspects of our personalities, abilities, talents, and intelligence. He designs each of us with a distinct purpose in mind. He creates us with a purpose and a job to do. We are created with God's fingerprints all over us.

Paul recognized that God had a purpose in his life that went all the way back to before he was born – and that purpose was to reveal His Son in his life, that he might preach Christ among the heathen. Now, Paul was not proud of his life before Christ:

(Phil 3:3-7) "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. {4} Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: {5} Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

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*{6} Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. {7} **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***"

He counted it all "but loss" in order to follow his Savior. He called himself the chief of sinners because of his hatred and persecution of the churches. He persecuted the church beyond measure, and wasted it in his zeal. (*Gal 1:13-14*) *"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: {14} And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."*

He had been raised up to be a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was trained up in "the Jews' religion," and was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions" of the Jews. He profited above many of his equals. He determined to destroy Christianity before it spread abroad.

He confessed this years later to king Agrippa. (*Acts 26:9-11*) *"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. {10} Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. {11} And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."*

Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, we can see how the purpose of God was molding Paul into the man that He could use, even before Paul was saved. Paul was born to a prominent Jewish family, which had received the coveted Roman citizenship. Unlike most of the Jews, Paul had the rights of a Roman citizen, which he used for the cause of Christ throughout his ministry.

Paul had two names: Saul, his Jewish name, and Paul, his Gentile name. When he began ministering to the Gentiles, he switched exclusively to his Gentile name (*Acts 13:9*) so that he could win them (*1 Cor. 9:19-23*). After *Acts 13:9*, he is never called Saul again.

Paul was raised in the strictest Jewish religion, as a Pharisee. This was a life of tremendous discipline and separation from worldliness.

The Pharisees were severely rebuked by the Lord for their hypocrisy, yet there were many sincere men among them who thought that they were doing right and serving God. Paul would have never dreamed that he was anything but right in his persecution of the Christians. The words from the Son of God on the road to Damascus shook him to his very soul: *(Acts 9:4-6) "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? {5} And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. {6} And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."* As soon as Paul knew the truth about Jesus, he owned Him as Lord and Savior.

Although it had become mixed with multitudes of human traditions, Paul would have received the very best training in the Old Testament. He even sat at the feet of the great teacher Gamaliel. *(Acts 22:3) "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."* Paul's education was tremendous for his day. Unlike the other apostles, who were called *"unlearned and ignorant men,"* Paul had received the utmost education possible, and had thrived above all his equals.

Yet, despite his strict Jewish upbringing, Paul was raised in a great Gentile city – Tarsus of Cilicia. Unlike the other Apostles, who lived entirely in Palestine and were deeply infected with Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles, Paul lived among them and carried out his family business with them. He was certainly not a Hellenist, but he was more equipped for his ministry among the great Gentile cities of Asia Minor and Europe than the other apostles would have been.

In all of this, I see the purpose of God. Paul was the man that God could use - a Jew that understood the ways of the Gentiles; a man of incredible drive, sincerity, courage, convictions, motivation, and energy; a man of tremendous training and knowledge of the Old Testament – a man that would turn the world upside down for Christ (Acts 17:6).

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II. PAUL HAD A DIVINE CALLING.

(Gal 1:15-16) "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, {16} To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen..."

1. First, he had the divine calling of salvation – "...and called me by his grace."

Paul never grew weary of giving his salvation testimony. He told the story over and over and over again.

He later said that his salvation was to serve as an example of Christ's longsuffering and mercy towards sinners. Despite the fact that he was "*before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,*" yet he "*obtained mercy,*" because "*the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant.*" If the "*chief*" of sinners could be saved by God's grace, anyone can be saved!

*(1 Tim 1:11-16) "According to **the glorious gospel** of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. {12} And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; {13} Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. {14} **And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.** {15} This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. {16} **Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.**"*

2. Then, he had the divine calling to preach Christ among the heathen – "...that I might preach him among the heathen..."

He was given this calling at the time of his salvation:

(Acts 26:12-20) "Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, {13} At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. {14} And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in

*the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. {15} And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. {16} But rise, and stand upon thy feet: **for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; {17} Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, {18} To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. {19} Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: {20} But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**"*

Paul knew that he was called to be an apostle. He claimed divine authority. (Rom 1:1-5) *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God... {5} By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name..."* He knew that he had seen the risen Savior. (1 Cor 15:7-8) *"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. {8} And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."*

He did not believe that he deserved to be an apostle, because he had persecuted the church, but he did not back down from the fact that, by God's grace, he was an apostle. (1 Cor 15:8-10) *"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. {9} For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. {10} But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

He knew that his specific role in God's plan was as the Apostle of the Gentiles. (Rom 11:13) *"For I speak to you*

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Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office..."

Throughout his Epistles, Paul had a four-fold claim to his apostleship. He was an apostle:

- 1) By the *calling* of God (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1).
- 2) By the *will* of God (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Coloss. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1).
- 3) By the *commandment* of God (1 Tim. 1:1).
- 4) By the *ordination* of God (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11).

Paul KNEW the reality of God's calling in his life. He knew that he was called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ among the heathen. He knew that he was sent. He knew that God had given him a special authority as an apostle – separate and individual compared to the original twelve, and yet equal in authority and position.

III. PAUL HAD DIVINE REVELATIONS.

The gospel Paul preached was not of man. He was not taught it, but received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (*Gal 1:11-12*) "*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. {12} For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

Immediately after his salvation and baptism, Paul left for Arabia. We do not know how long he was there, because at some point he returned to Damascus, and it was three years before he went to see Peter in Jerusalem. (*Gal 1:16-18*) "*...To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: {17} Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. {18} Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*"

This time spent in Arabia is not mentioned in the Book of Acts at all. This has caused some confusion as the events recorded in Acts are

compared with the statements of Paul himself. Here is a generally accepted chronology of these events in the early Christian life of Paul:

- 1) He was saved on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).
- 2) He was baptized by Ananias (Acts 9:10-18).
- 3) He immediately departed into Arabia (Galatians 1:17).
- 4) He returned to Damascus, where he fellowshiped with the church there, and began preaching Christ in the synagogues (Acts 9:19-25).
- 5) After being forced out of Damascus, he went to Jerusalem (this was three years after his salvation). They would not accept him, until Barnabas brought him to the apostles (Acts 9:26-29). Apparently, he only saw Peter and James (Gal. 1:19). At this time, he spent fifteen days with Peter (Galatians 1:18).
- 6) He departed and went through Syria and Cilicia, and ended up in Antioch with Barnabas (Acts 9:30; 11:25-26; 22:17-21; Gal. 1:21).

This mysterious period in Paul's life was when God gave him his revelations. Before his baptism, the Lord told Ananias: (*Acts 9:15-16*) *"...Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: {16} **For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**"* God had some things to show Paul – some mysteries to reveal.

We can imagine that Paul's brilliant, Pharisaical mind was turned back to the Old Testament Scriptures that he had diligently learned in his youth. After Paul's salvation, God began to *"reveal His Son in"* Paul. The verse does not say, "To reveal his Son TO me," but "to reveal his Son IN me." I believe that God began to show Jesus to Paul, from Genesis to Malachi, as Jesus had done to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. (*Luke 24:27*) *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."* Those two disciples were *"slow of heart to believe"* (*Lk 24:26-27*), but not Paul. His Spirit-filled mind was quick to understand the tremendous truths of the gospel preached before unto Abraham (Gal. 3:8). For the first time, he began to understand the importance of FAITH throughout the Old Testament (see

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Hebrews 11). In Arabia, separated from “*flesh and blood*,” the Holy Spirit began to open his mind and reveal the doctrines of the Old Testament as they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

In addition, God gave him special revelations of truth. Consider what Paul said about these revelations:

- (Rom 16:25-27) *"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, {26} But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: {27} To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."*
- (2 Cor 12:1-4) *"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. {2} I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. {3} And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) {4} How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*
- (2 Cor 12:7) *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."*
- (Eph 3:1-8) *"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, {2} If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: {3} **How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;** (as I wrote afore in few words, {4} Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) {5} Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; {6} That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: {7} Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God*

given unto me by the effectual working of his power. {8} Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..."

- *(Col 1:25-29) "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; {26} Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: {27} To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: {28} Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: {29} Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."*

To Paul were given all the great doctrines of the New Testament. These doctrines were given to him by God, as He opened the Old Testament Scriptures to Paul, and as He gave Paul further revelations of truth.

Paul was used to write the great doctrinal Books of:

- **Romans**, which defines and explains the great doctrine of justification by faith alone.
- **1 Corinthians**, which not only was to bring order to a carnal church, but also expounded the great doctrines concerning the resurrection, rapture, and glorification of the saved.
- **Galatians**, which battled the heresies of legalism, while defending the true gospel of grace.
- **Ephesians**, which is packed with doctrine, especially concerning the nature of the church and the acceptance of Gentiles in Christ.
- **1 & 2 Thessalonians**, which give us a great deal of information concerning the Rapture, Tribulation, Antichrist, and other prophetic information.
- **Hebrews**, in which he revealed the gospel of Jesus Christ as hidden in the Old Testament.

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And throughout all fourteen Books that were given to him through the miracle of divine inspiration, we find tremendous truths covering just about every practical area of life. More than anyone else, Paul was used to establish the right ways in which Christians were to live. *(1 Cor 4:16-17) "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. {17} For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."*

Where did Paul learn all of this truth? Did he figure it out on his own? No. He was taught by Christ. God revealed His Son in him. The years spent alone with God, away from "flesh and blood," were the years of revelation. He did not learn his truth from the other apostles. He did not learn his revelation from seminary or college. He had an absolutely unique calling for an absolutely unique life.

IV. PAUL HAD DIVINE CONFIRMATIONS.

Remember that Paul's authority was denounced by the Judaizers who were seeking to discredit his ministry and message. In Galatians and other places, Paul showed that his apostleship was confirmed where it mattered the most.

1. His work was approved by God.

God allowed mighty signs and wonders to accompany his ministry, as with the other apostles:

- *(Rom 15:18-19) "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, {19} **Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God;** so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."*
- *(2 Cor 12:11-12) "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: **for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. {12} Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."***

2. His work was approved by the other apostles.

James, Peter, and John “perceived” God’s purpose in Paul’s life. (Gal 2:7-10) *"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; {8} (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) {9} And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. {10} Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."*

Years later, Peter recognized that Paul’s writings were Scripture – even admitting that some things that God had revealed to Paul were hard for him to understand. (2 Pet 3:15-16) *"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; **even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; {16} As also in all his epistles**, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, **as they do also the other scriptures**, unto their own destruction."*

3. His apostleship was proven by the works that he had accomplished by God’s grace.

- (1 Cor 9:1-2) *"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? {2} If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: **for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."***
- (1 Cor 15:9-10) *"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. {10} But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; **but I laboured more abundantly than they all:** yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*
- (2 Cor 11:5) *"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."*

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Can you imagine anyone today denying the apostleship or authority of Paul? Yet, Paul had to deal with this throughout his ministry. The Judaizers dogged his steps and attacked his testimony at every opportunity. The man that was called of God to fulfill a divine purpose was vilified, lied about, slandered, and defamed by his enemies. Paul understood what it meant to bear a cross. He understood what it was to *"know him, and the power of his resurrection, and **the fellowship of his sufferings**, being made conformable unto his death"* (Ph. 3:10).

Paul preached the faith which he once sought to destroy. There is no argument for a transformed life. What a testimony to the amazing, sufficient, life-transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Chapter Three

TALES FROM TWO CITIES

(Gal 2:1-5) "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. {2} And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. {3} But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: {4} And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: {5} To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

You will remember from the last chapter that Paul was defending two truths in his Epistle to the Galatians:

1. The truth of the Gospel, which is that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, without the works of the law.
2. The truth of his authority as a true, God-called apostle.

Galatians chapter two continues his defense of his apostleship by revealing two specific incidents:

1. The first, in Jerusalem, when his ministry was given a stamp of approval by James, Peter, and John, who recognized that he was the apostle to the Gentiles.
2. The second, in Antioch, when he had to rebuke Peter and Barnabas when they were *"to be blamed,"* for *"they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel"* (2:11, 14). This was not a minor issue or petty argument. Peter was, by his actions, undermining the gospel message. Paul could not stand by and allow that to happen. The fact that he could

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withstand Peter was an indication of his position and authority as a fellow apostle.

Galatians 2 is then the Tale of Two Cities: Jerusalem and Antioch.

Remember that Galatians is a very important Book in explaining the Christian's position concerning the law of Moses. The church that Jesus started was entirely Jewish, but it was given a Commission to go into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature. However, these saved Jews were slow in overcoming their prejudice towards the Gentiles. The Jews considered all Gentiles to be unclean. It took a special vision to get Peter to go into the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10). After Cornelius and his entire household got saved and baptized, the Jews back in Jerusalem scolded Peter for going to the Gentiles and eating with them. *(Acts 11:1-3) "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. {2} And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, {3} Saying, **Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.**"*

That was their initial, natural reaction. Later, after hearing Peter's report, they glorified God. *(Acts 11:18) "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."* However, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem still had their issues concerning the Gentiles and their place in the churches.

Around that time, the church of Antioch was established. *(Acts 11:19-23) "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and **Antioch**, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. {20} And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. {21} And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. {22} Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. {23} Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."*

The scattered Christians were only preaching to the Jews at first, but some began preaching Christ to the Grecians (Gentiles). A great number believed. When the church of Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch to find out if the Gentiles were really getting saved. Barnabas saw what God was doing and was glad, and preached to them. Then, he went and found Saul, and together they went to Antioch and served in that church. (*Acts 11:25-26*) *"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: {26} And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*

The Antioch church was the first to be comprised of Jews and Gentiles in equal standing with each other. It is no surprise therefore that they were the first ones to be called "*Christians*."

These two churches became the prominent churches of that time: the church of Jerusalem, made up almost entirely of Jews that were still very zealous of the law; and the church of Antioch, made up of Jews and Gentiles. The church of Jerusalem was led by James, the half-brother of Christ, with Peter and the apostles. The church of Antioch was greatly helped through the ministry of Barnabas and Saul. The church of Antioch became the great missionary church.

The believers in Jerusalem had a hard time getting over their Judaism and their racial prejudices. They learned to rejoice that Gentiles had been saved and churches started, but they maintained many of their old customs in the law of Moses. This is perfectly illustrated in Paul's last trip to Jerusalem:

*(Acts 21:17-26) "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. {18} And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. {19} And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. {20} And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, **Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: {21} And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their***

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children, neither to walk after the customs. {22} What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. {23} Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; {24} Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. {25} As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. {26} Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

The Jewish Christians said, "The Gentile Christians don't have to keep these observances, but we that are Jews should. We need to walk orderly and keep the law." And even Paul himself submitted to keeping this dead observance. He purified himself and the four men that had a vow, as though he needed ceremonial purification (Heb. 1:3; 10:1-14).

I personally believe that Paul was wrong to keep these ordinances, and that the elders were wrong to ask him to do so. The blood of Christ purifies us – we do not need an empty ceremony! He even offered an offering for them, which is absolutely unnecessary since Christ was our "once for all" offering!

It is possible that Paul was simply trying to gain the Jews by observing their ordinances. (1 Cor 9:19-23) *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. {20} And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; {21} To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. {22} To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."*

{23} And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

We would like to give Paul the benefit of the doubt, but a converted Catholic would not go to the Catholic Church and observe their dead rituals in order to win the favor of Catholics. Personally, I cannot reconcile Paul's actions with the gospel or with the truths of the New Testament, or with his own statements concerning the "Jews' religion." But, as mentioned earlier, "*Great men are not always wise.*" Paul was not inerrant or perfect. He was flesh and blood like the rest of us.

The Bible is clear that the ceremonial laws of Moses were nailed to the cross of Christ. He was the fulfillment of the law. The sacrifices, offerings, feasts, priesthood, and ceremonies pictured the ministry and sacrifice of Jesus Christ; He fulfilled them for us, so that they are no longer binding or to be observed. When the veil in the Temple was rent, the Old Testament ceremonies and sacrifices were officially completed.

- *(Col 2:13-17) "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nailing it to his cross;** {15} And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. {16} **Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: {17} Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."***
- *(Rom 7:6) "But now we are delivered from the law, **that being dead wherein we were held;** that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."*
- *(Gal 2:19) "For I through the law am **dead to the law,** that I might live unto God."*

The Book of Hebrews teaches us that the Old Testament ceremonial and sacrificial economy was ended by the "once for all" sacrifice of Christ:

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- (Heb 9:6-14) *"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. {7} But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: {8} The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: {9} **Which was a figure for the time then present**, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, **that could not make him that did the service perfect**, as pertaining to the conscience; {10} Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. {11} But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; {12} **Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.** {13} For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: {14} **How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"***
- (Heb 10:10-14) *"By the which will **we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.** {11} And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: {12} But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God; {13} From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. {14} **For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**"*

The born-again Christian – whether Jew or Gentile – is redeemed and purified through the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no more need for the Temple worship of the Old Testament. There is no need for animal sacrifice, for a special priesthood, or for the ordinances of the Levitical ceremonial laws. We are told not to try to put the new wine into the old wineskins. (Mark 2:22) *"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."*

However, though the ceremonial law was dead, it took a long time to get it buried. The Jews of Jerusalem had a hard time getting over their traditions. It was not until 70 A.D. that the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament was buried under the iron shoes of the Roman General Titus. That year the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and the city was conquered. The Jews were scattered, and the church of Jerusalem, as far as we know, ceased to exist. When the Temple was gone, the ceremonial Judaism that had afflicted Christianity effectively disappeared.

Paul's Understanding of the Mystery.

Paul understood the mystery that so many of his Jewish counterparts struggled with: that the Gentiles were made one with Jews in Christ. Paul understood that God was not a respecter of persons, and that He did not consider the Jews to be superior to the Gentiles. God saw them all as lost sinners. God provided **one salvation** for both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul understood that there was *"no difference between the Jew and the Greek:"*

- (Rom 3:9-10) *"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;** {10} As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"*
- (Rom 3:29-30) *"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: {30} Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."*
- (Rom 9:24-26) *"Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? {25} As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. {26} And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."*
- (Rom 10:12-13) *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. {13} For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

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Paul understood that God's salvation made every believer an equal child of God. (*Gal 3:26-29*) *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. {27} For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. {28} **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** {29} And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Furthermore, Paul understood that God's plan was for the local churches to be worldwide institutions made up of saved people of any nationality or race. Paul understood that God's plan was not to have a Jewish Church and a separate Gentile Church, but to make *"both one,"* to *"make in himself of twain one new man"* - a Christian. God's plan was for Jews and Gentiles to be saved the same way, to be baptized into the same church, and to work together in carrying out the Great Commission.

*(Eph 2:11-22) "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; {12} That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: {13} But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. {14} For he is **our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;** {15} Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; **for to make in himself of twain one new man,** so making peace; {16} And that he might reconcile **both** unto God in **one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: {17} And came and preached **peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.** {18} For through him we **both** have access by one Spirit unto the Father. {19} Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; {20} And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; {21} In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the*

Lord: {22} In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

God never intended churches to be divided by race – whether it be Jews and Gentiles, or blacks and whites. In the 21st century, we Americans need to get over that hangover from a racist past. There is room enough in the local church for any born-again child of God, no matter what his skin color or ethnic background might be.

A church like the one in Antioch is going to be open to anyone. Some cities may not have a rich diversity of races such as Antioch did, but the door should never be closed to anyone because of their skin color. There is no reason for churches to be racially-oriented. The only divisions should be caused by differences in language.

Paul understood that. He found a home in the church of Antioch, and they were the kind of church that God intended. They had everybody, and they were called Christians first. I am not saying that Peter and James were wrong in their doctrine. I am saying that the Jerusalem church seems to have struggled with the truth that Paul understood so clearly, and this is illustrated in Galatians 2.

I. PAUL IN JERUSALEM (2:1-10).

This was Paul's second trip to Jerusalem, 14 years later. The timing coincides with the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15, which was called to settle the issue of legalism. Paul and Barnabas had just finished their first missionary journey, and had seen tremendous success among the Gentiles in Galatia. When the issue of the Pharisees and circumcision came up, Paul and Barnabas withstood them fiercely, and it was decided to go to the apostles in Jerusalem to settle the matter. Verse two means that Paul communicated with the apostles in private as well the church in public. He told them the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles, with which they found no fault.

Galatians 2 tells us that Paul also took Titus, a Gentile believer and young preacher. It appears that Titus was a test case for this issue. The legalist Judaizers insisted that Titus had to be circumcised according to the law of Moses. They were trying to impose the ceremonial laws of Moses on all the Gentile converts. If they could

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win that victory with Paul and Titus, they would be able to use it as a precedent to convince all of the Gentile converts to convert to Judaism.

Paul withstood them without flinching. (*Gal 2:3-5*) *"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: {4} And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: {5} To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."*

He called them what they were – “false brethren.” He said, “We did not submit to their demands. We were not going to compromise the truth of the gospel to please them. We know that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ for Gentiles as well as Jews, and we will not compromise our conviction just to appease these false brethren.” In this incident, we see Paul’s unflinching courage in his stand for the truth of the Gospel.

James, Peter, and John recognized Paul’s unique calling, and endorsed his ministry to the Gentiles. (*Gal 2:7-10*) *"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; {8} (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) {9} And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; **that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.** {10} Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."*

Some have tried to claim that this was the beginning of the church denominations. It certainly was not. The church denominations came from Catholicism, which is an apostatized, pagan version of Christianity. No denominations started here. This was an understanding between Paul, James, Peter and John concerning their respective ministries. James was the Pastor of the Jerusalem church; together with Peter, John, and the apostles, they served the Lord in the Jewish city of Jerusalem, reaching the Jews of Israel. Paul, the missionary, went to the “heathen” in far off lands, as the Lord Jesus

had commanded him (Acts 22:18-21). They did not separate into two different denominations. The Bible is clear that there is “*one Lord, one faith, one baptism*,” not four or more depending on whether you like ritualistic services or Charismatic shouting or something in between (Eph. 4:5).

Denominations came about because people wanted to have their own private interpretations of doctrinal truth. They did not want to submit to the authority of God’s Word. I am for denominations so that we can distinguish heretics.

Every “church” ought to tell the world what it believes. If I drive by a Catholic church, I know that there is a bachelor there called a “father” who dresses like a mother and believes that he can forgive men’s sins. If I drive by a Lutheran church, I know that they baptize babies by sprinkling to make them a part of the family of God. If I drive by a Methodist church, I know that I may hear a woman preacher but I will not hear much doctrine. If I drive by an Episcopalian church, I know that they do not believe much of anything but they do have nice, religious ceremonies. If I drive by a Baptist church, at least I have a good chance of finding the right doctrines and practices. If I see a “Bible Fellowship” of the non-denominational denomination, I do not know what they believe. They are like a vegetable can without a label. They are ashamed to be too strongly identified with any particular beliefs.

Peter, James, John, and Paul all believed the same doctrines, but they recognized that they had different fields to work in – while each understood that they were doing the Lord’s work. They were not different denominations.

For example, I have friends serving the Lord in various mission fields. I have a friend that God sent to Brazil, and another that serves in Croatia, and a third serving in Ethiopia, while I serve here in Wylie, Texas. We are not different denominations just because our locations are different, or because we are going after different people. We preach the same gospel and hold the same doctrines – just as Peter, James, John and Paul did. Here in Wylie, Texas, I have witnessed to Brazilians, Croatians, and Ethiopians that had immigrated to this country. I am sure that if a Texan ends up in Brazil, Ethiopia or Croatia, I know of three missionaries that will try to win him to Christ.

II. PETER IN ANTIOCH (2:11-21).

This next incident is a shocking revelation of the frailty of man. (Gal 2:11-13) *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. {12} For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. {13} And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."*

Is this the same Peter that was used of God to open the door to the Gentiles in Acts 10? Is this the same Peter that boldly said at the Jerusalem Conference: (Acts 15:7-11) *"...Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. {8} And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; {9} And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. {10} Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? {11} But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*

Later, he was visiting the work in Antioch. While there, he ate with the Gentiles and treated them as equal brothers in Christ. But, when certain men came from James, he *"withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."*

Peter more concerned about what the Jews from Jerusalem thought about him than he was about what was right. Paul understood the significance of Peter's actions. By his actions, Peter was telling the Gentiles that, though they were saved, they were still unclean (see Acts 10:28).

Let us learn five lessons from Peter's behavior:

1. We see that "great men are not always wise" (Job 32:9).

No one is perfect. No one is even close. Too many Christians judge others by a perfect standard, without making allowance for their humanity. These Christians are easily disillusioned when

they realize that someone they respected was not perfect after all. Then, these disillusioned Christians can become very jaded towards church, Christianity, or preachers in general.

I have several heroes. None of them are or were perfect. Some of them I knew closely, and others I admired from a distance. I would not agree with any of them 100% of the time, yet they are my heroes. I admire their good qualities, and I have mercy on their flaws, while remembering my own.

The problem with many people today is that they are used to “TV heroes.” They “heroes” they watched on television were perfect – they always knew exactly what to do and what to say, always made the right decisions, and always won in the end. The problem is that those heroes were not real – they were imaginary characters acting according to a script. They were not real people dealing with real life. But, unfortunately, we tend to expect our leaders to always know what to do, to always say just the right thing, and to always win in the end. The truth is that sometimes our leaders do NOT know what to do. Sometimes they say the WRONG thing. Sometimes they make the WRONG decision. And sometimes they appear to come out on the losing end.

I’ve got news for you, folks: the only perfect Man to ever live was the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone else is imperfect. Paul was not perfect. David was not perfect. Peter was not perfect. John was not perfect. Abraham was not perfect. So why do we expect that people around us today are going to be perfect – and why are we surprised, shocked and dismayed when we find out what we already know? We can become very self-righteous and “high and mighty” with people sometimes, and especially with leaders, when the Bible tells us to be merciful, forgiving, meek, humble, and forbearing.

God inspired His words – not His men. That is an important truth to learn. Romans is the inspired Word of God. Paul himself was not inspired. The Gospel of John is the inspired Word of God. John was not inspired. God gave them His words through the miracle of inspiration, but they were still sinful, imperfect men. God’s Word is inspired and inerrant. God’s men make plenty of errors – including Peter.

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2. We see that it is wrong to judge a man based on one event in his life.

My opinion of Peter does not go down the drain because of this one incident. Peter was still a great man, though he was wrong. Quite a few men in the Bible messed up at one point, but they got right and kept on going for the Lord. Peter was still used to write two Books of the Bible. He still served God for many, many years, and tradition says that he died as a martyr for His Savior. I could not polish his sandals.

3. We see the danger of being man-pleasers.

(Gal 2:12) "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

He allowed the fear of man to affect his convictions.

- *(Prov 29:25) "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe."*
- *(Gal 1:10) "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."*

4. We see that our walk talks louder than our talk talks.

Peter did not believe that the Gentiles were unclean. He was eating with them. We know what he said about the issue in Acts 15. We know that his doctrinal position was right.

But his conduct taught a lesson that contradicted his words. His inner convictions were sound, but his outer conduct belied his convictions. They all *"dissembled."* That means that they pretended to be something that they really were not. Their actions were not consistent with who they really were and what they really believed.

By his actions, he was rebuilding the wall between Jews and Gentiles. He was telling the Gentiles that they were still unclean, and unworthy of acceptance among the Jews.

We must always remember that we teach a little by what we say, more by what we do, and the most by what we are. People

are going to pay more attention to our actions than our statements. We must be careful that our convictions are revealed by our way of life, and not contradicted it.

5. We see the power of influence.

(Gal 2:13) "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."

Even Barnabas, the long-time member of the church of Antioch and teacher there; Barnabas, who had just returned from the first missionary journey among the Gentiles; Barnabas, who had just stood with Paul and Titus at the Jerusalem Conference – is this the same man, now separating from the Gentiles? Peter's influence affected even Barnabas, and drew him out of the way.

We must remember that our lives affect others. Someone is going to be affected by our decisions. *(Rom 14:7) "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."* It is vitally important that our walk match our talk, because people will follow our walk more than our talk. As the old saying goes, "Your talk talks and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."

Paul responded in no uncertain terms to Peter's actions:

- *(Gal 2:11) "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."*
- *(Gal 2:14-18) "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? {15} We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, {16} Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. {17} But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ*

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the minister of sin? God forbid. {18} For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."

Paul was not bickering about a minor issue (which is what many hair-splitting Baptists tend to bicker about). This was concerning *"the truth of the gospel."* This was undermining Paul's entire ministry. This was setting a horrible example in Paul's church at a critical time. It was affecting Paul's partner, Barnabas. This was a serious issue, and Paul stood in the gap for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of his church. He was trying to help Jews and Gentiles merge together in the church, and Peter's example was undermining this.

Most of what people argue about and fight over today is not what Paul was trying to deal with. Many Christians feel that they are such superior Christians that it is their job to correct everyone else and police the church. But God did not appoint us to be church policemen. God did not give us a badge and a citation book and command us to keep everyone else in line.

As a Pastor, I am a shepherd, not a sheepdog. It is my job to lead and feed and take care of the church. I am not going to try to regulate their homes, marriages, or child rearing. I will preach the truth, and I will have standards for those who serve in the church, but I am not going to police their homes or personal lives. I am not a dictator. (It would be good for Pastors to remember the various spheres of authority and stay within their own). If this is the Pastor's position, why do church members feel that they have a divine commission to police fellow church members – or even the Pastor himself? Such an attitude comes from PRIDE.

Notice how Paul dealt with Peter:

1. Paul withstood him to the face.

He did not talk about him behind his back. He did not start an Internet blog to attack Peter. He did not start a newsletter and mail it around the country with articles against Peter.

He withstood him to the face. He looked him in the eye like a man and talked to him face to face. Since it was a public problem, Paul dealt with it publicly. *"I said unto Peter before them all."* This took courage. Much of what is being done "for the truth"

these days is done by *cowards* hiding behind Internet websites, mail-outs, and behind-the-back gossip.

2. Paul did not attack Peter's character because he disagreed with him.

He came in the spirit of meekness, but with strength. He did not attack Peter personally. He did not call him a liar and a fraud.

I have heard Christians talk about other Christians with so much venom, anger, and even hatred that I have to wonder who their master is. My Bible never gives me a green light to hate another Christian, to despise a brother, or to hold a grudge. Rather, when a brother is overtaken in a spiritual fault and needs my help, I am to HELP him, not hurt him just so that I will feel better and get to vent some steam.

Consider this command: (*Gal 6:1*) "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*"

1. This command is only for truly *spiritual* Christians – “*ye which are spiritual.*” That exempts the carnal Christian, whose life is marked by divisiveness, envying, and strife – the kind of person that is more likely to attack or “vent steam” than to help restore his brother. (*1 Cor 3:3-4*) "*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? {4} For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*"
2. This command only applies to a Christian that has been “*overtaken in a fault.*” Everyone has faults, but not everyone has been overtaken in a fault. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines “overtake” as “to take by surprise,” and uses Galatians 6:1 as a reference. Certainly, this incident in the life of Peter was a surprise. It was not premeditated. He made a wrong decision and was suddenly in a wrong position.
3. This command has a specific goal – “*restore such an one.*” Restore means “to bring back; to repair or rebuild.”

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The command is not to destroy the Christian that is overcome by a fault, but to try to restore them to their former position in the truth.

4. This command tells the spiritual Christian to come to the faulty Christian in a “*spirit of meekness*,” and with a proper humility concerning his own faults and weaknesses, “*lest thou also be tempted*.” Peter was overtaken in a fault, and Paul restored him in the spirit of meekness.

I have rarely ever seen a spirit of meekness in those trying to “restore” another Christian. I have seen the spirit of superiority and anger, and the spirit of pride, and the spirit of arrogance, but rarely the spirit of meekness. I have seen Christians go to those that had offended them in anger, just to vent their steam, call names, and walk away without reconciliation. They may have thought that they were obeying the Word of God, but they were not, because they lacked the spirit of meekness the Word of God commanded them to have.

3. Paul corrected Peter with the truth.

(Gal 2:14-16) "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? {15} We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, {16} Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Paul reminded Peter that he had laid aside the ceremonial laws before James' men arrived, which meant that they were not vital after all. Peter had laid them aside and eaten with the Gentiles before they came. Now, he was saying by his actions that the Gentiles had to live as the Jews in order to be clean.

Paul also reminded Peter that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ – just as Peter himself had said in Jerusalem (*Acts 15:10-11*). He pleaded with

Peter not to frustrate the grace of God and make Christ's death in vain by endorsing the false gospel of the Judaizers. (*Gal 2:20-21*) *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {21} I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."*

Was Paul's rebuke successful? Yes. Did this cause a falling out with Peter, a breach of friendship that was never healed? No. Years later, Peter wrote: (*2 Pet 3:15*) *"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as **our beloved brother Paul** also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you..."* Peter certainly did not hold this incident against Paul, whom he referred to as *"our beloved brother."* The average Christian or preacher today would have held a grudge for forty years over it, and maybe even started a new fellowship because of it.

Galatians 2 is the Tales of Two Cities, Jerusalem and Antioch. Each illustrated Paul's lifelong battle to keep the gospel free from any mixture of works.

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Chapter Four

“CHRIST LIVETH IN ME”

(Gal 2:16-21) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. {17} But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. {18} For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. {19} For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. {20} I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {21} I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

The Gentile Christians were confused about their responsibilities concerning the law of Moses. Remember that they did not have the New Testament as we have it today. They had the Old Testament Scriptures, which are largely made up of the law of Moses. Like all true Bible-believers, they believed that the Old Testament was the Word of God. But they were confused about their responsibility to the law.

The Judaizers had used this confusion to teach the Galatians that they needed to keep the law in order to be saved. Unfortunately, we have many religious groups around today that have tried to mix various aspects of the law of Moses into God's plan of salvation.

Christians need to understand their relationship to the Old Testament law of Moses. What was the purpose of the law? We must understand that God did **not** give us the law as a means of salvation from sin, death, and hell. God never intended for the law to be a way for us to achieve salvation by our own merits. God gave the law as

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our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be saved by faith in Christ (3:26).

The Old Testament law is mostly found in the first five Books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. The law can be divided into three basic divisions:

1. **The National Laws.** These were laws that applied only for the ancient nation of Israel. These included many agricultural laws, civic laws, military laws, immigration laws, property rights, the rights of servants, etc.
2. **The Moral Laws.** The moral laws are God's eternal code of right and wrong. They do not change. The moral laws set the boundaries and identify right and wrong. "*Thou shalt not commit murder*" is a moral law that will never change. Murder will never be acceptable to God. "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" is a moral law that will never change. Adultery will always be wrong. It is never right. Scores of other commands concerning our responsibilities to God and to our fellow man are part of the moral laws.
3. **The Ceremonial Laws.** These laws concerned the Old Testament worship through rituals, sacrifices, feast days, and ceremonies. They also included the laws regarding ceremonial cleanliness. These laws are found mainly in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, and can be divided among the following six categories:
 - a. Sacred objects (Tabernacle and Temple furniture).
 - b. Sacred persons (the priests and Levites).
 - c. Sacred dues (tithes, taxes and vows).
 - d. Sacred offerings (the various sacrificial offerings).
 - e. Sacred times (Sabbaths and Feasts).
 - f. Sacred living (ceremonial cleanness, dietary laws, etc).

With the New Testament as we have it today, it is easy to determine which of the Old Testament laws are applicable for us. They will be repeated or re-emphasized in the New Testament. For example, tithing was an Old Testament command, but it is repeated and re-emphasized in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 9:8-14,

among other places. On the other hand, New Testament Christians are not commanded anywhere in the New Testament to keep the Saturday Sabbath day. We are to meet together in the church as often as the church assembles (Heb. 10:25), and we are to bring our offerings on Sunday (1 Cor. 16:1), which is the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10).

We are Dead to the Law.

Paul said, *"For I through the law am dead to the law."* The believer is not under the bondage of the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Romans 7:2 tells me that I am loosed from the law just as a widow is loosed from her husband when he dies. Romans 7:6 tells me that I am delivered from the law, and that it is dead. Romans 10:4 tells me that Christ is the end of the law to every one that believes on Him. Romans 8:2 tells me that I am free from the law. Again, our text in Galatians 2:19 tells me that I am dead to the law.

That creates some questions. Am I dead to *all* the law of God? Should I just toss out *all* of the Old Testament? Is Paul teaching us that we should be *lawless* Christians, without any regard to the law of God as revealed in the Old Testament?

The answer is NO. We are at liberty as Christians, but we are never permitted to use our liberty as a license to sin. God did not save me so that I could dishonor His name by sinful living. He saved me and set me free so that I could live for Him. (Gal 2:19) *"For I through the law am dead to the law, **that I might live unto God.**"*

Does the moral law still have a purpose for the Christian? Of course. New Testament Christians, of all people, need to know right from wrong. We need to know the boundaries that God has set. As Christians, we need to obey the moral laws of God – not to be saved, but to be pleasing to God and to protect our testimony.

The Moral Law is good for Christians when it is used in the proper way. (1 Tim 1:8-11) *"But we know that **the law is good, if a man use it lawfully**; {9} Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, {10} For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary*

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to sound doctrine; {11} According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

The Moral Law of God pronounces a judgment and a curse on mankind, because of our sins. It does not justify anyone. No one except Jesus Christ has kept all the Moral Law of God perfectly. Everyone else is pronounced guilty and cursed by the Law of God. Thankfully, I am dead to the curse and judgment of the moral law. (Gal 3:10) *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."* Dead men are not tried or convicted. They are dead to the law – the law cannot follow them into the grave and punish them. Even so, I am dead to the law, because I am in Christ. I will never be tried or condemned (Rom. 8:1).

I am also dead to the requirements of the ceremonial laws of God. The ceremonial laws showed me that I needed a divine means of receiving forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation with God. The ceremonial laws were a shadow of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (Heb 10:1). He was the Lamb of God. He is our great High Priest. He was the offering for man's sins. He was pictured by the Tabernacle, the Temples, the offerings, the priesthood, the atoning blood, the furniture in the Tabernacle, the scapegoat, the Feast days, etc. They all pictured what He would do on Calvary. Since He has come and fulfilled the ceremonial law, I do not need it anymore. I do not need the picture. I have the real thing.

To summarize:

1. I am dead to the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, because Christ has fulfilled them. They were the shadow; He is the substance. The ceremonial laws are no longer needed.
2. I am dead to the penalty of the moral law of God, because Jesus Christ died in my place, paying that penalty in full. I am to use the moral law lawfully, to live for God, but I am not under bondage as a guilty sinner.

The Law Was Our Schoolmaster.

The Law of God was designed to lead us to Christ. (*Gal 3:24*) *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*

1. The moral law shows us our sinfulness in the eyes of a holy God. (*Rom 3:20*) *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: **for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**"* The moral law of God was designed to humble the proud heart of man, so that he would receive Jesus Christ by faith. The moral law awakens our conscience to our sinfulness in God's sight. This leads us to look for forgiveness and reconciliation with God.
2. The ceremonial law shows us that God has a means of reconciliation and forgiveness through the shedding of blood. It leads us to trust the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God.

Once we are saved, we are no longer under the schoolmaster. (*Gal 3:25-26*) *"But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. {26} For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* That does not mean that we ignore what we have learned. I am not free to live lawlessly just because I am no longer under the schoolmaster. I have a new life in Christ, but it is a higher and nobler life than I once had. Now, I am to live for God, and God tells me to be righteous and holy and upright – not to be saved, but because I am saved!

Many folks are trying in varying degrees to earn their way to heaven. Some are truly striving to keep the law of Moses. Some are just subconsciously trusting in their own goodness and righteousness to get them into heaven one day. Both forms of self-righteousness will send you to hell. The pride of man does not like that truth, but pride never got anyone to heaven, either. In fact, pride caused Lucifer to fall from heaven and become Satan, and pride has been populating hell ever since.

NOTICE TWO MAIN THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE NEW LIFE THAT THE CHRISTIAN HAS IN JESUS CHRIST.

I. THERE ARE SOME TRUTHS THAT WE SHOULD KNOW.

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(Gal 2:16) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

1. We should know that a man is not justified by the works of the law. If you tried today to keep all the law of God, you would still never be justified. Never.
2. We should know that *no flesh* shall be justified by the works of the law.

No one, anywhere, except for Jesus Christ, has ever been or will ever be justified in God's sight through the works of the law. Rather, the law condemns all men as unrighteous sinners:

- *(Rom 3:10) "As it is written, There is **none** righteous, **no, not one...**"*
- *(Rom 3:19-20) "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that **every** mouth may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God. {20} Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall **no flesh** be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

The law stops our mouths and leaves us speechless and guilty before the eyes of God.

3. We should know that a man is justified only by the faith of Jesus Christ.

(Rom 3:20-22) "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. {21} But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; {22} Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"

Jesus Christ lived a perfect, sinless life. That means that He had perfect righteousness and perfect faith. He has what I

desperately need: perfect righteousness. I need something to cover my nakedness. I need something to cover my shame.

When I am saved, I am covered by the perfect righteousness and faith of Jesus Christ. It is *"unto all and upon all them that believe."* When God looks at me, He sees the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

There is no other way to be saved. (*Acts 4:12*) *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

4. We should know that a man must believe in Jesus Christ to be justified.

"...Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law."

This requires a personal decision to believe on Christ with all your heart. You don't have to get saved if you don't want to. If you want to die and go to hell, God won't stop you. He wants you to be saved, but He will not force you to be saved.

A man told one of our soul-winners recently: "I believe that everyone is automatically saved unless they choose to reject Jesus Christ." He had it backwards. Everyone is automatically *lost* unless they choose to *accept* Jesus Christ.

5. We should know that any other ideas concerning salvation frustrates the grace of God.

(*Gal 2:21*) *"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."*

If a man could earn his way to heaven by his own goodness or works or obedience to the law, the sacrifice of Christ was meaningless and vain. If a baptism or a church membership could get you to heaven, or religious activity or devotion, there is no purpose for Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

I want you to know that Christ did not die in vain. He died because there was NO OTHER WAY for us to be saved. He came to fulfill the righteousness of the law, to condemn sin in His flesh, and to die for our sins, so that He could give us His perfect righteousness.

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Jesus did what the law COULD NOT do. (Rom 8:3-4) ***"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: {4} That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."***

If you reject God's salvation, you will frustrate His grace, and deny what His Son did for you on the cross of Calvary.

II. THERE ARE SOME TRUTHS THAT WE SHOULD SHOW.

(Gal 2:20) *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

The Christian's life and standing with God is a paradox to human reasoning. Paul said:

- *I am crucified, yet I live.*
- *I live, yet not I, but Christ.*
- *Christ was crucified, yet He liveth in me.*
- *I live in the flesh, and yet I live by faith.*

These statements do not make sense except that our Savior is a resurrected Savior. He died on the cross for our sins, and yet He rose again and lives forevermore!

When Christ died on Calvary, I died with Him because He was my substitute. He died vicariously, in my place. So, I was crucified with Christ. Yet, I am not dead. I was dead in sins already (Eph. 2:1-2). His salvation has made me alive spiritually. I have been born again. He gave me life, and life more abundantly. Yet, this life is not my own, but is His life in me – *"Christ liveth in me."*

Do you know why I have a steadfast hope concerning eternity? *"Christ liveth in me."* That is it. He lives in me and He has given me life. I was crucified with Him as my Substitute, and He has paid for my sins. I have believed on Him with all my heart as my Savior. I am not trusting in the law or myself, but in Jesus. And now He liveth in

me, and I have life eternal. (1 John 5:11-12) *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. {12} He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

As a Christian, it is my responsibility to show this new life to others:

1. I am to live a Crucified Life.

Paul said, *"I am crucified with Christ."* He said something very similar at the end of Galatians: (Gal 6:14) *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

I have a new standing in relation to this world. I am crucified to it, and it is crucified to me. We no longer share a mutual attraction to each other. I am a reproach to this world, and this world is a reproach to me.

Christianity today does not want a cross (unless it is golden and hangs around their necks). Many Christians would rather be like Peter, warming himself at the enemy's fire while Jesus hangs on the cross. Paul was saying, "I would rather glory in the cross of Christ. I would rather hang on a cross next to my Savior, and to be mocked and insulted and hated and reproached, than to be accepted by the world that hates my Lord."

Christians are called to deny themselves and bear their cross after Jesus. (Luke 9:23) *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

Living a crucified life means living for God. It means living like Jesus. It means a submitted will, like Jesus had in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, *"Not my will, but thine be done."* It means bearing a reproach because you stand for God and His Word. It is the self-denying attitude of, *"Not I, but Christ."*

Are you living a crucified life?

2. I am to live a Resurrected Life.

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(Gal 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Notice, *"The life which I now live."* This new life is to show the world the power of Christ's resurrection and salvation. Our Savior is not dead! He is alive and He lives in me!

A little girl once asked her mother, "Mommy, is God bigger than we are?" The mother answered, "Yes, dear, He is." The little girl then said, "But my Sunday School teacher said that God lives in us when we are saved." The mother answered, "That is right, dear. He does." The little girl then said with a puzzled expression, "If God is bigger than we are, and He lives in us, how come He doesn't show anywhere?"

If you say you are saved, live the resurrected life. Don't get saved and then go back to the graveyard. Live for God!

Chapter Five

“WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU?”

(Gal 3:1-5) "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? {2} This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? {3} Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? {4} Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. {5} He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Chapter three continues Paul's defense of the gospel. It begins with a harsh rebuke that almost seems uncharacteristic of Paul – *"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? Are ye so foolish?"* Paul later asked the Corinthian Church, *(1 Cor 4:21) "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"* He gave the Corinthians a choice, and his second Epistle was written *"in love, and in the spirit of meekness;"* the Galatians were so far gone that Paul came directly to them with the rod of correction. The situation was desperate, because these churches had *"fallen from grace"* into *"another gospel,"* preaching the works of the law instead of the grace of God.

I believe that most preachers would rather preach in the spirit of meekness than to use the rod of correction. But the rod of correction is sometimes necessary. The preacher is instructed to *"preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke**, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"* (2 Tim 4:2). Most preachers would rather exhort and encourage people, but the sinful nature of man and the deceptions of Satan require that the preacher also stand up to fearlessly reprove and rebuke. God's instructions to Isaiah were to *"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins"* (Isa 58:1). Paul did not mince any words. He called it like it was. He

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called a spade a spade. He words cracked like thunder to get the attention of the deceived Galatians churches.

Paul asked, “Who hath bewitched you?” “Bewitched” is a fascinating word. The Webster’s 1828 Dictionary gives it the following definition: “To fascinate; to gain an ascendancy over by charms or incantation; an operation which was formerly supposed to injure the person bewitched, so that he lost his flesh, or behaved in a **strange unaccountable manner**; ignorant people being inclined to ascribe to evil spirits what they could not account for.”

The Galatians’ current behavior was so drastically different from the beginning that Paul could not understand what had happened. He said bluntly, “You are being foolish. You act as if you are under a spell. Your behavior is so strange and unaccountable that you must be under some kind of bewitchment. I cannot believe that you have turned your back on the gospel and the Savior. I cannot believe that you have disobeyed the truth in this matter.”

He reminded them in chapter four how they had initially responded to the Gospel. (*Gal 4:12-15*) *"Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. {13} Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. {14} And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. {15} Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."*

Paul had been amazed by their gracious reception at the beginning. They received him “as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” Wow! I have never been treated like an angel – well, maybe like a *fallen* angel – much less like Jesus Christ.

(That is how we should treat God’s people. We should treat them like we would treat Jesus if He was there in their place. (*Mat 25:40*) *"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*)

Paul had been dealing with a severe infirmity when he began preaching among the Galatians. This infirmity apparently affected his eyes in some way that must have been repulsive, causing him to

gratefully write: *"And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, not rejected."* Paul must have been concerned that his physical affliction would turn some away from the gospel.

"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" My, those people loved Paul! They told him that he was a blessing from God. They told him after each sermon, "Brother Paul, that message was such a blessing." Paul wanted to know what happened to the *"blessedness ye spake of?"* He had not changed. His message had not changed. How had he become their enemy while continuing to preach the same message that they once blessed?

Pastors still deal with this kind of behavior today. The folks that seem to love them the most and flatter them the most frequently are also the ones that seem to be the quickest to stab him in the back over the most trivial of offenses. Many times, these folks are insincere. They are flatterers, using kind words to try to get an advantage with the preacher. They have ulterior motives. When their selfish motives and desires are not realized, they turn on the preacher "quicker than two shakes of a lamb's tail," as my Dad used to say.

Paul continued by saying that *"if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."* Yet, now they treated him as an enemy. (Gal 4:16) *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*

Paul had been surprised by his initial reception, as an angel of God – he is even more surprised by their current rejection of his ministry, as a false apostle! He cannot believe the change. Surely, they have been bewitched! They are behaving in such "a strange unaccountable manner" that there is no rational explanation.

Why would anyone turn from the gospel of the grace of God to "another gospel," a message of legalism and works? Why would anyone turn from the salvation of Jesus Christ – which is full, free, and forever – to the bondage and yoke of the law? (Gal 4:9-11) *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."*

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The answer is that they had been **deceived**. The example of the Galatians is a warning to Christians to beware of deception! Can saved people be deceived? Yes, absolutely! These Christians had been taught by Paul himself, and yet were deceived by the legalists in the gospel itself. We are warned to take heed! (*1 Cor 10:12*) *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*

The Bible warns us over and over again to *"be not deceived"* and *"let no man deceive you."* So, consider with me this matter of bewitchment or deception, as it applies to the Christian life.

The first thing that we must understand is that Satan is the master-deceiver. The Bible says that Satan has deceived the whole world. (*Rev 12:9*) *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and **Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:** he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."* He is the father of deception. He is the father of lies. He has the whole world deceived.

What is deception? To deceive means to convince someone that something is true when it is not. To deceive is to dress up a lie as though it is the truth. **The lie is still a lie. Nothing can change a lie into truth.** But the lie does not look like a lie. The deception makes the lie look like the truth, but it can never and will never be the truth.

At the same time, a deceiver will often try to make the truth look like a lie, in order to make the victim believe that the lie is the truth. He must also discredit the truth so that the lie is not revealed for what it is – a lie. He must attack the truth, slander the truth, and discredit the truth to protect the lie.

Satan has deceived the world. He has taken his lies and dressed them up to look like the truth. Then, he has attacked the truth to discredit the truth, so that his lies will not be revealed for what they are – lies.

Billions of people alive right now are deceived by Satan. They do not think that they are deceived. They are sincere. They have religion. They have their own ideas. They have traditions and cultures that go back hundreds or thousands of years. But they are not going to heaven. They are destined for the Great White Throne Judgment and the lake of fire, because they have believed lies that are dressed up to look like the truth.

The devil is slick. He is the ultimate advertiser. He knows how to package his product so that it deceives his customers. He can package filthy, gut-rot liquor and make people think that they are cool to drink it. He can package shameful, promiscuous living and make it appear appealing. He can even package religion to make it seem spiritual.

Thankfully, God does not practice deception. God is truth. God does not hide the truth from man, or attempt to trick man into believing a falsehood. God has revealed Himself to mankind in every way possible. He has given us the Bible, which is the truth. He has revealed His glory and power in Creation. He has appeared in the flesh in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and lived among us. He has sent the Holy Spirit of God to indwell believers. God does not practice deception.

The truth is available. The Word of God is the truth, and it is our defense against temptation.

Who is most susceptible to deception? (*Rom 16:17-18*) *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. {18} For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."*

The simple are deceived by "good words and fair speeches." "Simple" means that they lack wisdom. They are not grounded. They cannot discern truth from error. They do not know the Word of God. They are entertained by "*good words and fair speeches*," but they are not grounded in the truth. Some people will believe anything if it is said in the right way.

The Word of God is the truth, but carrying a Bible around like a good luck charm is not going to protect you from error. You need to learn the Word of God. You need to be grounded in the faith.

HOW CAN I DEFEND MYSELF FROM DECEPTION?

I. PLANT YOURSELF IN A BIBLE-PREACHING, BIBLE-TEACHING CHURCH.

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(Eph 4:11-15) *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, **evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;** {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: {14} **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;** {15} But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ...*

Every Christian needs to be an active member of a New Testament church. Unfortunately, many today feel that they are such superior Christians that they do not need a church home. But these verses tell us that God has given us some people that are going to be very helpful to our Christian lives.

God has given us evangelists, pastors, and teachers whose ministry will perfect the saints and edify the body of Christ, so that *"we be no more children, tossed to and from, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."* The ministry of these men will ground us in the faith, anchoring us in the truth. They are placed to help protect us from *"the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness."*

Their ministry is to continue in our lives *"till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..."* That means until the Rapture or death. Until we see Jesus and become as He is, we still need the ministry of God's men. It is a lifelong need. You will never get to the point that you do not need the ministry of God's evangelists, pastors and teachers – even if you live to be a hundred years old.

Some Christians must think that they are already perfect, because they do not need pastors or teachers anymore. They think they know it all, and they are already deceived by their own hearts. They have grown so much spiritually that they do not even go to church faithfully. They do not win souls, tithe, give to missions, or serve in a ministry. They do not need the local church anymore.

God gave the church for a reason. Plant yourself in the local church. Put yourself in a pew every time the doors are open. Put yourself in Sunday School. Take special classes when they are offered. Go to special meetings. Read the Revival Fires paper. Read good books. Get grounded in the faith, so that you will not be easily deceived.

II. READ YOUR BIBLE THROUGH AT LEAST ONCE EVERY YEAR.

Over and over again, Jesus asked the Pharisees and Sadducees, *"Have ye never read in the Scriptures?"*

- *(Mat 12:3-5) "But he said unto them, **Have ye not read** what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; {4} How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? {5} **Or have ye not read in the law**, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?"*
- *(Mat 19:4) "And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read**, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,"*
- *(Mat 21:42) "Jesus saith unto them, **Did ye never read in the scriptures**, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"*
- *(Mat 22:31-32) "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, **have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God**, saying, {32} I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*

He summarized their problem in *(Mat 22:29) "Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**"*

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We need to be Bible readers. We are to search the Scriptures. (John 5:39) *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."* We are to study the Scriptures. (2 Tim 2:15) *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Read your Bible through every year. It is not impossible. Make the time.

III. HOLD FAST TO THE FAITHFUL WORD AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT.

(Titus 1:9-11) *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. {10} For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: {11} Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."*

Every once in a while, someone comes along and thinks that they discovered some truth that all the rest of Christianity has been missing for the last 2000 years. I go by the saying that if it is new, it is not true, and if it is true, it is not new.

Don't go looking for something new. Do not be a "fool for fads." Stick with the old gospel, the old doctrines, the old Bible, the old paths, the old music, and the old standards.

I was taught a set of doctrines that I know are sound. I am not looking for a replacement. I am not looking for new ideas. I am going to hold fast to the faithful word, as I have been taught.



Paul was shocked that his converts had so quickly turned their backs on their Savior and the true gospel message.

I have been shocked a few times. It is sad to see young people grow up in church and then turn around and marry Catholics. Others

have gotten involved in Charismatic churches or cults. How can this happen? They are deceived, because they have not obeyed the truth. They are not anchored. They are not grounded. And, because of that, they are easily carried about by every wind of doctrine, and the cunning craftiness of Satan and his men.

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Chapter Six

THE EVIDENCE FOR FAITH

*(Gal 3:6-14) "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. {7} Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. {8} And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. {9} So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. {10} For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. {11} **But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.** {12} And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. {13} Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: {14} That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

All of Paul's Epistles follow the same pattern: they start with doctrinal teaching, and finish with practical application. God's Word is balanced. God teaches us what is right, and then tells us what to do about it. A lot of teaching and preaching today is unbalanced, and it has resulted in unbalanced Christians and churches. A lot of Christians know their doctrines backwards and forwards, but they do not do anything; on the other hand, we have many Christians that are doing a lot, but do not know why.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the "meaty" doctrinal chapters of Galatians. The practical chapters are five and six. The first two chapters introduced us to the problem that Paul was dealing with: the false gospel of legalism that was subverting the churches of Galatia.

The great question was, and is today, "Are we saved by works or faith? Are we saved by faith in Jesus Christ, or by keeping religious

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ordinances?" This is the theme of chapter three, as seen in the first few verses:

- (Gal 3:2) *"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit **by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**"*
- (Gal 3:5) *"He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it **by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**"*

Galatians chapter 3 is a logical argument for the Bible doctrine of justification by faith. The key verse is (Gal 3:11) *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."*

That is pretty clear! *"It is evident!"* The Bible evidence is that God saves sinners through faith, and not by keeping the law. We are not saved by religious works or church affiliation. We are not saved by good deeds or moral living. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, plus nothing and minus nothing.

Consider the evidence for faith as given in this chapter:

I. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM IS EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

(Gal 3:6-9) *"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. {7} Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. {8} And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. {9} So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."*

Paul went all the way back to the founder of the Jewish race, Abraham. How did Abraham receive righteousness in the eyes of God? Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 for the answer: (Gen 15:6) *"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."* Genesis 15:6 is the clear-cut Old Testament reference that Abraham's righteousness was imputed (counted) to him by faith. Paul expanded on this truth in Romans 4:

- (Rom 4:1-5) *"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? {2} For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. {3} **For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** {4} Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. {5} But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness.**"*
- (Rom 4:9-12) *"Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? **for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.** {10} **How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.** {11} And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: {12} And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."*

Paul then stated clearly that we are saved THE SAME WAY as Abraham was: (Rom 4:22-25) *"And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. {23} **Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;** {24} **But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;** {25} **Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**"*

Abraham believed God, and God imputed righteousness to his account. Abraham did not earn his righteousness. He did not receive his righteousness through circumcision, but was already righteous before God instituted that covenant. Abraham's righteousness was given to him by God when he believed. He counted faith for righteousness.

In exactly the same way, we are given the imputed righteousness of Christ. We have no righteousness of our own. Ours is *"filthy rags"*

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(Isaiah 64:6) because of our dirty sins (Rom. 3:23). None of us is righteous (Rom. 3:10). But when Jesus died on the cross, my sins were imputed to Him. He bore my sins on Calvary and died under my unrighteousness. When I got saved, His perfect righteousness was imputed to my account – not through the works of the law, but through faith.

The Bible is also clear that Abraham believed the gospel that was preached to him. (*Gal 3:8*) *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."*

Abraham did not have the complete Word of God or the gospel as we have it today, but the gospel he had was about the coming Savior that would bless all nations. He believed the gospel.

The gospel story runs all the way through the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis 3:15. The gospel was preached to Abraham. Like a scarlet thread, it ran through the Pentateuch. Each additional Old Testament Book gave a little more light, a little more information, until the entire gospel message was hidden in the Old Testament Scriptures. Abraham believed the gospel! Have you?

Furthermore, God always intended to save the heathen by faith, just as he saved Abraham. (*Gal 3:8*) *"And the scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith**, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."*

Jesus Christ is not exclusively a Jewish Saviour. Jesus is the Saviour of the world. The gospel is for all men everywhere, and God's promise of faith is the same: (*Rom 3:29-30*) *"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: {30} **Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.**"* Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way – *"through faith."*

II. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF WORKS SALVATION IS EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

(*Gal 3:10-12*) *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth*

not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. {11} But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. {12} And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."

The phrase in verse 11 is very important: "**No man is justified by the law *in the sight of God.***" You might be justified in the eyes of men, but never in the sight of God. Other people might sing your praises and consider you to be a good person, but not God. God knows all about you. He knows every thought, deed, feeling, and word, and He is not fooled by what others see on the outside.

No one except Jesus Christ has ever been justified by the law in the sight of God. When Jesus was baptized, the Father said, (*Mat 3:17*) *"...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Jesus was perfectly righteous and just in the eyes of God. No one except Jesus has done *"all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."* He was the only man to ever live that was justified in the eyes of God by his own righteousness.

No one else stands justified before God by his own works. Ever since Adam, the rest of us have been under the curse of the law. Therefore, it is ridiculous to look to the law for justification. The law has already pronounced you as guilty and condemned. That is why the Bible is so clear that *"The just shall live by faith."*

Paul quoted from Habakkuk 2:4: *"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."* It was also quoted by Paul two other times:

- (*Rom 1:17*) *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*
- (*Heb 10:38*) *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."*

The Bible is clear that you CANNOT be justified in the eyes of God by works. How foolish to try to do the impossible!

III. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IS EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

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(Gal 3:13-14) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: {14} That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The law condemns and calls for judgment. It does not redeem. It does not pardon. It does not exercise forgiveness. The law puts us under a curse.

Jesus Christ had to be hung on a cross to be "made a curse for us," so that we could be redeemed from the curse of the law. There was no other way. His sacrifice requires a salvation by faith, and not of works. Christ's sacrifice was the only way that God could be just, and yet justify the ungodly:

*(Rom 3:20-28) "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. {21} But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; {22} Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: {23} For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; {24} Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: {25} Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; {26} To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: **that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.** {27} Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. {28} **Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."***

To teach a gospel of works is to deny or downplay what Jesus Christ did on the cross of Calvary. **His death was necessary because of our sins, and sufficient because of His righteousness.** He does not need your help. He does not need your rags of righteousness. He just needs your heart faith, trusting Him with all your heart, so that He can save you and give you His righteousness.

IV. THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM IS EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

(Gal 3:14-18) "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. {15} Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. {16} Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. {17} And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. {18} For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

The point of this passage is that God made promises to Abraham 430 years before He gave the law to Moses. Those promises are not voided by the law. They are confirmed and they stand forever. God's promises to Abraham are not of "none effect."

We are heirs of the promise of God to Abraham. *(Gal 3:28-29) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. {29} And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Why is this point important? Because the legalists were telling the Gentiles that they had to be circumcised and become Jews before they could be saved. Paul was saying, "No – Gentiles become children of Abraham, not by circumcision and keeping the law of Moses, but by faith in Jesus Christ."

(Gal 3:18) "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Our inheritance is also by promise.

I do not have to join a religion or a church to be saved. When I trust Jesus Christ as my Savior, I become an heir of God's promise to Abraham, as well as an heir of God through Jesus Christ!

V. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW IS EVIDENCE FOR FAITH.

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(Gal 3:19-22) "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. {20} Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. {21} Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. {22} But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

Why did God give us the law?

1. To show us right from wrong.
2. To identify and punish transgressors.
3. To reveal our sinfulness.
4. To lead us to faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

If there had been a law that could have given life, righteousness would have been by the law. But we would have broken any commandment that God gave us. If God only gave us one, as He did with Adam and Eve, we would have broken it.

The law concludes that we are *"all under sin."* (Gal 3:23-24) *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. {24} Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*

The purpose of the law was to show us our sinfulness and God's righteousness, so that we would run to Him for mercy and forgiveness! How arrogant man is when he denies his own sinfulness, ignores the condemnation of the law, and tries to earn heaven on his own!



The question again: "Are we saved by faith in Jesus Christ, or by keeping the law? Are we saved by faith, or by good works? Are we saved by faith, or through religious observances?"

(Gal 3:26) "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." We do not have to join a religion first. We do not become children of God by first becoming Jewish. We do not become children of God by joining a church or denomination. We do not become children of God through baptism or sacraments.

We become children of God through personal faith in Jesus Christ. All the evidence is for faith and against man's works or religion – and yet millions of people are trusting in their church, their religion, and their good deeds to make them heirs of God. How sad that so many are kept from the simple truth of God's Word as revealed in the Book of Galatians.

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Chapter Seven

THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME

*(Gal 4:1-11) "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; {2} But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. {3} Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: {4} **But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, {5} To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.** {6} And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. {7} Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. {8} Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. {9} But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."*

In chapter three, we saw that salvation can only come through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The law was our schoolmaster, designed by God to bring us to Christ so that we might be saved by faith. After faith comes, we are no longer under the schoolmaster.

Chapter three also taught us that we are children of Abraham by faith (3:7,29). As Abraham's children, we are also heirs of the promise that was made to Abraham. Consider these verses again:

- *(Gal 3:8-9) "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. {9} So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."*

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- *(Gal 3:14) "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

It was always God's intention to bless "all nations" through Abraham – specifically through his seed, Jesus Christ. God's plan has always been to pass the blessing of Abraham on to the Gentiles, through faith in Christ. When anyone of any nation trusts Jesus Christ as their Savior, they are blessed with faithful Abraham, and become inheritors of God's promise to his seed.

What was God's promise to Abraham? The world. *(Rom 4:12-13) "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. {13} **For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world,** was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."*

This promise refers to the coming kingdom of Christ, which we call the Millennium:

- *(Mat 8:11-12) "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. {12} But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Unbelievers, including unbelieving Jews, will be cast out. Only those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ will sit down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- *(Rev 1:5-6) "...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, {6} **And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;** to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*
- *(Rev 5:8-10) "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. {9} And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof:*

for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; {10} And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

- *(Rev 20:4) "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*

Why is this important? Remember the whole reason that this Epistle was written. The Judaizers, who were Jews, were convincing the Gentiles that they had to become Jewish proselytes before they could be saved. Paul was answering, "No! When you believe on Jesus Christ, as a Gentile, you automatically become a child of Abraham and an inheritor of God's promise to him. You are blessed with faithful Abraham, and one day you will inherit all of God's promises to his seed."

By faith, I am a child of Abraham and an heir of God's promises to him that will be fulfilled in the Millennium, when we rule and reign with Christ, as kings and priests, for 1000 years.

Chapter four continues the illustration of a child in school. Chapter three showed us that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Chapter four shows us the superiority of our position after we have come to Christ as Savior, and are no longer "*under a schoolmaster*" (3:25). We are in a superior position as not only children of Abraham, but as children of God. Therefore, it is ridiculous and absurd that they would allow these false teachers to re-enroll them back under the schoolmaster!

(Gal 4:1-4) "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; {2} But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. {3} Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: {4} But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"

I. THE SITUATION BEFORE THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME WAS ACHIEVED.

The Old Testament saints are seen under the illustration of children in school. They were saved by grace through faith as well as we are, and yet they did not have the fullness of understanding that we have today. We can look back to the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus in the four Gospels, and we have the Epistles of the New Testament to tell us the exact meaning of the gospel.

In contrast, the Old Testament saints had a three-fold basis for their faith:

1. Promises.

Genesis 3:15 was the first great promise of the coming Savior – the Seed of woman that would crush the serpent’s head. The covenant with Abraham, repeated seven times in Genesis, also involved a Seed that would bless all nations.

God’s covenant with David promised an eternal King on the throne of Israel. There are many other promises concerning the Messiah scattered throughout the Old Testament.

2. Pictures.

There are many, many Old Testament illustrations concerning the life and ministry of the Savior. The first offering in Genesis 3; the Ark in Genesis 6; the offering of Isaac in Genesis 22; the Passover lamb in Exodus 12; the brazen serpent in Numbers 21; the scarlet thread of Rahab in Joshua 2; the Tabernacle and Temple; the offerings and sacrifices; the Feasts; all of these and more were God’s inspired illustrations of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Prophecies.

The entire life of Christ was prophesied ahead of time – from His virgin birth, to where He would be born, to where He would grow up, to His ministry, to His death on the cross, to His resurrection and ascension. The Book of Isaiah is so full of Messianic prophecy that it has been called the “Gospel according to Isaiah.”

Yet, compared to us, their knowledge was dim and their understanding was darkened – like little children compared to adults.

They were tied to rituals and ceremonies, which they did not fully understand. They were like servants, under the “*bondage of the elements of this world*,” obliged to keep ordinances and commandments without a full understanding of why they were doing so.

They looked through a veil, and the unbelieving Jews are still looking through a veil when they read the Old Testament. This veil is still on their hearts. (2 Cor 3:12-16) *"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: {13} And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: {14} But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. {15} But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. {16} Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."*

Paul was saying, “The tutors and governors served their purpose. The schoolmaster served his purpose. They were designed to bring us to Christ. Now, Christ has come. The veil is taken away, and we are no longer to be under the schoolmaster. Do not re-enroll yourself in the Old Testament schoolhouse. Do not go back into the bondage of ceremonies and rituals. You are no longer servants, but sons!”

II. THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME HAS COME.

(Gal 4:4-5) "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, {5} To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

God has always had a plan. That plan included a time at which He would send forth His Son to be the Savior of the world.

The very first promise in Genesis 3:15 laid out the time frame for us – Jesus would come as the seed of woman, “*made of a woman*.” That is a clear reference to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. He was conceived without a human father. Throughout the Bible, the seed is associated with the man. Only in this instance is it applied to a

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woman without a man. God miraculously caused Mary to conceive, making Jesus the seed of woman, *“made of a woman.”*

The virgin birth of Christ was prophesied again, thousands of years later, by Isaiah.

- *(Isa 7:14) “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*
- *(Isa 9:6) “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

This child that was born was also a Son that was given. *(John 3:16) “For God so loved the world, that **he gave** his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* He was born a child (humanity, through Mary) and He was given as a Son (deity, the Son of God).

God said that this Seed of woman would crush the serpent’s head, though the serpent would bruise His heel in the process. Thank God, on Calvary Jesus’ heel was bruised, but He crushed the serpent’s head. The sting has been removed from death, and victory has been won over the grave. *(1 Cor 15:55-57) “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? {56} The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. {57} But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

All of this was dimly seen in the very first promise concerning the coming Savior. From the moment that God spoke Genesis 3:15, the time clock was ticking. The Old Testament is God’s countdown to the advent of His Son as the Saviour of the world. The Old Testament is summarized beautifully in Isaiah: *(Isa 19:20) “...and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one...”* The Old Testament ends with a promise concerning the *“Sun of righteousness”* that will *“arise with healing in his wings”* *(Malachi 4:2)*.

Daniel’s prophecy even gave the exact time of His death on Calvary:

*(Dan 9:24-27) “**Seventy weeks** are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and*

*to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. {25} Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto **the Messiah the Prince** shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. {26} And after threescore and two weeks shall **Messiah** be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. {27} And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."*

This prophecy is called the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. Daniel prophesied of 70 weeks in which God finishes His plan and purpose for Israel. In these 70 weeks, God will accomplish 6 acts for Israel:

1. To finish the transgression.
2. To make an end of sins.
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity.
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness.
5. To seal up the vision and prophecy.
6. To anoint the most Holy.

These 70 weeks are 70 weeks of 7 years, equaling 490 years. They are divided into 2 sections: 69 weeks, and then the final week. Using a 360-day year (30 day months), Sir Robert Anderson calculated the end of the 69th week to have fallen on the Sunday before Christ's crucifixion.

Between the 69th week and the 70th week is what we call the Church Age. The seventy weeks countdown is paused while God carries out His plan through the New Testament churches. But there is one week left, and that is the seventieth week – the seven-year

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Tribulation period. During that time, God will again deal specifically with the Jews.

Some understood the times. The wise men from the east saw His star and came to worship the newborn King of the Jews. These men were not pagans, as some believe, but Bible-believers that understood the prophecies of Daniel. They came looking for the Messiah of whom Daniel had spoken. They knew Daniel's writings because he himself had written his Book in Babylon, and the Jews of the east maintained the Old Testament there. The sad thing is that men from far away came looking for the Savior, understanding that the time was fulfilled, and yet when they asked for the new-born King in Jerusalem, no one knew where He was! He was only a few miles away in Bethlehem!

When Jesus was thirty years old, He announced that the time was fulfilled. He had come. (*Mark 1:15*) *"And saying, **The time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."*

God had sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Why did He come? *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:5).

III. OUR POSITION NOW THAT CHRIST HAS COME.

(Gal 4:5-7) *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. {6} And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. {7} Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

Now, because of my faith in Jesus Christ, I am a child of God. But there is more. I am not only a child of God. I am also an adopted son. Webster's Dictionary gives this applicable definition for "son:" "One adopted into a family. Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Ex. 2."

Adoption was a legal action that made a child (of any age) the legal heir. This truth is illustrated in Abraham's family. Abraham had eight sons: Ishmael, by Hagar; Isaac, by Sarah; and six sons by his second wife, Keturah. And yet only Isaac was his heir. (*Gen 25:5-6*)

"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. {6} But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country." Isaac was the appointed heir. The others were legally known as "the sons of the concubines" and were not legitimate heirs to Abraham's wealth.

The use of the word "son" is far more specific than "child." A "son" had legal standing, as an adult. All of God's children have equal standing as full-grown "sons." This adoption as sons makes us heirs of God, and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ. (Rom 8:14-17) *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. {15} For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. {16} The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: {17} And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

Every child of God has also received the blessing of adoption as a son. We all have an equal standing with each other. We are equal heirs of Jesus Christ!

What does it mean to be an heir of God? Jesus Christ is the *"appointed heir of all things"* including *"the worlds."* (Heb 1:1-2) *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, {2} Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds..."*

I am a joint-heir of Jesus Christ. That means that I am also an heir of *"all things."* It means that everything in the universe will one day be ours. We have a lot to look forward to, folks. Eternal life will not be boring. We will not just be floating around on clouds playing harps. There will be a new heavens and a new earth when it is all said and done – and we, as heirs of God, will be responsible for it all.

I do not know how it will all work out, but I believe that we have a wonderful, exciting future to look forward to!

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(Gal 4:9-11) "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

Paul was afraid because they were re-enrolling under the schoolmaster. That time was past. The fullness of time had come. They were no longer servants, under the bondage or ceremonies and rituals. Christ has come! We are saved through faith, and heirs of God's promise to Abraham. Further, we are children of God by faith, and sons of God by adoption, which translated us from servants to sons. And, as sons, we are elevated to heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

Chapter Eight

A TOUGH LESSON IN LEADERSHIP

*(Gal 4:8-20) "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. {9} But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. {12} **Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.** {13} Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. {14} And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. {15} Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. {16} Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? {17} They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. {18} But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. {19} My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, {20} I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."*

In these verses, we are allowed an intimate look at the great heart of the apostle Paul. Though Paul primarily did the work of an evangelist or missionary, starting and establishing churches, there is no doubt that he had pastor's heart for the people to whom he ministered. He cared deeply about the people that he had led to the Lord and led in the ministry of their local church. His love and affection for the Christians of Galatia is summarized in verse 19: *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you..."* He called them his *"little children,"* and compared his heartache and pain concerning their current condition to the travail of childbirth.

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The apostle Paul used the illustration of a parent several times in his Epistles:

- (1 Cor 4:14-16) *"I write not these things to shame you, **but as my beloved sons I warn you.** {15} For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: **for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.** {16} Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."*
- (1 Th 2:7-8) *"But we were gentle among you, **even as a nurse cherisheth her children:** {8} So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."*
- (1 Th 2:10-12) *"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: {11} As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, **as a father doth his children,** {12} That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."*

Paul loved these Galatian Christians like his own family, and they were breaking his heart. Like rebellious teenagers, the Galatian Christians were rejecting everything that Paul had taught them, and were departing from the faith of Paul for "another gospel."

Paul's heart was broken. He was taking it personally. As a Pastor, folks that I have loved and trained and ministered to have turned their backs on me in various ways. Some just disappeared without a word. Some stabbed me in the back. Some wrote me nasty letters. Some tried to get others to leave with them. And it hurt each time. It is no fun to be "divorced" by people that you love. People said, "Don't take it personally." How could I not take it personally? That is like telling a parent not to take their children personally.

How could Paul not take it personally? (Gal 4:16) *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* They were treating him as if he had become their enemy, when nothing was further from the truth. He was the best friend they had in the world, but they had been deceived. Their true enemies were those that were trying to pull them away from the gospel and from the Lord. Paul was

trying to keep them right. He was not their enemy, but they were treating him like an enemy.

Every Christian ought to strive to be involved in the ministry. I do not necessarily mean full-time ministry. I mean in the ministry of the church so that you have someone that you are investing your life in. Sunday School teachers are in the ministry. They have classes that they love and serve and in which they invest their lives. The bus ministry is another way to minister and to serve others. And there are many other ways in any church if people want to help and minister to people. When you get into the ministry of actually leading and serving others, you will learn a little bit of how a Pastor feels towards his church. And you will learn some of the pain that he feels when people turn away.

Moses is considered the greatest leader in the Old Testament, yet his people were a constant disappointment to him. They were constantly complaining and trying to go back to Egypt. Yet he was a truly great leader.

If you will study the life of Christ, you will find that more rejected Him than accepted Him. More left Him during His ministry than stayed with Him to the end. His church had the first church split. (John 6:66) *"From that time **many** of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."*

If you will study the life of Paul, you will find that many turned away from his ministry, especially towards the end. (2 Tim 1:15) *"This thou knowest, that **all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.**"*

How many of us can hope to be the kind of leaders that Jesus Christ, Moses and Paul were? Yet they were not always appreciated. They were often misunderstood. They were often rejected, mocked, murmured about, and even betrayed by close associates. Because of the very nature of the ministry (serving people), leaders have to find a way to be tenderhearted, and yet being tough enough to deal with the discouragement of the ministry. It is a delicate balance.

What every church needs is people that will step forward into positions of leadership and lead people to the Lord – not only for salvation, but also for growth and service. You can invest in people. You can teach a class one day. You can help with the bus routes. You

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can invest money in sending some kids to camp. You can do so much – if you want to.

But if you are going to step into the battlefield of service, you have to be ready to deal with some heartache, frustration, and disappointment. In this chapter, let us consider some lessons from the perspective of Paul as a leader in dealing with disappointing people.

I. PAUL'S FEAR.

(Gal 4:8-11) "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. {9} But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? {10} Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. {11} I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

What parent does not know fear? From the moment that you discover that you are going to be a parent, a little bit of fear moves in to the bottom of your heart. There is the fear of miscarriage, or a thousand other things that might go wrong.

Then, after the baby is born, and you count ten fingers and toes, a thousand other fears move in. As they grow, there is always that fear at the back of the mind. Yet, I would rather have a child and deal with fear than to never have a child.

In the ministry, there are fears. *(Gal 4:11) "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."* Sadly, not everyone that I have invested labor in is serving the Lord. Some never got with it at all. Some started but quit and are now out in the world. As a Pastor, I have a certain level of fear for everyone in my church. That fear motivates a lot of my hardest preaching – not because I am mad and want to get things off my chest, but because I do not want to see people mess their lives up. This aspect of the preacher's ministry is probably the most misunderstood by his people. They do not understand his burden or his inner fears. Yet, I would not want a preacher that did not care enough to preach his heart out to keep my family or me from the snares of sin and foolish living.

If you are going to get in the ministry, you are going to have to risk being hurt. If you are too selfish or weak-minded to deal with that possibility, you will never take the chance to invest your life in others. And you will not get hurt – but you also will never know the joy, thrill and excitement of seeing people saved, growing, and serving.

II. PAUL’S FRUSTRATION.

1. Paul was frustrated by their radical change in behavior.

(Gal 4:13-16) "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. {14} And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. {15} Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. {16} Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

At one time, they had received him as an angel of God. They had treated him like Jesus Christ. They told him what a blessing he was. If it had been possible, they would have plucked their eyes out and given them to Paul. But now they are treating him like an enemy.

It is very sad to see Christians change over time for the worse. We ought to grow stronger, sweeter, and more Christ-like as we get older in the Lord. Unfortunately, many become colder, harder, meaner, and more unfaithful. They do not listen to preaching as they used to. They do not participate as they used to. They do not respond as they used to. Such Christians are a great discouragement to their preachers and spiritual leaders.

2. Paul was frustrated by the divisive, subversive presence of the false teachers in Galatia.

(Gal 4:17) "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them." He was saying, "Their zeal is affecting you, but not in a good way. They are stealing your affection, excluding you from my ministry." They were stealing the church away from Paul's influence.

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In the same way, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel from David. (2 Sam 15:4-6) *"Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! {5} And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. {6} And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."*

Sheep-stealing preachers do the same thing. They find someone else's disgruntled church members and side with them against their pastor. They steal their affection and then steal them away to their ministry. I know a few pastors that do that. They will reap what they sow.

Parasite ministries do the same thing. I saw a woman preacher on television recently. She said that she was a pastor, and she was wearing some sort of Protestant clerical collar to match her black pants suit. She said, "You are supposed to tithe." I said, "Amen." But she was not done there. She continued, "Why give your tithe to your local church? You are getting fed here. Send your tithes in to where you are getting fed." I hollered at the television – "Thief! Robber!" She was a sheep-stealer, a thief, and a hireling that was trying to steal the affections of the members of local churches so that they would support her parasite organization. The "high places" of the Old Testament were never the storehouse; the Temple was. The parasite organizations out there today are not the storehouse; the local church is.

3. Paul was frustrated by their lack of conviction and character.

(Gal 4:18) "But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

Paul was saying, "You should be zealously involved in good things for God, and not just when I am there with you. You should do it without me there looking over your shoulder."

Some Christians are like children. My son Joe can spend eight hours cleaning his room – and not get it done. If no one is watching or motivating him, he will stop and play every five

minutes. But at least he is only three-years-old. What is your excuse?

Some Christians do well as long as there is someone that they are accountable to. There is nothing wrong with accountability (it is a great motivator), but a person with character does not need to be supervised. A leader needs to be self-motivated. A person with character does not mind a supervisor, but he does not require one, either. He is not offended by authority, but he has the character to do his job on his own.

Some Christians will stay home if they know the preacher will be out of town. Some will not visit or knock doors unless they have to fill out a report that someone will see. Some will not be faithful just because they are supposed to be. The fact that God is watching them is not as important as what some man might think.

Sometimes, leaders can be very disappointed in the poor character of their people. We wonder, "Don't you ever learn?" A teacher can prepare a great lesson on why every Christian should go to church every service – and half her class will not come the next Sunday. Do not despair. Paul dealt with the same issues, and he was a far better teacher than you or I: *(Heb 5:11-14) "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, **seeing ye are dull of hearing. {12} For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. {13} For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. {14} But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."***

III. PAUL'S FORBEARANCE.

(Gal 4:12) "Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all."

Forbearance is a wonderful Bible word that means "the exercise of patience; long suffering; indulgence towards those who injure us;

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delay of resentment or punishment.” It means to put up with people. It means to bear patiently with people when they hurt you or disappoint you. It is turning the other cheek.

- (Eph 4:1-3) *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, {2} With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, **forbearing one another in love**; {3} Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*
- (Col 3:12-14) *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; {13} **Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.** {14} And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*

The leader especially has to learn to take it on the chin sometimes without firing back or quitting. Instead of attacking the Galatians viciously, Paul came with a measure of humility, saying, *"Brethren, I beseech you."* Then, Paul said: *"Ye have not injured me at all."*

I have read that and thought, "They haven't injured you at all? They have turned their backs on you and treated you like an enemy. They have questioned your authority and apostleship and said that you were a fake. They have rejected what you taught them and accepted a false gospel. That did not hurt at all? I need to learn your secret!"

How can we adopt a mindset that will allow us to remain injury-free in the Lord's service?

1. The leader must set the right example no matter what the follower has done.

"Be as I am." Paul did not allow their behavior and response to change who he was. He was going to be a good Christian no matter what they decided to do. That is called being the bigger man. You and I must do what we are supposed to do and be what we are supposed to be no matter what. That is not always easy, but it is always right.

2. The leader must remember his own failures and the weakness of his own flesh.

"I am as ye are." We sure like to jump all over people for things that we ourselves have done in the past, in one way or another. I am thankful that God remembers that I am just flesh and dust. (Psa 78:39) *"For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again."* (Psa 103:14) *"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."*

It would be good for us to remember that, too. It will help us to maintain that *"spirit of meekness"* that we are supposed to have as leaders. (Gal 6:1) *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

3. The leader must refuse to turn insult into injury.

"Ye have not injured me at all." We use the phrase, "Don't add insult to injury." Sometimes, we as Christians turn insults into injuries by dwelling on them, working them over in our minds until we get good and mad.

We make mountains out of molehills. We are too easily offended. If we loved God's Word more, we would not be so easily offended. (Psa 119:165) *"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."*

4. The leader must die to self in order to serve others.

"Ye have not injured ME." Paul said, *"...I die daily"* (1 Cor 15:31). He was referring to dying to self. He did not have a "me-first" mentality.

Self-denial is a forgotten part of Bible Christianity. Much of what is called church these days is totally self-oriented – self-help, self-esteem, self-worth, self-fulfillment, self-love, self-interest, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence. Yet the Lord told us to deny self and take up our cross daily. We cannot follow the Lord without denying ourselves. (Luke 9:23-24) *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. {24} For whosoever*

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will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

Good leaders put themselves last behind God, people, and the job that needs to be done.

- 5. The leader must be willing to go through great difficulties so that God's purpose might be achieved.**

(Gal 4:19) "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,"

Travail means "to labor with pain; to toil." That means to keep on working when it hurts to keep on working. Great athletes learn to play hurt; soldiers learn to fight when they are hurt; leaders in the secular world keep on going when their lives are hard – so why do Christians get hurt and quit on God?

You have to tough out the tough times so that God's purpose might be achieved. God's purpose is all that matters. We have a mission to accomplish. We must do it at any cost!

- 6. The leader must always desire reconciliation and be willing to make the first step towards that goal.**

(Gal 4:20) "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

The Lord commanded the more spiritual brother to go and seek reconciliation. *(Mat 5:23-24) "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; {24} Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

Leaders cannot just throw people away. Paul said, "I desire to be with you know, in person, that we might work this out so that I can change my voice." Do you have that desire, or are you nursing a grudge?

- 7. The leader must refuse to compromise the truth for anyone, no matter how much he loves them.**

(Gal 4:20) "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." Paul wanted to change his voice, but only when they changed their ways.

Paul loved these people, but he refused to condone their actions by his silence. He spoke out against their heresy. He spoke against their apostasy. He spoke against their foolish decisions. He loved them and tried to convince them to stay with the Lord – but if they would not stay, he let them go. He kept going forward for the Lord. When they forsook him, he refused to forsake His God or His Bible.

He told his preacher-boy to “preach the word” and let the itchy-eared teacher-heapers go their own way without him. *(2 Tim 4:2-5) "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. {5} But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."*

Many preachers have allowed their churches to stray because they love their people too much – more than they love God. They used to preach hard and insist on standards, but they could not bear to see people go. So they changed.

The apostle Paul wanted to be reconciled and change his voice from rebuke to consolation (as he did in 2 Corinthians), but he was not going to compromise the truth to bring it to pass.



It is a wonderful thing to serve God. But we need to be aware that it is not all sunshine, blue skies and daffodils. I am not going to quit because of what others do or do not do. I am not going to allow the fear of failure or rejection to keep me from investing my life in others. I want the attitude and mindset of Paul when he told those Galatians, *"Ye have not injured me at all."*

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Chapter Nine

THE TWO COVENANTS

*(Gal 4:21-31) "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? {22} For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. {23} But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. {24} **Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants;** the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. {25} For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. {26} But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. {27} For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. {28} Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. {29} But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. {30} Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. {31} So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."*

The last part of Galatians four is an allegory of two contrasting covenants, law and grace.

1. The covenant of the law is stated for us in Galatians 3:10: *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."*
2. The covenant of grace is stated in Galatians 3:26: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

These two covenants are diametrically opposed to each other. The law can never be by grace, and grace can never be by the law. Paul

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stated it in a slightly different manner in Romans 11:6: *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."*

God's covenant of the law was simply this: "Keep the law without sinning, and you will have life." This covenant went all the way back to the first commandment to Adam. God told Adam that he would live as long as he did not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If, however, he broke God's commandment, he would surely die (Gen. 2:17). Of course, we know that Adam sinned and brought death into the world (Rom. 5:12).

The problem with the covenant of the law is that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). No one has managed to keep that covenant. And no one will. If we break even one point of the law, we are guilty of the whole thing. (*James 2:10*) *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* Therefore, every man under the law is under the curse, because he has not continued in *"all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them."*

Salvation has never come through the law and cannot. The law does not give life. The law brings condemnation on the guilty, and the Bible is clear that we are all guilty.

God's covenant of grace is through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was decided before the foundation of the world that the Son of God would be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, and die vicariously on the cross of Calvary for the sins of mankind, so that *"whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:16). This covenant is fulfilled every time that a sinner believes on Jesus Christ for salvation.

These two covenants are diametrically opposed to each other.

- The covenant of the law depended upon our obedience. The covenant of grace depended upon Christ's obedience.
- The covenant of the law was based upon our sinlessness. The covenant of grace is based upon Christ's sinlessness.

- The covenant of the law was contingent on our righteousness. The covenant of grace is contingent on Christ's righteousness.

Every man must decide which covenant to be under. If you want to trust in your own righteousness, your religion, your goodness, or your morality, you are choosing the covenant of the law. And you will die and go to hell, because the covenant of the law places you under a curse and a condemnation.

If, however, you decide to repent and trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are choosing the covenant of grace. You will be saved and go to heaven when you die, because Jesus Christ kept His end of the covenant perfectly.

This is why Paul said, (*Gal 4:21*) *"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?"* These Galatians were choosing the covenant of the law over the covenant of grace. In doing so, they were ignoring the very law that they claimed to endorse.

Paul then used an allegory to explain why God's purpose has always been a covenant of grace, and why we should not put ourselves back under the bondage of the covenant of the law. His allegory is about Sarah and Hagar, and their respective sons, Isaac and Ishmael.

Sarah and Hagar illustrate the two covenants, law and grace:

- **Hagar represents the covenant of the law.** She was a bondwoman. She represents the fallen, sinful flesh of mankind. She is seen in connection with Mt. Sinai, where the law of God was given amid crashing thunder and the burning fire of God's wrath towards sin. Ishmael, the wild man, represents those who are born under the covenant of the law. His wild nature represents the wild, untamed nature of a man's fallen flesh.
- **Sarah represents the covenant of grace.** She was a freewoman. She was the lawful wife of Abraham. She is represented by the new, heavenly Jerusalem, where the redeemed of God will dwell forever (vs. 26 – "the Jerusalem which is above" – see Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12; 21:2). Isaac was the son of promise and the heir of Abraham. He represents

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those born again into the covenant of grace, “*children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*”

HAGAR – LAW

Bondwoman

Flesh

Mt. Sinai - Judgment

Ishmael, the wild man

SARAH – GRACE

Freewoman

Spirit

Jerusalem – Salvation

Isaac, the son of promise

I. SARAH WAS THE ORIGINAL WIFE OF ABRAHAM.

Long before Hagar was picked up in Egypt, Abraham had chosen Sarah to be his wife. In the same way, the covenant of grace was God’s original plan for mankind.

There are those that teach that salvation by grace was God’s *secondary* plan after Adam sinned. They believe that God did not know that Adam would sin in the Garden, and had not thought ahead to providing salvation. However, this is simply not true.

Before the foundation of the world, God had already predestined the plan of salvation. He did not predestine WHO would be saved. That is what the Calvinists teach, and they are wrong. God predestined HOW He would provide salvation for sinners (Calvary), the WAY in which sinners would be saved (by grace through faith), and the RESULTS of that salvation (eternal life).

Predestination is a Bible doctrine. The question is, “What did God predestinate?” Calvinists teach that God predestined that the elect would be saved and everyone else would be damned. They deny the sinner’s responsibility and opportunity in choosing to receive Jesus Christ.

What did God predestinate before the foundation of the world?

1. He predestined that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would die as the Lamb of God to provide salvation for man (1 Peter 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8).

2. He predestined that this salvation would be made available to mankind only through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 1:4).
3. He predestined that whoever chose to believe on Jesus Christ would be given eternal life and would be eternally secure in Christ (Titus 1:2).
4. He predestined that the saved would become His children by adoption the moment that they believed (Eph. 1:4-5).
5. He predestined that sinners would be saved through the gospel call (Rom. 8:30; 10:13-17).
6. He predestined that the saved would be justified and eventually glorified, when they will be completely conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).
7. He predestined that the saved would inherit a kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world (Mt. 25:34; Eph. 1:10-11).

God planned all of this before the foundation of the world, and God will not deviate from His plan. If you want to go to heaven, you need to get into the covenant of grace. You need to humble yourself and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

God's plan has always been the covenant of grace. God never intended that man would live through the covenant of the law. Just as Sarah was Abraham's original wife long before Hagar came along, even so grace was God's plan before Hagar entered the picture.

II. HAGAR, HOWEVER, BARE THE FIRST SON.

You will remember that Sarah was barren, and so Abraham took Hagar and had a son by her, Ishmael. Abraham had picked up Hagar in Egypt. Egypt is always a type or picture of the world (1 John 2:15-16).

Adam, the first man, started out under the law. He had one commandment, but his life depended on his obedience to that one commandment. He was not under grace until God saved him as a sinner in Genesis 3. Adam started out innocent, then became a sinner, and then, by choice, became a child of God by grace.

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It is the same with all of his children. Though we are born sinners, we are “safe” in Christ as babies and small children until we reach the age of accountability, when we begin to sin after the similitude of Adam’s transgression (Rom. 5:14). It is then that we face the choice of continuing under the condemnation of the law, or entering the covenant of grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The point is that we all start out as "Hagarenes." The first Adam became a sinner; the last Adam, Christ, is our Savior (1 Cor. 15:45).

III. HAGAR WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE ANYTHING BUT A HANDMAIDEN FOR SARAH.

Abraham had picked up Hagar in Egypt for the sole purpose of serving his wife, Sarah. Hagar was never intended to be a wife for Abraham. She was a servant, a handmaiden, a bondwoman.

God never intended for the law to be a means of achieving eternal life. The law was given to bring us to grace (3:24-26). The law was given to teach us right from wrong and to reveal our sinfulness, so that we would trust Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

The law is good, when it is kept in its proper place. *(1 Tim 1:8-11) "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; {9} Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, {10} For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; {11} According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."*

As a servant of grace, the law is useful and effective. We should not throw the law of God away simply because we are under grace. However, when the law is promoted to the position of wife, terrible things happen. If Hagar had remained in the position of handmaiden, a great deal of trouble would have been avoided!

Legalism then is the promotion of Hagar from the position of bondwoman to wife! No, keep the law in its place. Use it lawfully. Do not make the law the means of achieving salvation, or even a part of

it. Many religions have promoted Hagar into the position of wife. They are trusting in a covenant of works, not realizing that they are condemning themselves by doing so.

IV. HAGAR WAS NEVER FREE, AND SARAH WAS NEVER IN BONDAGE.

Hagar delivered a son to Abraham, and despised Sarah in her heart, but she was never anything but a bondwoman, and her son was never anything but the son of a bondwoman. When Hagar despised Sarah, Sarah was given permission to deal with her harshly, to the point that Hagar ran away (Gen. 16:5-6). She never ceased to be a bondwoman to Sarah.

Her son, Ishmael, was called "*the son of this bondwoman*" (Gen. 21:10; Gal. 4:30). He was never an heir of Abraham. He was circumcised, as Abraham and Isaac were, but he was not the son of promise (Gen. 17:23). This is further evidence that circumcision or religious rites cannot provide salvation to mankind. Ishmael was circumcised, and yet he was eventually "cast out." He was just the son of the bondwoman.

Even so, those under the covenant of works are never free. They are not heirs. They can serve and serve and work and work and yet they will never be free from their bondage. And in the end, when they die, they will be rejected by God because they are not heirs through Jesus Christ. That is the curse of the covenant of the law.

Sarah, however, was never in bondage. She was Abraham's lawful wife. Though she was an old woman before she was finally given Isaac, yet she is the mother of us all just as Abraham is the father of the faithful. (Gal 4:26-27) "*But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is **the mother of us all**. {27} For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.*"

Her son was a legitimate heir. He was the son of promise. So are we. (Gal 4:28) "*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*"

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The difference between Isaac and Ishmael was their birth. Ishmael was born unlawfully, to a bondwoman. Isaac was born legitimately, to a freewoman. That made all the difference.

What is the difference between a lost man and a saved man? The only difference is one of birth. Both were born after the flesh, as sinners, but the saved man has a second birth, the new birth. He has been "*born of the Spirit*" (Gal. 4:29). That is the only difference, but it is a big difference.

That second birth, the birth of the Spirit, makes the difference between bondage and freedom, between hell or heaven, between death and life. That new birth makes all the difference when it comes down to being a legitimate member of the family of God, and thereby an heir of God.

That is why Jesus said that we **MUST** be born again: (*John 3:5-7*) "*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. {6} That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*"

V. HAGAR AND HER SON DESPISED SARAH AND ISAAC.

Hagar despised Sarah after she had conceived Ishmael. (*Gen 16:4-5*) "*And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, **her mistress was despised in her eyes.** {5} And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.*"

Ishmael mocked Isaac. (*Gen 21:8-9*) "*And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. {9} **And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.***"

Even so it is today. Those who hold to the covenant of Hagar despise the doctrines of grace. Hagar thought, "I am better than Sarah is. I have conceived, and she cannot. I am a better person than she is." Men who consider themselves good, moral, and righteous, think, "I

am as good as those Christians. I am a good man. I am honest. I pay my bills. I obey the law. I am as good as any Christian and better than a lot of them I know!" That is how men despise the doctrine of grace.

Hagar's problem came from the pride of life, and men today suffer from the same affliction. Though Hagar thought that she was as good or better than Sarah was, she was wrong. Sarah was his wife. Hagar was a bondwoman. Abraham loved Sarah. Abraham did not love Hagar. Abraham was committed for life to Sarah. He was not committed to Hagar. He had made no promises to Hagar.

Ishmael may have been a good man in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. He seems to have been a successful man, with a large family. He founded a race of people. But in God's eyes he was never anything more than a "*wild man*" (*Gen. 16:12*), while Isaac was the "*son of promise*."

A lost man may think that his standing is as good or better than a Christian's, but he is wrong. A lost man stands condemned in his sins. He stands under the wrath and judgment of God. He stands separated from God. A saved man stands justified in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He stands as a child of God and joint-heir of Christ. The lost man may flatter himself into mocking God's Isaacs, but he is a fool to do so.

VI. HAGAR AND HER SON WERE EVENTUALLY CAST OUT.

(Gal 4:30) "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

The son of the bondwoman was NOT going to be an heir with the son of the freewoman. It is that simple. Those under the covenant of the law will not inherit eternal life, the kingdom of God, the world to come, or the New Jerusalem. They will be "cast out" of the presence of God into the lake of fire:

(Rev 20:11-15) "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. {12} And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were

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*opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. {14} **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**"*

Many who thought that they were saved because of their religious affiliations and good works were be shocked that they, too, will be "cast out."

*(Mat 7:21-23) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**"*

However, Sarah and Isaac were never cast out. Sarah was with Abraham until her death; when Abraham was buried, he was buried beside his wife in the cave of Machpelah. God has never cast away His covenant of grace, and will not. His plan of redemption from before the foundation of the world will remain His plan forever.

Isaac was not cast out. Isaac received all of the inheritance; Ishmael received none. Isaac was kept in the house of the father; Ishmael was sent away.

The person that chooses Jesus Christ and the covenant of grace will never be cast out. *(John 6:37) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

VII. LIKE ISAAC, WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE FREE WOMAN.

Standing Fast in Liberty

(Gal 4:31) "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Consider seven ways in which Isaac represents the born-again Christian:

1. Isaac's birth was miraculous. The new birth is a miracle.
2. Isaac was born into Abraham's family. We are born into the family of God.
3. Isaac was born into freedom. We are born again into liberty.
4. Isaac was the heir of Abraham. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.
5. Isaac was the son of Abraham by God's promise. We are also the children of Abraham by God's promise (Gal. 3:7).
6. Isaac was mocked and persecuted by Ishmael. We are hated by the world (Jn. 15:18-23).
7. Isaac was eventually separated from Ishmael. We will eventually be separated from this world.



(Gal 4:21) "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" I do not want to be under the law. The law condemns the guilty. It does not give life. I am under the covenant of grace. Thank God for His wonderful grace!

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Chapter Ten

LIBERTY & GRACE

(Gal 5:1) "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

It is wonderful to know that "*Christ hath made us free!*" We are no longer in bondage. We are not servants born into the house of God, such as Abraham had (Gen. 14:14), or such as Solomon possessed (Ecc. 2:7). We are freeborn children of God through the miracle of the new birth. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus.

Galatians 5:1 is a summary of the entire Book of Galatians. "*Stand fast therefore...*" Always watch the Bible word "*therefore.*" When you see a "*therefore,*" look back to see what it is *there for*. That little word is one of the key words to use in Bible study to rightly divide the word of truth.

Galatians 5:1 summarizes everything that Paul taught in the first four chapters. We are free. We have been given liberty. We are to stand fast therefore in that liberty.

However, you do not have to read much further into chapter five before you realize that liberty is not lawlessness. We have been set free from Satan and sin. We have been set free from the power of sin and the penalty of sin. We are no longer to serve sin. We have not been set free from God's authority as our God, Lord, Creator, and Heavenly Father. His Word is still our final authority.

There are those in so-called Christianity today who have turned liberty into loose living. Jude spoke about them: *(Jude 1:4) "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Lasciviousness means "Looseness; irregular indulgence of animal desires; wantonness; lustfulness." These men took their liberty and turned it into lawlessness. God tells us to stand in our liberty, and not

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to use it to live in sin. (*Gal 5:13*) *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; **only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh**, but by love serve one another."*

One of the saddest facts about America is that so many are *abusing* their freedom instead of *using* it. Being free in America does not mean that you have the freedom to commit crimes and break the law. You cannot do anything or everything that you want to do. Being free means that you have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

When a man turns the liberty of citizenship into lawlessness, he risks losing his liberty. He may end up in prison. Why? Because he abused his liberty and turned liberty into lawlessness. It is terribly sad that so many millions of Americans are sitting in prisons today. They were born free citizens, with all of the opportunities that America has to offer. For whatever reason, they chose to break the laws of the land and thereby forfeited their freedom.

God did not set us free from the bondage of sin so that we could live loose, immoral, sinful, carnal, lukewarm, worldly lives. Such living is an insult to the grace of God.

Those who are abusing their liberty often turn and call those of us who believe in separation, holiness, purity, and clean living "legalists." First of all, a legalist is someone who adds works to God's plan of salvation. Those who add baptism are legalists. Those who add good works are legalists. Those who teach about holding on are legalists. Those who add communion are legalists. Those who add the law of Moses are legalists.

Catholicism is legalism. The Church of Christ is legalism. The Mormons are legalists. The Seventh Day Adventists are legalists. The Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans, who all baptize for salvation, are legalists. Anyone who adds any work or religious observance to salvation is a legalist and is teaching a false gospel.

Someone who believes the Word of God and lives by the commands of the New Testament is not a legalist – he is a CHRISTIAN.

Now, all my Christian life I have heard Christians speaking as though God expected more out of people in the Old Testament than

He does of those in the New Testament age. I have heard such statements as, “Well, they were under the law, and we are under grace.” The underlying message is, “God does not expect as much out of us, because we are under grace.”

Consider Titus 2:11-13: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, {12} Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; {13} Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"*

- What teaches us to deny ungodliness? The grace of God.
- What teaches us to deny worldly lusts? The grace of God.
- What teaches us to live soberly? The grace of God.
- What teaches us to live righteously? The grace of God.
- What teaches us to live godly? The grace of God.
- What teaches us to look for the blessed hope? The grace of God.

The grace of God that brought our salvation teaches us these things. Yet modern, worldly, carnal Christians claim that grace teaches them to go to the movies, drink liquor socially, cuss occasionally, listen to the world's music, live by the world's philosophies, and to be unfaithful to church – because they are under grace, not the law!

Liberty is not lawlessness. The New Testament, if Christians would read it, is full of commands and laws! The moral law of the Old Testament is backed up and repeated in the New Testament! Only the ceremonial laws and some of the national laws dealing with agriculture and government are done away with for us. God never changes His moral laws. Right is still right and wrong is still wrong.

God requires more from those who are under grace than He did those who were under the law. Grace has higher standards than the Old Testament law.

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Consider the following passages from the Sermon on the Mount. Which standard is higher in these passages, the Old Testament law or New Testament grace?

- *(Mat 5:21-24) "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: {22} But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. {23} Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; {24} Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*
- *(Mat 5:27-28) "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: {28} But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."*
- *(Mat 5:31-32) "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: {32} But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."*
- *(Mat 5:33-37) "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: {34} But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: {35} Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. {36} Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. {37} But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."*
- *(Mat 5:38-42) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: {39} But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy*

right cheek, turn to him the other also. {40} And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. {41} And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. {42} Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

- *(Mat 5:43-45) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. {44} But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {45} That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."*

In each instance, Jesus elevated the standard for those under grace.

Did God **broaden** the way for those under grace? (Mat 7:13-14) *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: {14} Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* You mean the way is still strait and narrow, even under grace? Absolutely. God is still holy. He has not become permissive in the New Testament era.

Grace has higher standards. God expects more out of New Testament saints than He did out of Old Testament saints. Still don't believe me?

- Samson was a whoremonger and a rebel, yet the Old Testament speaks about the Holy Spirit coming upon him more than any other individual. He could not teach Sunday School in my church, but he was used mightily during the time of the Judges.
- David committed murder and adultery, but God left him as king. If a pastor did so, what would happen? Whom does God expect more from?
- Jacob had four wives simultaneously. Would you allow a deacon to have 4 wives at the same time? Yet Jacob was the father of the 12 Tribes of Israel.

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- I am not justifying their sins. But God killed Ananias and Sapphira in church for not keeping their faith promise commitment!

Some preachers that have crept in and turned the grace of God into lasciviousness are destroying the testimony of Christianity in our society.

- Modesty has become immodesty.
- Separation has become assimilation.
- Holiness has become profanity.
- Sobriety has become social drinking.
- Love has become lust.
- Sacrifice has become materialism.
- Church services have become Hollywood productions with worldly music, worldly emphasis, worldly philosophy, and worldly people.

They have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and labeled sincere, obedient Christians “legalists.” God did not have a higher standard for Old Testament saints. God has a higher standard for New Testament saints. This is not legalism. It is Biblical Christianity.

(Gal 5:1) "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Chapter Eleven

“YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE

*(Gal 5:1-6) "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. {2} Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. {3} For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. {4} Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **ye are fallen from grace.** {5} For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. {6} For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."*

The most important rule in Bible study and interpretation is **the law of context**. No verse stands alone. Each verse is connected to every other verse in the Bible, and one cannot contradict another. Most importantly, you have to study the immediate surroundings – the setting – of each verse.

Our text verses state the conclusion of Paul’s argument against the Galatians and their legalistic seducers. These verses do not make proper sense unless we understand what Paul has been teaching in the first four chapters. Heresies and cults are started when men take verses such as these out of context and use them to teach false, unbiblical doctrines.

One such false doctrine is the false idea that saved people can “fall from grace” and lose their salvation. This is a basic tenet of **Arminianism**. Arminianism is the theological opposite of Calvinism. Both are Protestant theologies. Calvinism comes from the teachings of the dictatorial reformer, John Calvin. Arminianism comes from the teachings of the Dutch theologian, Jacob Arminius.

Calvinism teaches that man does not have a choice in salvation. God has already decided and predestined who will be saved, and you will be saved and kept saved whether you want to be or not (of

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course, God will make you want to be saved, but you will not have a personal choice). They teach that God's grace cannot be resisted (they call this "irresistible grace").

Arminianism teaches that man must decide to receive Jesus Christ as Savior in order to be saved. Arminians believe in the free will of man. The problem is that they believe that man's will is *so* free that he can actually choose later to give up that salvation, or lose it through unfaithfulness. They believe that salvation is by grace, but it is conditional upon *continued* faith. If faith stops, salvation ceases and the person has fallen from grace and is lost again.

There is some disagreement on whether such people can be saved again. Arminius believed that if a person ever lost their salvation, they could never gain it back. John Wesley, a firm Arminianist, differed with Arminius in that he believed that people *could* be saved again if they ever lost it. But both believed that salvation could be lost if faith was not continued.

In other words, whether you make it to heaven or not is entirely up to **you**, not Christ. This doctrine is a wolf in sheep's clothing – a subtle form of works-based salvation.

Salvation must be eternally secure or it is not salvation. You are either saved or not. If you are saved, you are secure.

I am neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian. I am a Bible-believing Baptist. I believe that man has the freedom and responsibility to choose to receive Jesus Christ as Savior. I also believe that the choice is the only part that we have in salvation. Everything else is God's doing. He saves us, redeems us, forgives us, and births us into His own family as children of God.

- He does all the work *before* salvation.
- He does all the work *at* salvation (after you make the decision to receive Christ).
- He does all the work *after* salvation. I am not *persevering* to the end. I am *preserved* to the end. Nothing I can do can change what God did for me when He saved me.

Many Christian denominations hold to Armenian doctrine and believe that you can lose your salvation. John Wesley was a staunch

Armenian, and the Methodist Church holds this doctrine. Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Charismatics, the Churches of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, General Baptists, Free-will Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists also hold to an Armenian position or lean in that direction. The strange thing is that many of those denominations are the loosest and worldliest of them all. You would think that they would be more concerned about losing their salvation than they appear to be. Be honest – how many Methodists do you know that are “on fire for God?”

The fact is that the phrase “*ye are fallen from grace*” has nothing to do with a person losing their salvation and becoming lost again. That is an impossibility. No saved person can ever become lost again under any circumstances. Once we are saved, we are saved forever.

I. THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION PROVES THAT WE CANNOT FALL FROM SALVATION.

The doctrine of eternal security is consistent throughout the Bible. Those who believe that we can lose our salvation must take a few slightly obscure verses and ignore the plainer teachings of Scripture. No one could read John 3:16 and come to the conclusion that we are not eternally secure.

The very word “salvation” means “*the act of saving and preserving from destruction.*” If God does not preserve us, He has not given us salvation in its fullest sense.

Let me give you five very simple Bible reasons why a saved person can never, ever, under any circumstances, lose his or her salvation:

1. The plain statements of Jesus Christ teach us the eternal security of the believer.

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jesus did not promise us “temporary life.” He promised us “everlasting life.” He promised that we would NEVER perish. If I

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lose my salvation and perish in hell, Jesus did not tell the truth in John 3:16.

(John 10:27-29) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: {28} And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. {29} My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Jesus promised to "give" us "eternal life." It is a gift, totally undeserved and unearned by us as the recipients. He said again that we "shall never perish" and no man could pluck us out of His hand, or from the Father's hand.

(John 14:1-3) "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. {2} In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. {3} And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Can you imagine arriving in heaven and seeing boarded-up mansions scattered through the New Jerusalem? According to the Arminianists, a lot of saints had their mansions started that will never get to enjoy them because they lost it before the end. Of course, that will not happen. He is preparing our mansions for us now. Every born-again child of God has a mansion being prepared. There will not be any empty, half-finished ones there because some poor saints fell at the end.

Do you believe in Jesus' promises, or not?

2. The sufficiency of Calvary teaches me the eternal security of the believer.

(Heb 10:10-14) "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

On the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished." Finished means finished. When a person adds works or perseverance to salvation, he is saying that it is NOT finished. It needs some more work.

3. The adoption of God in the new birth teaches me the eternal security of the believer. Jesus did not say, “*Ye must be born again and again and again.*”

(Gal 4:5-6) "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. {6} And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Adoption was also permanent. A natural child could be disowned, but an adopted child could never be disowned. God is giving us DOUBLE ASSURANCE. We are His by new birth, and by adoption. We are “heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ.” To think that God will adopt us, disinherit us, adopt us, disinherit us, is ridiculous and unfounded in Scripture.

4. The fact that salvation is all of grace teaches me the eternal security of the believer.

- **Who did the work before I got saved?** Who provided salvation through the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ almost 2000 years ago? Who convicted my heart and opened to me the Scriptures so that I could be saved? God did it all.
- **Who did all the work when I got saved?** All I did was believe and receive. God saved me, sealed me, sent the Holy Spirit to indwell me, wrote my name down in the book of life, adopted me, redeemed me, cleansed me, and imputed Christ’s righteousness to my account. God did all of that. All I did was believe.
- **Who does all the work after I get saved?** Who is interceding for me right now at the right hand of God (Heb. 7:25)? Who holds me in His hand? Whose blood is on the mercy seat in heaven? Who holds me up and keeps me from falling? God does. To think that God does all the work before I get saved, and all the work when I get saved, and then leaves the rest up to me is ridiculous.

Salvation is ALL of grace – from beginning to end.

5. The fact that I am preserved in Christ and kept by the power of God teaches me the eternal security of the believer.

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- (Jude 1:1) "... **preserved** in Jesus Christ, and called..."
- (Jude 1:24) "**Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling**, and to present you **faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy..."
- (1 Pet 1:5) "**Who are kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

II. WE CAN, HOWEVER, FALL AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL OF GRACE TO "ANOTHER GOSPEL."

When you rule out what something *cannot* mean, it is easier to decide what it *does* mean. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we have concluded that the Bible teaches the eternal security of the believer. So what does "fallen from grace" mean? Let us look at the context of this statement, "*ye are fallen from grace*," and find out.

(Gal 5:1) "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*"

Paul reminded them that they had been set free from the yoke of bondage through Jesus Christ. We have been freed from:

1. The yoke of the ceremonial law.
2. The curse of the moral law.

Galatians 4 described the bondage of the covenant of the law. Remember that there are two covenants: the covenant of the law, and the covenant of grace. The covenant of the law says, "Keep all of God's commandments and live." The covenant of grace says, "Believe on Jesus Christ and live."

Paul was saying, "Stand fast in the liberty of the covenant of grace. You are free from the curse of the moral law, not to live lascivious lives, but to live with a clear conscience for God. You are free from the yoke of the ceremonial law. Don't get entangled again in the bondage of the covenant of the law."

Verses 2-4 describe how they were returning to the covenant of the law: (Gal 5:2-4) "*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. {3} For I testify again to*

every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. {4} Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

They were returning to the yoke of ceremonialism, as represented by circumcision. They were changing their doctrinal position from grace to law. They were depending on the works of the law for righteousness instead of Jesus Christ.

He said, "*Ye are fallen from grace.*" What does that mean? Go back to Galatians 1:6 for the answer. (*Gal 1:6*) "*I marvel that ye are so soon **removed** from him that called you into the **grace** of Christ unto another gospel...*" They had been called from unbelief into the grace of Christ, but now they were moving away from the grace of Christ into the covenant of the law. They had fallen away from the gospel of grace and were teaching a gospel of works – that men are justified by the works of the law.

It is obvious that "*fallen from grace*" refers to the Galatian churches' departure from the gospel of grace to a message of legalism and self-righteousness. It fits into the context of what we discussed in 4:21-31 – they were choosing to return to the covenant of the law, as represented by Hagar. They were rejecting, as a group, the covenant of grace, as represented by Sarah.

The little King James word "ye" is very important. "Ye" is plural, equivalent to "you all" or "ya'll" today. Paul was speaking to the church as a body: "You all, as a church body, have fallen from grace. You all have been called away into another gospel. You all are turning from the grace of Christ to the works of the law."

Churches do fall from grace. Churches can apostatize, and they have. History proves this point. First, some added circumcision as a step in salvation. Later, it was baptism. Then, various sacraments. Today, there are scores of "churches" and each has its own way to get you to heaven. Most of them teach some form of the old Hagar covenant of the law – self-righteousness or church-righteousness.

Churches fall from grace. This church can fall from grace if we do not stand strong on the true doctrines of salvation. I can fall from grace if I become deceived concerning doctrine and choose to believe a false gospel. But I cannot lose my salvation, because I am secure in Christ.

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All across America, saved people are sitting in legalistic churches that teach a works-based “gospel.” They were saved by grace through faith in Christ, but they have returned to their old, legalistic churches. Or, they have backslidden and ended up in legalistic churches – or even cults.

All soul-winners can tell a story illustrating this truth. I won a lady to Christ this year that had been raised in Catholicism. She came to my church several times and heard the gospel preached. I went through the gospel with her personally and led her to Christ. She was baptized the following Sunday. But, before long, she stopped coming and stopped answering the door when I visited. She had gone back into the spiritual bondage of Catholicism. Did she lose her salvation? No, not if she was truly saved. But she has fallen from grace back into a works-based religion.

The danger is for those who are coming after – especially the children of saved people that have returned to the bondage of the law. The parents are saved, but their children end up lost.

Martin Luther is a great historical example of a man that fell from grace back into the covenant of the law.

Martin Luther was the spearhead of the Protestant Reformation, and he was a man of tremendous courage. However, a serious study of Luther’s doctrinal positions will reveal that he turned away from the gospel of his own salvation and endorsed a works-for-salvation gospel when he started the Lutheran Church.

When Luther was a monk in an Augustinian convent, he was greatly influenced by an evangelical official named Johann von Staupitz. Staupitz sowed the seed that eventually brought about Luther’s salvation. Later, Luther was saved when he understood from the Bible that *“the just shall live by faith.”*

However, he eventually moved away from his evangelical position and started his own State Church. Consider what he taught concerning infant baptism in *The Small Catechism*: **“Lutherans believe that, in baptism, a person is born into the Kingdom of God and becomes an heir of salvation.”**

Luther, seeking to reconcile justification by faith with infant

baptism, said, “Yes, justification is by faith alone. No outward rite, apart from faith, has any efficacy.” He then declared that infants are regenerated in connection with baptism, and that they are simultaneously justified by faith. He further added that through the prayers of the church the infant does have faith. When challenged that an 8-day old baby could not believe, Luther exclaimed, “Prove the contrary, if you can!”

This heresy has continued on to this day: “Lutherans believe that, in baptism, a person is born into the Kingdom of God and becomes an heir of salvation. It is the beginning of the life of faith in which each day our human nature ‘should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever’” (G. Elson Ruff, editor of “The Lutheran” magazine, commenting on *The Small Catechism*, by Martin Luther; Religions in America pg. 116).

What happened? Luther was apparently saved by grace through faith alone, apart from his infant baptism in the Catholic Church (he never repudiated the authority of his own baptism by the very Church he split from). He said that salvation was by grace through faith alone. Yet, he returned to the bondage of ceremonialism when he started his own denomination. Instead of adopting the New Testament pattern, he reverted to what he knew best - the Catholic model, which involves three basic elements:

1. A State Church.
2. A complex Church hierarchy with a man in the place of Christ as head of the Church.
3. Infant baptism.

If Luther was saved, and I believe that he was, he condemned future generations of Lutherans by passing on the false doctrine that they are justified through **works** (baptism) instead of personal **faith** in a personal Savior.

That is what it means to fall from grace. It is falling from the gospel of grace to a message of legalism (works, self-righteousness or religion for salvation).

Our church can fall from grace. This preacher can fall from grace. You can fall from grace. No, we cannot lose our salvation, but we can

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fall away into the old covenant of the law. We cannot change our own eternal destinies, but we sure can affect our children's eternities! We can affect future generations! That was why Paul was so desperately trying to pull these Galatians back to the gospel of the grace of God. That is why we need to know our doctrine, especially the doctrine of salvation!

Chapter Twelve

“YE DID RUN WELL”

(Gal 5:7-12) "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? {8} This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. {9} A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. {10} I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. {11} And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. {12} I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

In our text verses, Paul made a personal appeal to the Galatians. It forms a conclusion to the doctrinal portion of the Book. After this, Paul deals with some very practical and important details of the Christian life.

I. A COMMENDATION.

(Gal 5:7) "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

The Christian life is a race. It is not a 50-yard dash. It is a marathon race. It will take a lifetime to complete. Paul used this illustration again in Hebrews 12:

(Heb 12:1-2) "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, {2} Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

1. Each of us has our own race to run. It is a personal race. No one can run it but you. No one can quit it but you. It is your race.

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2. It is not a competition race. The only way to win the race is to finish it. Everyone that finishes his or her race is a winner. Everyone that does not finish the race is a loser.

We are not competing with each other. We are all on the same team, but each of us has to finish his own race.

3. Our course is set by God. It is "*the race that is set before us.*" God decides each man's course. He decides His will for our lives.
4. The race ends when we see Jesus. Anything short of that finish line is a failure. Paul did not consider his race to be finished until just before his martyrdom. (2 Tim 4:6-8) "*For I am **now** ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. {7} I have fought a good fight, **I have finished my course**, I have kept the faith: {8} Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

The Galatians had been running their race, and Paul said, "*Ye did run well.*" They were doing a good job. They were running well in their courses.

It is not enough that we run in the race. We must endeavor to run *well*. Paul used the race illustration yet again in 1 Corinthians 9:

(1 Cor 9:24-27) "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? **So run, that ye may obtain.** {25} And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. {26} **I therefore so run**, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: {27} But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*"

Don't just run. "**So run, that ye may obtain**" the incorruptible crown. A lot of Christians are taking a leisurely walk down their course in life. They are not sweating. They are not striving. They are not concerned with winning. They are not giving it their all.

Paul said, "You were running well." It is a great thing to see a Christian that is running their race, giving it his all, involved and

striving to do the will of God for his life. Paul commended them for the fact that they had, at one time, been running a good race for the Lord.

II. A QUESTION.

(Gal 5:7) "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

The Galatians had fallen from grace. They had departed from Christ. They had turned their backs on the truth and were no longer obeying the truth. Paul asked them, "Who caused this? Who hindered you? Who pushed you back or tripped you up so that you are no longer in the race as you once were? Who knocked you off course? Who misled you out of the way?"

He did not ask, "What hindered you?" He asked, "**Who** did hinder you?" Someone caused this. The Galatians had been hindered by people, not events or circumstances.

Christians need to beware of several groups of people that can become hindrances to their race:

1. False teachers.

This group was guilty of tripping up the Galatians. They listened to the Judaizers and their perverted gospel.

You need to be careful whom you listen to. These folks on religious television are not usually Bible-believing Baptists. Most of them are Charismatics. If they aren't, they hang around the Charismatics and fellowship with them. Beware of who you listen to.

2. Disgruntled troublemakers.

Misery loves company, and disgruntled people always look for partners. They cannot be disgruntled alone. They want to find someone else who is disgruntled or that will be disgruntled so that they can gripe and complain together. Such people will poison your minds against others, especially authority figures. The Judaizing teachers had turned the Galatians against Paul.

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3. Carnal or bad influences.

I am talking about folks that do not *want* to be spiritual. They are content to live carnal, worldly lives. They will drag *your* spiritual life down. ***The law of spiritual gravity*** has its effect – it is easier to pull someone down than it is to pull someone up.

4. The worst person of all and the most dangerous to me personally is – ME.

My old, sinful nature is the most likely to get me off course. I had better keep it crucified and submitted to God. I had better watch my attitude, and my mind. I need to make sure that my pride, or vanity, or basic selfishness does not hinder me and keep me from obeying the truth.

III. A COMPARISON.

(Gal 5:9) "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Leaven is like yeast. It is corruption. A baker puts a little leaven into a lump of bread and it expands and fills the entire loaf. It only takes a little leaven to do the whole lump. *(1 Cor 5:6) "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"*

False doctrines are just like leaven. A little false doctrine gets in, and it starts affecting other doctrines. That is why Jesus warned us to beware of the false doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. *(Mat 16:6) "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Mat 16:12) "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."* He went further and stated that the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy (Lk. 12:1).

It was this exact leaven – the leaven of the Pharisees – that corrupted the Galatian churches. The source of this false doctrine concerning circumcision came from the Pharisees in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:5).

IV. A CONDEMNATION.

(Gal 5:10-12) "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. {11} And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. {12} I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

Paul knew who was causing the trouble. And he knew that they knew. His prayer and desire was that they would purge out the leaven of false doctrine from the church. *(1 Cor 5:7-8) "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: {8} Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

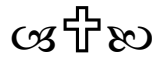
He wanted the false teachers to bear the judgment of the church and be "cut off." In the Old Testament, to be "cut off" meant to be executed. I do not know if Paul was wishing for a supernatural death for these false teachers or not.

It is more likely that he was telling the church to remove the false teachers from their church. Cut them out of the church body like cancerous cells. Excommunicate them. Judge them and cast them out of the church. Purge out the leaven. *(Titus 3:10-11) "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; {11} Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."*

Jesus commended the Ephesian church for trying false apostles and expelling them as liars: *(Rev 2:2) "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars..."*

That is why Christians need to be doctrinally sound. I do not mean just knowing a few pet doctrines backwards and forwards. I mean being a true student of the Word of God. Knowing what the Bible teaches will help you to recognize lies and heresies when you hear them.

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Are you running your race? Are you running it well? Are you allowing anyone to hinder you from obeying the truth? Is there any leaven that needs to be purged out of your life?

Chapter Thirteen

LIBERTY, LOVE & SERVICE

*(Gal 5:13-15) "For, brethren, ye have been called unto **liberty**; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love **serve** one another. {14} For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself. {15} But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."*

I have mentioned several times that the Book of Galatians contains a lot of strong doctrine. Much of it is "strong meat." Unfortunately, far too many Christians today are simply incapable of digesting the truths of Galatians because they can only handle skim milk. They have not grown spiritually and they are not interested in doctrine.

In this Book, Paul has followed the five-step preaching pattern that he later passed on to Timothy: *(2 Tim 4:2-4) "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

1. Preach the word of God. Preach the Book as it is to men as they are. Leave psychiatry and self-help to the worldly wise men of today. God's Word has all the answers for everything pertaining to life and godliness.
2. Be instant in season and out of season.

"Instant" means "pressing; urgent; importunate; earnest." It is used in the same way in *(Rom 12:12) "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer..."* "In season, out of season," according to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, means early, on time, or late. Be pressing, urgent, and earnest all the time. Preachers are supposed to push us.

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They are supposed to be earnest and pressing. God's work is the most important work, and we need the "in season, out of season" work of God's men.

3. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort."

Contrary to the positive preacherettes of the television world, God's preaching formula is two-thirds *negative*. The world does not like the negative aspects of God's Word. They want a positive message that pleases their ego and tickles their self-righteousness.

Why is God's preaching formula two-thirds negative? The answer is simple: *we* are two-thirds negative, and we need a message that is two-thirds negative to combat our natures. Our bodies and souls are stained by our flesh nature. They are still corrupted, which is why we need to offer our bodies as living sacrifices daily and have a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-23).

Our spirits, however, "*are created in righteousness and true holiness*" (Eph. 4:24). The spirit is always willing, but the flesh is weak (Mt. 26:41). We need reproof and rebuke from the Word of God if we are going to keep our flesh in line so that we can serve God with our spirits (Rom. 1:9; 7:6). My spirit needs exhortation. My sinful flesh needs reproof and rebuke.

"Reprove" means "to charge with a fault to the face; to chide; to convince of a fault." "Rebuke" is stronger than reprove, and means "to stop by reproof; to check or restrain; to chasten or punish." A "rebuke" is "chastisement; punishment...for the purpose of restraint and correction."

I dare say that many Christians today would not have the humility to handle a reproof from their preacher, much less a strong rebuke. But that is part of his message. Those prideful Christians are denying themselves the ministry of the man of God. They will not be what they should be or could be because they will not accept the negative side of the pastor's ministry. They are too easily offended, too quick to hold grudges, and too proud to admit fault, even to themselves.

“Exhort” means “to encourage, embolden, cheer up, or incite by words or advice.” Exhort is positive. We need exhortation to do right and to keep doing right. This world is discouraging for the true Christian. He needs the positive ministry of God’s men.

4. “With all longsuffering.”

The preacher must be patient with people. They are just flesh and dust. Preachers must not get impatient with people just because they seem slow to do what God has said.

5. “And doctrine.”

The Word of God is the preacher’s tool to help people and to build them up for the Lord. Sometimes doctrine must be used to tear down false ideas so that right ideas can be put in their place. Sometimes doctrine must be used to pluck up some wrong ways so that new, right ways can be replanted in people’s lives. But doctrine, the Word of God, is the tool that we use.

In the first four and half chapters of Galatians, Paul was reproofing and rebuking the Galatians with sound doctrine. He attacked their false ideas, and presented the truth of God’s Word concerning the doctrines of salvation. He reproofed them for the faults. He rebuked them strongly, and in no uncertain terms, calling them “foolish” and “bewitched.” Did he say these things just so that he could vent some steam? No – he was trying to get their attention so that they would stop and listen to what he was saying.

In chapter five, he begins to exhort them concerning the proper way to live for God. Consider three words from verses 13-15:

I. LIBERTY.

(Gal 5:13) "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

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Liberty is a privilege. It is the gift of God to His redeemed people. He has purchased our redemption and set us free. He did not purchase us from bondage so that we could be put under His bondage. (Rom 8:15) *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."* We are sons that serve. We are not mere hireling servants. We are certainly not slaves. We are children that serve their Heavenly Father.

Liberty is our privilege. All privileges come with responsibility. We are not to *abuse* our liberty, but *use* it for the glory of God.

"Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." "Occasion" means "opportunity." Do not allow your liberty to provide an opportunity for your flesh to be in control of your life. Do not turn your spiritual liberty into the flesh's opportunity.

(Rom 13:13-14) *"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. {14} But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*


We are free from the bondage of sin, but we are not free from our responsibilities to God. We are to stand fast in our liberty so that we can stand fast for God. We are liberated from the yoke of bondage so we can bear Christ's yoke with Him (Mt. 11:29-30).

II. LOVE.

(Gal 5:14) *"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

"Fulfilled" means "accomplished; performed; completed." The law is accomplished, performed, and completed when I love my neighbor as myself.

This commandment is a summary of all of God's commandments concerning my relation to my fellow man.

 (Mat 7:12) *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."*

📖 (Mat 22:36-40) *"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? {37} Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. {38} This is the first and great commandment. {39} And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. {40} On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

All of the commandments of God hang on these two commandments. The Ten Commandments are a perfect example of this truth:

1. The Great Commandment: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God will all thy heart..."*

📖 (Exo 20:2) *"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."*

📖 (Exo 20:4) *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"*

📖 (Exo 20:7) *"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."*

📖 (Exo 20:8) *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."*

2. The Second Commandment: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

📖 (Exo 20:12) *"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."*

📖 (Exo 20:13) *"Thou shalt not kill."*

📖 (Exo 20:14) *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*

📖 (Exo 20:15) *"Thou shalt not steal."*

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📖 (Exo 20:16) *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."*

📖 (Exo 20:17) *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."*

God has set me at liberty to love Him with all my heart and to serve His people by love. Christianity is a faith based on love. Even the law is based entirely on love.

III. SERVICE.

(Gal 5:13) *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."*

God has called us to service. Christ is, of course, our example. He came to serve and give, and commanded us to do likewise. (Mat 20:25-28) *"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. {26} But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; {27} And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: {28} Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Spiritual Christians will love God and love others, and will be like Jesus – they come to serve, not to be served. Most people going to church this Sunday are looking to be served by others. This is not Christ-like at all.

When Christians do not love God or each other as they should, they often turn on each other. This “cannibalistic” attitude is described in verse 15: (Gal 5:15) *"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."*

“Bite” means “to injure by angry contention.” It means to hurt people with harsh, angry, vicious words. In every case in the Word of God, the word “bite” is used in reference to a striking snake or

serpent. This matches well with the description that God gives to our mouths and tongues.

📖 (Psa 140:3) *"They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips."*

📖 (James 3:6-8) *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell...{8} But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."*

“Devour” is Satan’s goal for each Christian. We should not be assisting the devil in devouring each other! (1 Pet 5:8) *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"*

Paul is describing Christians that are living devilish lives. They bite each other like poisonous snakes. They devour each other, which places them on the devil’s team. They are fulfilling a satanic will instead of God’s will.

The warning.” *Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*” “Consumed” means “destroyed slowly; wasted.” In the Old Testament, several armies were defeated because they turned on each other and fought each other instead of the enemy (such as in Judges 7:22; and, 1 Sam. 14:16, 20).

Many a church has committed suicide. They were their own worst enemy. The members turned on each other and on the preacher, and the preachers turned on the people, and they bit and devoured each other until the church was consumed – destroyed and wasted. Who gets the glory from those situations?

That is why Paul said, “Take heed.” Beware. Watch out. Watch your tongue. Watch your attitude. God has not set us at liberty to walk in the flesh, fulfilling again the lusts of the flesh and mind. He has set us at liberty so that we can by love serve one another.

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Chapter Fourteen

THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH & THE SPIRIT

(Gal 5:16-18) "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. {18} But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

The last eleven verses of Galatians chapter five are extremely vital for the Christian that desires to “*stand fast in liberty*.” These verses deal with the nature and works of two opposing forces in the Christian’s life: the Holy Spirit of God and the old, fallen, flesh nature that we inherited from Adam.

Baptists have allowed the Charismatics and Pentecostals to hijack the doctrine of the Holy Ghost of God. We are so worried about being associated with them that we have become guilty of ignoring what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. How dare we ignore the blessed Third Person of the Trinity?

He is called the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, and the Comforter. The name that is used the most is “the Holy Ghost,” used 90 times. He is called the “Holy Spirit” seven times. The most common name in the Old Testament is “the Spirit of the LORD” (26 times).

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit includes two basic facts that every Christian should know:

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force. He is the third Person in the Godhead. He is just as much God as the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ. He shares their attributes. He is co-equal with the Father and the Son.

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2. When a person gets saved, the Holy Ghost immediately indwells the new believer, turning his body into the temple of the Holy Ghost.

📖 (1 Cor 6:19-20) *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? {20} For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

📖 (2 Cor 6:16) *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

📖 (Rom 8:9-10) *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. {10} And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."*

Now, we must ask, "Why does the Holy Spirit dwell in me? Why did God put His Spirit into my body? What is the purpose for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost?"

1. He is the earnest of our inheritance. He is God's assurance of eternal security.

📖 (2 Cor 1:22) *"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."*

📖 (Eph 1:13-14) *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

2. He witnesses with our spirit, giving us assurance of salvation.

📖 (Rom 8:16) *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"*

📖 (1 John 5:8) *"And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."*

3. He comforts and helps us.

📖 (John 16:7) *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."*

4. He teaches us and guides us into the truth.

📖 (John 14:26) *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

📖 (John 16:13) *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."*

5. He empowers us for witnessing and service.

📖 (John 16:8-11) *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: {9} Of sin, because they believe not on me; {10} Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; {11} Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."*

📖 (Acts 1:8) *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

6. He enables us to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil.

📖 (1 John 4:4) *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."*

📖 (Gal 5:16) *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*

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The victorious Christian life, the overcoming life, is the Spirit-filled life. You cannot overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil unless you *"walk in the Spirit."*

The Holy Ghost of God lives in the body of the believer, but He is not alone. There is also an enemy within – the old, unregenerated nature, called "the flesh" or "the old man." These two – the flesh and the Spirit - are in constant disagreement with each other. They are contrary to each other. They cannot share the life of the believer. Each demands **complete** control.

Every Christian is either walking in the Spirit, or walking in the flesh. Ephesians 5:18 says to be *"filled with the Spirit."* The Christian's life is going to be filled with something. If you are filled with the Spirit, you cannot be filled by the flesh. If you are filled with the flesh, you cannot be filled with the Spirit. These two are contrary to the other. They cannot coexist. (Gal 5:17) *"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* You cannot be half-filled with the Spirit and half-filled with the flesh. It is either one or the other.

Many Christians are living flesh-filled lives instead of Spirit-filled lives, and it shows itself in the fruit that they produce. The tree *determines* the fruit. The fruit *reveals* the tree.

(Mat 7:16-20) "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? {17} Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. {18} A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. {19} Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. {20} Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

If I walk up to a tree and it has apples on it, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that it is an apple tree. If a Christian's life is evidencing the works of the flesh, it is obvious that the flesh is in control. If there is no fruit of the Spirit, no soul-winning power, no fruit of the Christian, then the Spirit is not in control.

Your life as a Christian will evidence one or the other of these fruits. We can tell which one is in control by the results in your life. A Spirit-filled Christian will bring forth a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit. A carnal, flesh-filled Christian will evidence the works of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of a Christian who is living the victory life over the world, the flesh, and the devil. The works of the flesh, and the absence of the fruit of the Spirit, is the evidence of a Christian who is living the defeated life, conquered by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I. THE LUST OF THE FLESH.


The word “lust” is almost always used in a negative sense. Most of the time, it refers to **a strong desire** for that which is **forbidden** or off-limits. It is a wrong desire. It is a sinful desire of the mind or the flesh. However, the word “lust” is not *always* used in a negative sense. Verse 17 says that the Spirit lusts against the flesh, and we know that the Holy Spirit does not have any unlawful or wicked desires.

“Lust” in its most basic sense is defined by Webster as “longing desire; eagerness to **possess** or enjoy.” Verse 17 tells us that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh. The flesh wants to **possess** something. The Spirit wants to **possess** something. What do you think they are both longing to possess? The answer is simple – YOU.

The Holy Spirit wants to be in control of your life. The flesh wants to be in control of your life. They will not share control. Each demands complete control.

- The lust of the flesh is to be independent from God’s control and authority.
- The lust of the Spirit is to be independent from the flesh’s control and authority.

The Bible mentions the “lusts” of the flesh several times, but twice it refers to “**the lust**” of the flesh:

 (Gal 5:16-17) *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil **the lust of the flesh**. {17} For the flesh lusteth*

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against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

📖 (1 John 2:16) *"For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh**, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."*

What is "**the lust of the flesh**," as opposed to the "lusts" of the flesh?

The lust of the flesh is basically rebellion against God. It is the self-will. The flesh wants to rebel against God's authority. The flesh does not care what you do or don't do as long as you do what YOU want to do instead of what GOD wants you to do. When the flesh is in control, it will fulfill its other lusts, which manifest themselves in the many "*works of the flesh*" described in verse 19-21. **The basis of all of the works of the flesh is a selfish, self-willed, stubborn, rebellious attitude towards God.**

The lust of the flesh is simply rebellion. Be your own god. Ignore God's Word. Be your own final authority for what is right or wrong. Do your own thing. Live the way you want to live. Enjoy all the pleasures of sin and ignore the consequences. Do what is right in your own sight. Follow your heart. Get everything you can get for yourself. Judge and condemn God as you see fit.

The whole world operates by this principle. (Eph 2:3) *"Among whom also **we all** had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* Some have religious flesh, and some have moral flesh, and others live in the depths of depravity, but the whole unregenerate world lives to fulfill the lust of the flesh – independence from God's authority. Romans 1:18-25 describes how the lust of the flesh has led the whole world away from God. The end result is a world that "*lieth in wickedness*" (1 John 5:19).

II. THE LUST OF THE SPIRIT.

If the lust of the flesh is independence from God's authority – rebellion, selfwill, stubbornness, and selfishness – and the lust of the

Spirit is contrary to that lust, then what is the lust of the Spirit? The strong desire of the Holy Ghost is that He be in possession of our lives so that we are submitted to God's authority, obedient to His Word, and faithful in our service to Him. The Holy Ghost wants to fill us and enable us to fulfill the will of God for our lives.

The flesh wants to be in control so that it can lead us away from God. The Spirit wants to be in control to keep us right with God. The choice is entirely up to you. You must choose to *"walk in the Spirit."* You must actively *"walk in the Spirit."*

Walking is something that healthy people do everyday, without even thinking about it. You walk to the kitchen. You walk to your car. You walk to your office. You walk into a store. You walk into the church. Walking is part of our everyday life.

God does not just want us to be filled with the Spirit for preaching or teaching or Sunday services. He wants us to live in the Spirit Monday morning on the way to work, and Tuesday evening at home, and Friday afternoon while you are doing your chores. He wants you to be filled with the Spirit when you are talking to your coworkers, and when you are on vacation, and when you are visiting relatives.

We should be filled with the Spirit on a daily basis. But it is a choice. Fulfilling the lust of the flesh is passive – if I am not walking in the Spirit, I am automatically fulfilling the lust of the flesh. The lust of the flesh is my default setting. Every night when I go to sleep, my digital clock starts flashing "12:00." I have to be reset every day.

The Bible calls this being "renewed." There are three things in my life that need to be renewed every day:

1. My spirit or *"inward man"* needs to be renewed daily. (*Psa 51:10*) *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."* (*2 Cor 4:16*) *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."*
2. My spiritual strength needs to be renewed daily. (*Isa 40:31*) *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

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3. My mind needs to be renewed daily. *(Rom 12:2) "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Eph 4:23) "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"*

How often do we get up and go through the day with the flesh back in control? We wake up in our default setting and never set it right. We do not yield to the Holy Ghost. We do not seek His filling. We do not renew our minds. We think that we are okay because our flesh is fairly religious and disciplined compared to others, but if we are not walking in the Spirit, we are automatically fulfilling the lust of the flesh.

That is why we need to start each day with God. We need to surrender to God again. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and lead us. We need to submit our will to God's will. That is why the Lord taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." We need to get in the Bible and get our minds renewed. We need to ask God for fresh, renewed strength so that we can mount up with wings as eagles.

(Gal 5:16-17) "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

If we do not crucify the flesh and walk in the Spirit, we are not going to see the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Our lives will be marked by varying degrees of the works of the flesh.

Do you walk in the Spirit?

Chapter Fifteen

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Part One: Sins Against Marriage

*(Gal 5:19-21) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,** {20} Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

The last half of Galatians 5 compares two possible ways of life for each Christian. You can live the Spirit-filled life, which is a life of victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. Or, you can live a flesh-filled life, which is a life of bondage and failure.

Every Christian has two opposing forces in life. He has two opposing natures: the old, carnal, sinful nature, and the new, spiritual, holy nature. These are called the old man and the new man in Ephesians 4. The old nature is also referred to as "the flesh." In addition to these contrary natures, the Holy Spirit of God indwells the body of the believer from the moment of salvation.

On one side, you have the old man, the fallen flesh nature. His allies are the devil and the world. On the other side, you have the new man, your renewed spiritual nature. His ally is the Holy Spirit of God.

You *can* overcome the flesh, the devil, and the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. *(1 John 4:4) "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* It can be done.

However, a choice must be made. These two sides can never coexist. One must be in control at all times. They will never share control. *(Gal 5:17) "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other:*

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so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Remember that "lusteth" used here means "to desire to possess and control." The flesh struggles against the Spirit. It opposes everything that the Holy Ghost wants to do. It opposes submission to God. It wants to be in control. The Holy Spirit strives against the flesh. The Spirit of God opposes the flesh *"with the affections and lusts."* *"So that ye cannot do the things that ye would"* – I still fall short. I cannot be all that I want to be because of the flesh's opposition. The greatest hindrance to my life is my sinful nature.

Paul described his frustration with this constant struggle in (*Rom 7:14-25*) *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. {15} For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. {16} If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. {17} Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. {18} For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. {19} For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. {20} Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. {21} I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. {22} For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: {23} But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. {24} O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? {25} I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*

Is that an excuse to sin? No – it is a reminder of the necessity of daily crucifying the flesh and walking in the Spirit. *"Evil is present with me."* Therefore, I must recognize that evil is a part of my nature and therefore yield myself to the power of the Holy Ghost.

The flesh and the Spirit are forever contrary to each other. There will never be peace between them. Therefore, you need to choose sides. You must choose to obey your convictions instead of your corruptions. You must choose to obey God instead of obeying your lusts. You must choose to submit your will to God's will instead of exalting your will over God's will.

In the next several chapters, we are going to examine the various “works of the flesh” as revealed in verses 19-21. In these verses is a world of hurt. Nothing good ever came from the works of the flesh.

I. THE FLESH THAT PRODUCES THE WORKS.

All of these works come from the same factory – the lust of the flesh, which is the self-will, the selfish desire of the flesh to be independent from God’s will and authority. Adam unleashed a many-headed monster on this world when he chose to disobey God’s commandment. (Rom 5:12) *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..."*

Thanks to Adam, sin was unleashed in the natures of mankind. Our natures became sinful and corrupt. Sin wears many faces and goes by many names, but it comes from one root lust – rebellion against God.

Our hearts are the factories for sin:

- (Jer 17:9) *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*
- (Mark 7:21-23) *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, {22} Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: {23} All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."*

Even though we are saved, our flesh is not. It is just as corrupt as it ever was. It must be restrained and crucified by character, conviction, and choices.

We have to realize the nature of our flesh. The flesh cannot be trusted. My heart is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” I may not want to admit this, but God says that it is so. My heart is a factory that can produce any sin known to mankind.

I read a fable once about a deadly scorpion that crawled to the bank of a river and wanted to get across. The scorpion saw a fox and asked him for a ride across the stream. The fox refused, saying, “No, if I let you on my back, you will sting me and I will die.” But the

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scorpion promised not to sting him if he would carry him across the stream. Finally, the fox relented and allowed the scorpion on his back and swam across the stream. As soon as they got to the other side, the scorpion lashed out with his tail and stung the fox on the nose. The fox jumped back, but the poison was already working through his system. “Why!” cried the fox. “You promised not to sting me!” “I know,” said the scorpion. **“But I could not help myself. It is my nature to sting.”**

It is the nature of the flesh to produce these works. You cannot bargain with the flesh. It is what it is – corrupt, sinful, wicked, deceitful, and rebellious. The flesh must be crucified with its affections and lusts.

II. THE WORKS THAT THE FLESH PRODUCES.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest.” They are obvious. Just look around this world and you will see the fullness of the works of the flesh. We know from our own corruption the manifold evidences of sin’s power in our lives.

God lists for us 17 specific sins, and then an eighteenth heading that covers many others: *“and such like”* (vs. 21). The Bible names sin. For many years, many seminaries and Bible colleges have been training their preachers to preach against sin without naming it. Paul did not practice that philosophy. He called sin by name. People are never going to repent if preachers do not make sin “exceeding sinful.”

The works of the flesh can be divided into four categories:

1. Sins against marriage and the home.
2. Sins of apostasy.
3. Sins of pride.
4. Sins of excess.

The first four works are sexual sins – sins against the home, marriage, and God’s plan for men and women. To understand this point, we must realize that sex was designed by our Creator but was limited to the marriage relationship. (Heb 13:4) *“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and*

adulterers God will judge." The marriage bed is undefiled, but fornication, adultery, lasciviousness and uncleanness – the works mentioned here in Galatians 5 – are wicked perversions of God's design and intention.

God designed intimacy for two purposes:

1. **Procreation.** God has put the power of reproduction into the bodies of men and women. This power is not to be misused or abused. Sex is not a toy to be played with by people that are not committed to each other – legally – for a lifetime. Because of the fact that sex produces babies, God has limited its enjoyment to those that are legally bound together in marriage. If God's plan was carried out properly, babies would not be born illegitimately to single mothers. They would be born into homes that are based on the marriage of a mother and father.
2. **Pleasure.** Intimacy is God's gift to the married couple. Read Song of Solomon, an inspired Book describing in great detail the ecstasy of the proper marriage relationship. God never wrote a book describing the joy of the whoremonger's life. The married couple should enjoy their intimate relationship to the fullest. There are many passages in the Bible that encourage husbands and wives to do so. In addition, there comes a time when procreation is no longer physically possible. However, the pleasure of the marriage relationship can continue long past this point.

God's design is that sexual desires and passions be satisfied completely within the marriage relationship:

- *(1 Cor 7:2-5) "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. {3} Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. {4} The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. {5} Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."*

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- (Prov 5:18-20) *"Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. {19} Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and **be thou ravished always with her love.** {20} And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?"*

Sexual sin is a sin against God's intention for intimacy. It is a sin against the institution of marriage. It is a sin against the home and family. It is a sin against the other spouse. It is a sin against the children that are born because of it.

I. ADULTERY.

"Adultery" is sexual sin committed by a married person, a violation of their vows and the marriage bed. It is a violation of the seventh commandment: (Exo 20:14) *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."* It is called a "heinous crime" (Job 31:11). It is a crime against the home and against society. It leads to a lifelong mark of shame: (Prov 6:32-33) *"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. {33} A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."*

We must also remember that there is an adultery of the heart, which begins long before any actual acts of adultery. (Mat 5:28) *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* **No one ever committed adultery without thinking about it first.**

II. FORNICATION.

"Fornication" is sexual sin committed by an unmarried person. If fornication is committed by unmarried people, is it a sin against the home and marriage? Yes. Paul told us that we are to abstain from fornication so that we do not defraud our brother in any matter.

- (1 Th 4:3-7) *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: {4} That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel*

*in sanctification and honour; {5} Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: {6} **That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter:** because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. {7} For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."*

What do this mean? Defraud means to take what is someone else's right. It means that no man or boy has the right to take what should one day belong to that woman's husband. No girl has the right to take what should one day belong to a man's wife.

Fornication is a manifold sin:

1. Fornication is a sin against our own bodies. *(1 Cor 6:18) "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."*
2. Fornication is a sin against our future spouses.
3. Fornication is a sin against God and His plan for intimacy in the marriage relationship.
4. Fornication is a sin against children born out of wedlock.

It is a wicked work of the flesh, and it is all too common in our day and time.

III. UNCLEANNES.

"Uncleanness" is defined by Webster as, "want of restraint of the sexual appetite; free or illegal indulgence of lust; **lewdness**; used of either sex, but appropriately of the male sex. Incontinence in men is the same as unchastity in women."

It refers to dirty, filthy behavior. Dirty imaginations. No doubt, it includes such filthy sexual abominations as homosexuality or bestiality (Lev. 18:22-23).

IV. LASCIVIOUSNESS.

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“Lasciviousness” is defined as, “looseness; irregular indulgence of animal desires; wantonness; lustfulness. Tendency to excite lust, and promote irregular indulgences.”

It is lustful behavior or behavior designed to provoke lust. This word runs a gamut of wicked enticement and perversion. Immodest clothing is lascivious – it tends to “excite lust, and promote irregular indulgences.” Immodest clothing on a woman is no different than a strip club billboard on the highway. They are both advertising the same thing. That is why God commands Christian women to adorn themselves in modest apparel.

These four words go together and are often used together in the Bible, and sometimes interchangeably. They all refer to sexual sins – sins against the first institution that God designed, the home. They are sins against marriage and the home. They are an abuse of God’s gift to the married couple and an abuse of God’s plan for the propagation of the human race.

These four words cover the gamut of sexual sins – from adultery to promiscuous behavior to pornography to homosexuality to strip clubs to wicked entertainment that glorifies sexual sin.

We need to recognize that sexual sin of any kind is a work of the flesh. It is adultery if you are married and fornication if you are not. It is uncleanness and lasciviousness all the time. It is never right or acceptable to God. It is not acceptable for single people, married people, or divorced people. We are to flee such sins (1 Cor. 6:18).

Chapter Sixteen

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Part Two: Sins of Apostasy

(Gal 5:19-20) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, {20} Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,"

In the last lesson, we began our discussion on the works of the flesh. These works are the product of a flesh-driven life – a life that is dominated by the lust of the flesh. Being a Christian does not mean that the works of the flesh cannot be produced in my life. The fact is that any one of us could be guilty of any of the works of the flesh that are mentioned in Galatians 5.

Consider how some of God's people were guilty of some of the works of the flesh:

- David was guilty of adultery and murder.
- Samson was guilty of fornication and lasciviousness.
- Saul went a visited the witch of Endor.
- Noah was drunk after the Flood.
- The Corinthian Christians were guilty of strife, lasciviousness, fornication, heresies, and adultery.
- Gideon allowed an ephod to be turned into an idol.
- Many others could be listed under the heading of "and such like."

The point is that we had better take heed to our position, lest we fall. *(1 Cor 10:12) "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."*

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In today's lesson, we are going to continue our study of the various works of the flesh. The next two works listed are sins of apostasy. They are sins that are produced when men turn their backs on the true and living God and seek to replace Him with the works of their own hands and the ideas of their own minds. Instead of submitting to their Creator, they worship gods of their own creation. In Jeremiah, the Lord lamented of how His people had committed two evils: they had forsaken Him, and then sought to replace Him with the works of their own hands: (*Jer 2:13*) *"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."*

Idolatry and witchcraft are the two works of the flesh that will be discussed in this chapter.

I. IDOLATRY.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary has two outstanding definitions for idolatry:

"1. The worship of idols, images, or any thing made by hands, or which is not God. Idolatry is of two kinds; the worship of images, statues, pictures, &c. made by hands; and the worship of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars, or of demons, angels, men and animals.

"2. Excessive attachment or veneration for any thing, or that which borders on adoration."

In its most specific sense, idolatry is the worship of false gods. Any god other than the God of the Bible is a false god. The Bible teaches that these false gods are really **devils in disguise**:

- (*Lev 17:7*) *"And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto **devils**, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."*
- (*Deu 32:17*) *"They sacrificed unto **devils**, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to **new gods** that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."*
- (*Psa 106:37-38*) *"Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto **devils**, {38} And shed innocent blood, even*

*the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the **idols** of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood."*

- *(1 Cor 10:19-20) "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? {20} But I say, **that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils**, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with **devils**."*

The worship of idols is foolishness.

- *(Psa 135:15-18) "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. {16} They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; {17} They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. {18} They that make them are like unto them: **so is every one that trusteth in them.**"*
- *(Isa 44:13-19) "The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. {14} He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. {15} **Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.** {16} He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: {17} **And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.** {18} They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. {19} **And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part***

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of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

The idolater cuts a tree down, and with some of the wood he makes a fire, and saves some for firewood, and bakes bread with it, and with the residue of the tree he makes a god and worships it! How foolish does man become when he turns his back on the true and living God!

However, idolatry is not just the worship of graven images. In its broadest sense, idolatry is worshipping anything ahead of God.

- A job can become an idol.
- Money is a definite idol for countless people. That is why Ephesians 5:5 tells us that the covetous man is an idolater. You do not have to have money to love it. A lot of poor folks are desperately in love with money.
- Many today are guilty of self-worship. They have become their own idols. The self-worshiper idolizes himself. He is his own final authority. He does what he wants to do. He is self-centered instead of God-centered. He is his own judge of what is right or wrong. The only will for his life is his own will.

Idolatry is a terrible sin of apostasy still being practiced around the world. Christians must flee from idolatry! (*1 Cor 10:14*) *"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."*

II. WITCHCRAFT.

"Witchcraft" is defined by Noah Webster as, "The practices of witches; sorcery; enchantments; intercourse with the devil." "Sorcery" is "magic; enchantment; witchcraft; divination be the assistance of evil spirits, or the power of commanding evil spirits."

Like idolatry, witchcraft is ancient and widespread, going back to man's departure from God as recorded in Romans 1. It existed in ancient Egypt and Babylon, and is referenced in the Code of Hammurabi (2000 B.C.). In the Old Testament, witchcraft was a

crime punishable by death. (*Exo 22:18*) *"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."*

Those who practiced the various forms of witchcraft were called **abominations** by the Lord. (*Deu 18:10-12*) *"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, {11} Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. {12} For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."*

1. He "that useth divination, or an observer of times" refers to those who try to use occult methods to determine the future or to find hidden knowledge. Today, people follow astrology and horoscopes instead of God's leadership or His Word.
2. Enchanters and charmers were those that consulted with devils called familiar spirits.
3. "A wizard" is a male witch.
4. "A necromancer" is someone who claims to be able to communicate with the dead.

Remember that Saul sought the witch of Endor because she was known to be able to consult with a familiar spirit. He was also guilty of necromancy, because he wanted to speak to Samuel, who had died years before.

It is commonly believed that witchcraft involved the usage of narcotic or hallucinogenic drugs in its spells and potions. The Greek word translated "witchcraft" is closely related to "pharmacy." Such drugs open the mind and heart to devilish possession.

Neo-paganism is a growing religion today, especially the branch known as Wicca. In 2001, a survey estimated that there are over 134,000 practicing adults involved in Wicca. Most involved in modern Wicca or witchcraft worship a goddess called the Great Mother, as well as a god called "the Horned God" (I wonder who that is?). It is definitely polytheistic.

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Christians do not have any business messing with witchcraft, or endorsing it as harmless entertainment. It is interesting to me that in these last days the richest woman in England is the author of a series of books about witchcraft. Billionaire J.K. Rowling is rumored to be richer than the Queen of England because of the success of the *Harry Potter* books – more than 325 million copies and counting. She is the highest-earning novelist in literary history. The books are all targeted to the impressionable demographic of 9 to 11 year-old children.

According to Rowling, a major theme in the series is the theme of death. She said: “My books are largely about death. They open with the death of Harry's parents. There is Voldemort's obsession with conquering death and his quest for immortality at any price, the goal of anyone with magic. I so understand why Voldemort wants to conquer death. We're all frightened of it.”

It is an abomination, and a work of the flesh. It is grouped with idolatry as a sin of departure away from God. Christians do not have any business meddling with such things – no matter how “entertaining” and “harmless” they might seem to be.

Chapter Seventeen

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Part Three: Sins of Pride

(Gal 5:19-21) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these... hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings, murders..."

As Christians, we have three spiritual enemies:

- The devil, the *infernal* enemy.
- The flesh, the *internal* enemy.
- The world, the *external* enemy.

The world system referred to in John 2 is Satan's trap for the flesh. That trap is baited to attract with **the three-fold lust** that makes up our fallen nature. This all ties together with the "lust of the flesh" in Galatians 5. Satan has designed a world of temptation that is custom-built to keep sinners under the bondage of sin.

The problem with the world is not the world. The problem with the world is the fallen nature of mankind. The problem with the world is that six billion people want to satisfy the lusts of their flesh, the lusts of their eyes, and the pride of lives. The world suffers because of man's fallen nature.

In the Millennium, the world will change. It will be ruled by King Jesus. There will not be any red-light districts in the Millennium. There will not be any drive-through liquor stores, or dirty men's clubs, or bars, or brothels, or honky-tonks. There will not be any clubs, dope deals, casinos, gambling halls, porn magazines, or prostitutes.

But there are going to be natural people left on this earth. They will be spared but apparently they do not get regenerated. As soon as Satan is let out of the bottomless pit, he will gather the people of this earth together and turn them against God. *(Rev 20:7-9) "And when*

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the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, {8} And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. {9} And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

The problem for those unrepentant sinners was not the world that they lived in. The problem will be in themselves – the nature of the flesh will not have been changed. This illustrates the truth that the biggest problem that men have is their own sinful nature.

In this chapter, we are going to look at the third part of that which is in the world, and in our fallen natures, the *"pride of life."* We live in a world that is based on lust and pride, and we need to learn to overcome these desires of our fallen natures.

I. THE PRIDE OF LIFE.

*(1 John 2:15-17) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.** {17} And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

The world, under Satan's direction, reflects the three-fold lust in man's nature:

1. "The lust of the flesh."

That is the same lust of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:16 – **the sinful desire to DO** what it wants to do, without any interference from God or His Word. The flesh wants to commit all the works listed in Galatians 5. It wants to be independent of God's rules and authority.

2. "The lust of the eyes."

This is **the sinful desire to HAVE**. It is covetousness.

The lust of the eyes is to have what they see. Advertisers understand this basic lust in man's heart and exploit it through posters, billboards, television commercials, and catalogs.

This lust, like all lusts, can never be satisfied. The covetous person is never content with what he has; he always wants something else, or something more. (*Prov 27:20*) *"Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."*

3. The lust of the ego - "the pride of life."

This is **the sinful desire to BE**. It is also a lust. It is the lust of the ego.

It is not always sinful to want to be more than you are, any more than it is sinful to want something to eat or see something that you would like to obtain lawfully or properly. The pride of life is a sinful pride, the desire for vainglory, promotion over others, and selfish advancement.

Pride.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines "pride" as "Inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit in one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office, which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve, and often in contempt of others."

Webster also gave a more detailed definition under "proud:" "A man may be proud of his person, of his talents, of his accomplishments or of his achievements. He may be proud of any thing to which he bears some relation. He may be proud of his country, his government, his equipage, or of whatever may, by association, gratify his esteem of himself. He may even be proud of his religion or of his church. He conceives that any thing excellent or valuable, in which he has a share, or to which he stands related, contributes to his own importance, and this conception exalts his opinion of himself."

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It is one thing to be proud of your family, country, or vocation, in the sense that you are not ashamed of them. It is quite another thing to become haughty and demeaning to others that are not a part of your family, country, or vocation.

Pride becomes sinful when we begin allow our self-conceit to exalt ourselves over others, and it is especially sinful when we become haughty and arrogant towards the Lord.

As Christians dealing with the pride of life, we need to beware of three dangerous attitudes:

1) The Desire for Preeminence.

This is the hunger to be first, ahead of others. It is the “me first” mentality. It is a striving for lordship instead of servanthood.

2) The Spirit of Superiority.

This affliction is caused when we consider ourselves to be superior to others in some regard.

Let us work on a “less than the least” attitude instead. (Eph 3:8) *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...”* Many of us when put ourselves somewhere in the middle – better than most, and less than others. But how many of us would admit to being *“less than the least of all saints?”*

3) The Desire for Vainglory.

(Gal 5:26) *“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”* This is the thirst for applause, credit, reward, or public honor.

The pride of life is the selfish sinful desire to BE preeminent, to BE superior to others, and to BE honored and applauded by men. ***We should fight this lust just like we fight the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Many Christians that shudder at sins coming from the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes will wallow in the pride of life.*** They are sanctified and proud of it. They are soul-winners and

proud of it. They are faithful and proud of it. Yet, their lives are often filled with the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5 that deal with the pride of life.

II. THE WORKS THAT COME FROM THE PRIDE OF LIFE.

Consider these works according to their definitions, given by Noah Webster:

1. "Hatred" is "great dislike or aversion; hate; enmity."

Hatred is, of course, the opposite of love. It is a spiteful animosity towards anything – whether it be a person, a group of people, an ethnicity, a nation, a job, an object, etc.

Most of the time, hatred grows out of unjust prejudices or wrong ideas. This fact is clearly evidenced by the fact that many people actually hate God. Romans 1:30 refers to those who are "haters of God..." People hated Jesus without a cause. Their hatred was based on unjust prejudices, wrong ideas, and the pride of life.

If people will hate God, it should not be a surprise that they will also hate each other. (*Titus 3:3*) *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, **hateful, and hating one another.**"*

Christians, however, are not allowed to hate:

- Their enemies. (*Mat 5:44*) *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;"*
- Their brethren. (*1 John 2:9-11*) *"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. {10} He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. {11} **But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.**"*

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Hatred comes from pride. The hateful person says, "I am so much better than you that I hate you for who and what you are." Humility has no room for hatred. They cannot coexist. Hatred grows freely in the prideful heart.

There is absolutely no excuse for the genuine hatred that is seen in the lives of many Christians. Such hatred thrives where pride is left uncrucified.

2. "Variance" is "difference that produces dispute or controversy; disagreement; dissension; discord. A mere variance may become a war. Without a spirit of condescension, there will be an everlasting variance."

Variance is the strife produced between prideful people over disagreements, which leads to unchristianlike divisions and strife. People that are at variance often turn into "right-fighters." They are just fighting to be right.

Variance is dissension and discord that leads to strife, and as a work of the flesh it is a mark of the **carnal** Christian. (*1 Cor 3:3-4*) *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? {4} For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"*

God wants His children to be in **one accord**. That requires "lowliness of mind," not pride. (*Phil 2:2-3*) *"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. {3} Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."*

3. "Emulation" is a "contest; contention; strife; competition; rivalry accompanied with a desire of depressing another."

Emulation is trying to advance yourself by hurting someone else. It is trying to make your light shine brighter by blowing someone else's out.

4. "Strife" is "contention in anger or enmity; contest; struggle for victory; quarrel or war."

It is selfish ambition. Fighting for superiority. Fighting to be first. I am right. It is the opposite of humility. Strife is connected with the desire for vainglory. “Only by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13:10).

5. “Sedition” is “a factious commotion of the people, a tumultuous assembly of men rising in opposition to law or the administration of justice, and in disturbance of the public peace.”

Sedition is rebellion against God-placed authority. All of us are under some form of authority. We need to learn who the authority figures in our lives are and what their authority is. Whom does God command us to obey and submit to?

Sedition comes from pride. Korah was lifted up with pride when he turned against Moses. Absalom was filled with pride when he attempted to steal David’s kingdom. Pride leads to church splits as well.

6. “Heresy.”

Heresies are false doctrines that lead to separation and division. Heresies get started when prideful people reject the accepted doctrines of God’s Word and invent their own interpretations.

7. “Envy” is “to feel uneasiness, mortification or discontent, at the sight of superior excellence, reputation or happiness enjoyed by another; to repine at another’s prosperity; to fret or grieve one’s self at the real or supposed superiority of another, and to hate him on that account.”

Envy is obviously an aspect of the pride of life. It is feeling superior to another and desiring the credit or happiness that they enjoy. We feel that we deserve it more than they do.

These are all sins of pride:

1. **Hatred is pride *despising*.** Hatred is despising someone that you do not think is as good as you are, for whatever reason.
2. **Variance is pride *disagreeing*.** It is fighting for pride’s sake instead of fighting for the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3).

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3. **Emulation is pride *defrauding*.** Emulation is trying to advance yourself by hurting someone else.
4. **Strife is pride *disputing*.** Strife is not a discussion. It is a heated argument in which two or more people simply want to
5. **Sedition is pride *defying*.** This is pride exalting itself over God-placed authorities.
6. **Heresy is pride *dividing*.** This is pride dividing churches with false ideas and false doctrines.
7. **Envy is pride *desiring*.** This is pride selfishly coveting the blessings or success that others enjoy, and despising them for what they have. It is a desire to take what they have. Just as there is adultery of the heart and murder of the heart, there is also a thievery of the heart – envy or covetousness.

Sins of selfish pride, left unchecked and unrepented of, can lead to **wrath** or even the ultimate crime against another person, the sin of **murder**. They are the products of the other seven sins of pride. Wrath and murder are pride *destroying*.

8. “Wrath” is “violent anger.”

Wrath is destructive anger, and is usually the product of hatred, variance, strife, etc. It is a desire to cause harm to others because of anger of a real or imaginary offense. (*James 1:19-20*) *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: {20} For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."*

9. “Murder” is “the act of unlawfully killing a human being with premeditated malice, by a person of sound mind.”

Manslaughter is not murder. Manslaughter is killing someone by accident, without malice or premeditation. Killing someone in battle is not murder. Capital punishment is not murder. Killing an animal is not murder. You cannot murder an animal.

Murder is unlawfully taking the life of a human being. It is a terrible, heinous crime. It is stealing someone’s life. If the victim is not saved, it is a crime that sends the person to hell. It hurts everyone involved in the crime. It leaves fatherless and motherless children. It devastates homes, lives, and futures.

It is no wonder that God prescribed the death penalty for those that would commit the awful crime of murder. (*Gen 9:6*) *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."*

What causes wrath and murder? They are the fruits of the other works of the flesh. They are caused by *"hatred, variance, emulations...strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings..."*

Here are some examples in which the prideful works of the flesh led to murder:

1. **Hatred** – Cain murdered Abel because of hatred in his heart (1 Jn 3:12). Absalom murdered Amasa because of hatred (2 Sam 13). Hatred led the Jewish priests and leaders to demand the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Stephen told the Sanhedrin that they were the “murderers” of the Just One (Acts 7:52).
2. **Emulations** – Joab murdered Amasa and Abner to protect his job as general. Herod murdered the baby boys of Bethlehem to protect his throne (Mt. 2:16).
3. **Wrath** – Simeon and Levi slew all the men of Shechem in their wrath concerning the situation with Dinah (Gen. 49:5-7). Moses’ wrath led to the murder of an Egyptian taskmaster (Ex. 2:12).
4. **Strife** – It appears that Lamech murdered a man out of strife or revenge (Gen. 4:23). Haman’s strife with Mordecai led to Haman’s ill-fated attempt to murder the entire Jewish race.
5. **Seditions** – Barabbas had committed murder in his insurrection (Mk. 15:7). Several of the kings of Israel were murdered by usurpers to the throne. Gedaliah, the governor of Judah at the beginning of the Captivity, was murdered by Ishmael for rebellion’s sake (2 Kings 25:25).
6. **Heresies** – The false doctrines of Catholicism led to the brutal murders of millions of Baptists throughout history.
7. **Envyings** – Naboth was murdered by Jezebel for his vineyard (1 Kings 21).

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Other works of the flesh have also led to murder:

1. **Adultery** leads to murder. David murdered Uriah to cover up his adultery. John the Baptist was murdered for preaching against Herod's adultery (Mk. 6:25-27).
2. **Fornication** leads to murder. Shechem's seduction of Dinah led to his death at the hands of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34).
3. **Drunkennes** leads to murder. Liquor removes inhibitions and brings out the worst in people.

Sins of selfish pride, left unchecked and unrepented of, can lead to the ultimate crime against another person, the sin of murder.



Christians need to look inward again and deal with the sins of the spirit, which are often sins of pride. Pride defiles the spirit and corrupts the mind. Let us cleanse ourselves from such filthiness, with just as much diligence as we fundamentalists deal with the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes! (2 Cor 7:1) *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

Chapter Eighteen

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

Part Three: Sins of Excess

(Gal 5:19-21) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these... drunkenness, revellings, and such like..."

In this chapter, we are going to discuss two sins of excess: drunkenness and revelling. These two go together. Revelling rarely takes place apart from the presence of alcohol. Unfortunately, these are very common sins in our society, especially among young people.

I. LET US DEFINE THE TERMS.

1. "Drunkenness" is "intoxication; inebriation; a state in which a person is overwhelmed or overpowered with spirituous liquors, so that his reason is disordered, and he reels or staggers in walking. Drunkenness renders some persons stupid, others gay, others sullen, others furious."
2. "Revelling" is "a feasting with noisy merriment; revelry." Wild parties, honkytonks, and the club atmosphere fall under the heading of revellings. Christians have no business in these nightclubs. We have no business in that kind of an environment where just about "anything goes."

Peter warned us to stay away from the "excess of riot" that the heathen enjoy: *(1 Pet 4:3-5) "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: {4} Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: {5} Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."*

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In this chapter, we are going to focus in on “drunkenness,” because it is the source of so many other sins. “Revellings” abound where there is “excess of wine.” If you give everyone a Diet Coke or a Dr. Pepper, they settle down quite a bit. It is the liquor that removes the inhibitions of men and turns them into animals. Revellings rarely occur apart from the demoralizing influence of liquor.

II. THE ARGUMENTS OF DRUNKARDS.

Sadly, the use of liquor is often defended, even by those who claim to be born-again Christians. I have heard the same arguments for the use of alcohol from dignified church members as those given by skid row bums in downtown Fort Worth. Let us examine the “arguments of drunkards,” and dismantle them with the wrecking ball of Scripture:

1. Is it okay to drink liquor so long as you do not get drunk?

Many believe that it is fine to drink liquor so long as you do not get drunk. Such people are either ignorant or willingly ignorant. After this lesson, you can only be willingly ignorant. You are going to have to refuse to hear God’s Word if you want to stand on the side of the liquor crowd.

The most common statement that I have heard concerning liquor – even from Christian people – is that God is only against drunkenness. It is okay to drink as long as you do not get drunk. As I will show you, God is against the drink itself.

Drunkenness is not God’s only limit. Drunkenness is the final result of drinking. It is the **product**. God is also against the **process**. ***Drinking is the process. Drunkenness is the product.*** God would be inconsistent to bless or permit the process and then condemn the product.

For example, God is against fornication. But that is not all He is against. Hormone-driven teenagers claim that there is nothing wrong with holding hands, hugging, kissing, and “making out” as long as they do not actually engage in sex. They are wrong. God is also against those forms of behavior that lead to fornication. He wants us to avoid fornication by avoiding the road that leads to fornication. (1 Cor 7:1-2) *“Now concerning the things whereof*

ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. {2} Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

God is against fornication, so He prohibits men from touching women in an intimate way that would encourage fornication. He is against the process that leads to fornication.

God is against drunkenness. He is also against that which leads to drunkenness. He is against alcoholic beverages altogether.

2. Didn't Jesus drink wine?

It is amazing how people will argue for liquor! They even bring Jesus in as their star witness. "But," they say, "Jesus drank wine!" Every drunk down at the homeless shelter will use that same line. I challenge anyone to show me in the King James Bible where it says that Jesus drank alcoholic wine. Run every reference to "wine" in the New Testament and see if you can find one single reference. In fact, the only reference to Jesus having anything to do with alcoholic wine is in Mark 15:23 – and He REFUSED it. (*Mark 15:23*) *"And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not."*

"But," they say, "Jesus turned water to wine at the wedding in Cana! See, God is for me drinking socially at weddings and such!" Jesus *did* turn water into wine. And you can drink all of *that* kind of wine that you want. You won't though, because you won't get a "buzz" off of grape juice!

In the Bible, the word "wine" is used for both grape juice and alcohol. While in Israel, this author drank some Biblical "wine" – 100% *unfermented* grape juice. The context of the Bible passage will indicate which wine is referenced. Alcoholic wine is fermented, changing and corrupting its nature. "Strong drink" is an even stronger form of alcohol. We still have such variations today, usually referred to as "hard liquor."

Grape juice does not affect the mind or morals of a man, but fermented wine or strong drink will do both. You can drink all the grape juice that you want. It might give you a stomachache but it will not make you drunk.

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Jesus turned the water into natural grape juice. He did not ferment it, corrupt it, and turn it into alcohol. His miracle did not produce a perverted, unscriptural beverage.

3. Doesn't the Lord's Supper include wine?

"But," they continue, "what about the Lord's Supper! He used wine there!" However, the word "wine" is NEVER used in connection with the Lord's Supper in any reference in the KJV. It is called "*the fruit of the vine*" and refers to pure, freshly squeezed grape juice. This juice represented the sinless blood of Christ. To use corrupted, fermented, polluted alcoholic wine is **blasphemous**. Jesus' blood was not corrupted like our blood is corrupted by our sinful natures. His blood was *sinless* blood.

The Lord's Supper is to consist of unleavened bread and unleavened juice – picturing the sinless body and blood of our perfect Saviour. Anything else is an abomination.

4. What about 1 Timothy 5:23?

"But," the drunkard continues, "the Bible says to *"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"* (1 Tim 5:23). Yes, use a little *wine* – not beer, vodka, cocktails, bloody Marys, rum, whiskey, or champagne. It is amazing how drunkards will take a simple statement such as this and apply it to the whole range of alcoholic beverages!

Again, there is no reason to believe that "wine" used here refers to fermented, alcoholic wine. In fact, if Timothy had used such wine he would have violated the Word of God, as we shall see. The "*little wine*" that Timothy used for his stomach and health problems was grape juice.

III. DRINKING, NOT JUST DRUNKENNESS, IS SINFUL AND CONDEMNED BY GOD'S WORD.

1. The Law of First Mention condemns the drinking of liquor.

This rule of Bible study states that the first mention of any subject will set the theme for that subject throughout the Word of

God. The first mention of alcohol is in Genesis 9, at some point soon after the Flood.

*(Gen 9:20-24) "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: {21} **And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.** {22} And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. {23} And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. {24} And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him."*

According to the Law of First Mention, we find the following associated with the drinking of alcohol:

- 1) **Nakedness.** When Noah started drinking, the first thing he did was start taking his clothes off.
- 2) **Sexual sin.** Ham saw the nakedness of his father and did something to him while he was unconscious. Many scholars believe that Ham sexually assaulted his own father while he was drunk. Noah's drunkenness provided the opportunity for this perversion.
- 3) **Humiliation and shame.** Shem and Japheth were shamed by their father. No doubt, Noah was humiliated when he came to his senses and saw what the wine had done to him.
- 4) **A family division.** Noah cursed Canaan because of what had happened, leading me to believe that Canaan was involved in some way with the sexual assault (Gen. 9:25). This is the FIRST time that one man cursed another. No doubt, Canaan left the family soon after.

The Law of First Mention discourages the drinking of wine that leads to drunkenness which in turn leads to nakedness, sexual sin, humiliation, and family division.

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2. Several other references to liquor in the Old Testament promote this theme as well. Consider a few:

Lot's worldly daughters got their father drunk so that they could commit incest with him. No doubt, he would never have done this if he had been sober.

*(Gen 19:31-36) "And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: {32} **Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him,** that we may preserve seed of our father. {33} **And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.** {34} And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. {35} **And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.** {36} **Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father."***

Hannah told Eli that drunkenness was a mark of a woman of Belial. *(1 Sam 1:13-16) "Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. {14} And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. {15} And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: **I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink,** but have poured out my soul before the LORD. {16} **Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial:** for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto."*

King Ahasuerus divorced his wife when he was drunk (Esther 1). He would never have done this if he had been sober.

3. Consider what else the Word of God has to say about alcoholic beverages:

- (Prov 20:1) *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."*
- (Prov 23:29-35) *"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? {30} They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. {31} **Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. {32} At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. {33} Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. {34} Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. {35} They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? **I will seek it yet again.**"***

Fermentation is referred to in verse 31 – *"when it is red...when it moveth itself aright."* The results of drunkenness are clear: woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, and wounds without cause. It strikes like a poisonous snake. It leads to adultery and fornication – *"strange women."* It leads to perversion – *"thine heart shall utter perverse things."* It leads to addiction – *"I will seek it yet again."*

- (Eph 5:18) *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"*

God tells us not to be drunk or intoxicated with wine. Why? Because there is "excess" in the wine. The word "excess" is also translated "riot" in the King James Bible. The excess (riot) is in the wine, not just in the drunkenness. It is part of the nature of the wine. Drunkenness is only the result of the excess already present in the alcohol.

To illustrate, allow me to change the verse slightly. "Be not drunk with arsenic, wherein is poison." Where is the poison – in the drunkenness or the arsenic? Poison is the nature of arsenic, and I do not have to drink very much before the arsenic will kill me.

Even so, the excess (riot) is in the wine, not the drunkenness. It is the nature of the wine.

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4. Alcohol is guilty by association in the Word of God:

It is connected with nudity and sexual perversion.

- *(Gen 9:20-22) "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: {21} And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. {22} And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without."*
- *(Hab 2:15-16) "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! {16} Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory."*

It is connected with dishonesty, rioting, whoremongering, strife, and envy - *(Rom 13:13) "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."*

It is connected with fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, and extortion. We are not to have close fellowship with believers who drink alcohol. *(1 Cor 5:11) "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."*

It is connected with unrighteousness, including adultery, homosexuality, and thievery - *(1 Cor 6:9-11) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

It is obvious that liquor is in very bad company, as are those that indulge in it.

5. We are told clearly:

- Not to **look** upon wine when it is fermented. (*Prov 23:31*) *"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."*
- Not to **touch** the unclean thing. (*2 Cor 6:17*) *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"*
- Not to be in the company of drunkards. (*Prov 23:20*) *"Be not among winebibbers..."*
- Not to be drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but to be filled with the Spirit (*Eph. 5:18*).
- Not to fellowship with believers who are drinkers (*1 Cor. 5:11*).
- Not to give or serve alcohol to others. (*Hab 2:15*) *"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"*

If I obey the Bible, it is going to be hard to be a “social drinker” – when I cannot look at it, touch it, or be with those who are drinking it. I cannot drink it, which would make me “drunk,” and I cannot hang around Christians that drink it, so it is hard to do it “socially.” But, the Christian who drinks liquor probably is not too concerned with what the Bible says anyway.



The bottom line: Christians have absolutely no business drinking any kind of alcohol in any amount under any circumstances. Christians should not buy it or sell it to others. Christian business people are wrong if they sell liquor in their stores or restaurants. Christians have no business in bars. Christians have no business allowing any liquor inside their homes. It is absolutely forbidden to the honest, sincere, Bible-believing Christian.

Unfortunately, not all preachers have the courage or conviction to stand against the liquor crowd. In fact, it is a mark of our lukewarm,

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compromising, worldly, fleshly “Christianity” of today that we have so-called Christians and preachers who advocate “social drinking” and the use of alcohol. They stand on the side of the liquor crowd.

- *(Isa 28:7-8) "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. {8} For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean."*
- *(Micah 2:11) "If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people."*

Chapter Nineteen

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

(Gal 5:22-26) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, {23} Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. {24} And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. {25} If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. {26} Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

We have been discussing the two possible ways of life for the child of God.

1. You can live a flesh-filled life.
2. You can live a Spirit-filled life.

Those are really the only two options. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfil the lust of the flesh. If you do not walk in the Spirit, the flesh will be in control in various degrees in your life.

The flesh produces works. Seventeen are mentioned in verses 19-21, and many others come under the heading of "*and such like.*" These works do not please God. In fact, verse 21 tells us plainly that those who do such things and do not repent will not inherit the kingdom of God. Thank God, we can be saved from the penalty of those sins. *(1 Cor 6:9-11) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

Galatians 5:21 refers to those who continue in their sins without repentance. Paul warned Titus about the people of Crete, who were notorious for their hypocritical lifestyles and false professions. *(Titus*

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1:16) *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."* God is not fooled by man. He knows who is sincerely repentant about their sins, and who is not.

After spending several chapters discussing the works of the flesh, it is going to be a breath of fresh air to now discuss the fruit of the Spirit. What a contrast there is between these two products! The whole world is hurting today because of the works of the flesh. It has been hurting ever since Adam and Eve sinned against God. It was not long before hatred and murder entered their family through Cain, who killed his own brother. It has been downhill ever since.

Think about how much better the world would be if men were born again and filled with the fruit of the Spirit of God! But let us put it a little closer to home. How much better would our marriages and homes be if they were orchards of the fruit of the Spirit instead of factories for the works of the flesh?

The fruit of the Spirit is acceptable in any culture. Paul said that *"against such there is no law."* No society passes laws against "love, joy, peace," etc. Can you imagine a city ordinance against meekness? Can you imagine getting a ticket for gentleness? Of course not. Most civilized societies have laws against the works of the flesh, but no one passes laws against the fruit of the Spirit.

Consider four truths concerning the Fruit of the Spirit:

I. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS SUPERNATURAL.

It is the fruit of the Spirit. He produces this fruit. You cannot produce it on your own. Yes, you can love as an unsaved person. You can be at peace. You can feel joy. You can be gentle, longsuffering, etc. But you cannot have these things on the level that the Holy Ghost can produce in your life. You cannot achieve this supernatural fruit on your own.

A lot of Christians get frustrated because they are trying to produce this fruit without the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They are trying to do the impossible. This fruit will only be produced as the flesh is crucified and the Holy Ghost is allowed to be in control – and for more than a few hours at a time. He must be in charge season by

season if you would enjoy the continual harvest of His fruit in your life.

II. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS NINE-FOLD.

The Bible does not say “the fruits of the Spirit.” It says “the fruit,” singular, of the Spirit. This is one product with nine different aspects. That tells me that these characteristics are connected together. They cannot be separated from each other. How can you have longsuffering without faith? How can you have gentleness without love? How can you have meekness without temperance? How can you have peace without joy, or joy without peace? Have you ever been so miserably distraught that you became filled with joy? Of course not. Peace and joy go together.

These aspects are all connected. You cannot separate them. They are the product of the consistent Spirit-filled life. With the fruit of the Spirit, it truly is “all or nothing.”

What are these nine characteristics?

1. Love.

“God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). It is no surprise that the first aspect of His fullness in our lives would be love. All of God’s commandments are based on love. We are to love God with all our hearts. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

God the Holy Spirit wants to help you to love God and love others as you should. He wants to shed God’s love abroad through your heart. *(Rom 5:5) “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* If our lives are not marked by love, the failure must be in our hearts, because we know that it is not God’s failure to love. We know the Holy Spirit does not fail. That leaves us.

The fact is that you cannot love others with the love that they deserve unless you are filled with the Spirit. The flesh can only produce an inferior version of love. Spirit-filled husbands and wives are going to love each other as they should. The same can be said in all of our relationships.

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Sadly, our churches and homes show more of the works of the flesh than the love of God. We fail the test concerning the fruit of the Spirit on the very first aspect! Christianity is empty and fake if it is not marked by LOVE (Jn. 13:35).

2. Joy.

Joy is not mere happiness. Happiness is determined by what has happened. Joy is based on my relationship with God. Happiness comes and goes. Joy should remain no matter what our circumstances. No one can take our joy - (*John 16:22*) "...*your joy no man taketh from you.*" Jesus said that His joy should remain in us, not pass away, and that this joy should be full. (*John 15:11*) "*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*"

3. Peace.

Peace is the by-product of faith. It is the calm confidence that God is in control, no matter what the circumstances might be. The opposite of peace is distress. God does not want us to be filled with anxiety, fear, cares, distresses, worries, or apprehension:

- (*John 14:1*) "***Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.***"
- (*John 14:27*) "***Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.***"
- (*Phil 4:6-7*) "***Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. {7} And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***"

4. Longsuffering.

This is patience. It is the ability to bear or suffer long with people. And with some people, it is close to suffering.

Longsuffering is the opposite of a quick temper or impatience. In the Bible, God's longsuffering is usually connected with His grace, mercy, compassion, and willingness to forgive (see Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:14; Rom. 2:4). Longsuffering people will evidence the same Godly characteristics towards others.

Longsuffering is defined for us in (Eph 4:1-3) *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, {2} With all lowliness and meekness, **with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; {3} Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**"*

It is *"forbearing one another in love."* It is striving for peace and unity. It is self-denial.

5. Gentleness.

Gentleness is the opposite of rudeness or abrasiveness. Gentleness is kindness, consideration, and tenderness. This is the mark of God's servants. (2 Tim 2:24) *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient..."* This quality is missing in much of our "fighting fundamentalism," especially among those that believe that the only way to stand for God is to be *rude, crude, and in a bad mood.*

6. Goodness.

Goodness in the Bible refers to benevolence towards others – doing good for the sake of others. God's goodness does not always refer to His perfection or His sinlessness, but to His benevolence towards people. (Psa 145:9) *"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."* Goodness is benevolence. It is helping others and doing good for others. If God is good to all, it seems that we should endeavor to be so as well.

7. Faith.

Faith is trusting God. It is taking God at His Word and acting accordingly. The Holy Ghost does not fill us with doubt. The Holy Spirit does not cause us to doubt His Word.

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He wants us to live by faith in His Word. He increases our faith in God and His Word. Part of the fruit of the Spirit will be an increase in faith and a corresponding increase in faithfulness to the Lord.

8. Meekness.

Meekness is humility towards others. It is the opposite of a haughty spirit. Jesus was not weak, but He was meek and lowly in heart. *(Mat 11:29) "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*

The Lord Jesus was superior to everyone that He was around, but He did not act superior to anyone. Rather, He humbled Himself: *(Phil 2:5-8) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: {7} But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: {8} And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Therefore, it is quite obscene that one sinner should exalt himself over another sinner. You are not better than anyone else is. The same price was paid for your sins as for someone else's. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the drunkard on skid row and He died on the same cross for you and me. That makes our value the same.

When meekness is not present, we will become filled with vainglory, selfishness, and envy. *(Gal 5:26) "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."*

9. Temperance.

Temperance is self-control. It stands in stark contrast to such works of the flesh as lasciviousness, wrath, strife, murders, drunkenness, or revellings. Those are the marks of an animalistic mindset. God wants us to control ourselves. Be responsible for yourself and your own actions. Discipline yourself to do what is right.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS TO MAKE US LIKE CHRIST.

The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is a wonderful picture of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Study the Gospels. Was Jesus loving? Was Jesus at peace? Was the Lord filled with joy? Was He longsuffering? Was He gentle? Was He good, benevolent towards others? Did He walk by faith in obedience to His Father? Was He meek? Temperate?

Of course! He was all of these things, perfectly fulfilled for 33 years without a failing. You will not find one work of the flesh in the life of the Lord Jesus, but you will find a constant example of the fruit of the Spirit. And, by the way, the Holy Spirit that wants to fill you is the same Holy Spirit that filled Jesus during His earthly ministry. *(Luke 4:14) "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."*

The Holy Spirit wants to transform us into the likeness of Christ. *(2 Cor 3:17-18) "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. {18} But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT WILL BE PRODUCED IN THE CULTIVATED LIFE OF A BELIEVER.

The Bible compares our hearts to different kinds of soil. Consider the different types of "heart soil" that we find in the parable of the sower:

*(Luke 8:11-15) "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. {12} Those **by the way side** are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. {13} They **on the rock** are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. {14} And that which fell **among thorns** are they, which, when*

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*they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. {15} But that **on the good ground** are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."*

1. Way side ground – the seed is snatched away. These people are lost. They never receive the gospel.
2. Rocky ground – the seed does not have enough ground to take root, and only grows for a little while. These people are saved – they received the word – but they lack the character to handle the times of temptation. These folks may get involved for a little while, but they do not last. They backslide quickly.
3. Thorny ground – the seed is choked out by the things of this world. These people are saved but their spiritual lives are choked out by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. They did not bring forth any fruit to maturity.
4. Good ground – the seed falls into a good and honest heart. These people are saved, and their hearts are cleared of the rocks and thorns of this world so that God can bring forth His fruit in their lives.

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit. But it is up to you to get the garden of your heart in good shape so that He can produce His fruit. A lot of saved people have allowed their hearts to be filled with rocks, weeds and thorns. It is no great wonder that their lives are marked by the works of the flesh, instead of the fruit of the Spirit. Cultivate a heart that is “good ground” for God.

How can I keep my heart cultivated so that the fruit of the Spirit can be constantly produced? Two things are necessary:

1. Walk in the Spirit.

(Gal 5:25) "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." This is a daily choice. A daily action. A daily yielding of self. It requires a decision to obey God, and not the flesh. And this decision must be made constantly. When the Holy Ghost points out things in your life that hinder His control, yield quickly and remove those rocks or thorns.

2. Crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

(Gal 5:24) *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."* The flesh must not be coddled or treated. It is to be **crucified**.

Two aspects of the flesh are mentioned here:

- **The affections of the flesh.** This refers to what the flesh *likes*.
- **The lusts of the flesh.** This refers to what the flesh *wants*.

There may be some things that you *like* that God does not like, and you are going to have to make a choice. There may be some things that you *want* that God has denied, and you are going to have to make a choice. You are either going to crucify those likes and wants or you are not going to have the fruit of the Spirit in your life.



Examine your life. Is your life marked by the hurtful works of the flesh, or the helpful fruit of the Spirit? The Holy Ghost wants to be in control, and He wants to make you more like Jesus. The decision is up to you.

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Chapter Twenty

THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION

(Gal 6:1) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

In Galatians 5:13, we are told to *"by love serve one another."* God does not save people and then isolate them from each other. Rather, God saves us and puts us into His local church and commands us to love each other and serve each other. The local church is a family and a community, and we each have a responsibility towards each other. Cain, the rebel, tried to abdicate his responsibility towards his brother. *(Gen 4:9) "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"*

The fact is that we each have Biblical responsibilities towards each other. In a very real sense, we are responsible for each other's well being. Now, I am not *totally* responsible for you, because you are a free moral agent and you are ultimately responsible for yourself. But I am responsible for my end of God's commandments concerning other believers.

Galatians 6:1 connects with 5:13. Part of my service towards other believers is the ministry of restoration. Unfortunately, getting saved did not exempt me from sin's presence in my life. I am still a sinner and so are you. Everyone in this church is a sinner. We all still possess the potential for every work of the flesh mentioned in chapter 5. We can fall from our steadfastness. We can backslide. We can fall into error and doctrinal heresy. We can become lukewarm towards the things of God. We can be overtaken in a fault. As members of the local church, we need to know what to do with a brother that is overtaken with a fault.

Consider some truths concerning the restoration of a fallen brother or sister in Christ:

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I. THIS COMMAND CONCERNS A BELIEVER THAT HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN IN A FAULT.

(Gal 6:1) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

It is important that we understand what the Scripture means when it says "*overtaken in a fault.*" All of us have faults. We all have flaws in our character that need work. It does not take a Sherlock Holmes to "find fault" in another believer.

Galatians 6:1 is not a license to judge each other's faults and look for what is wrong in Bro. So-and-so or Sister So-and so. Galatians 6:1 is not a license to be critical of others and then go around trying to fix what is wrong with everyone else. God has not called us to police each other. He does not give us a ticket book or the authority to give each other demerits.

Churches are not helped by conceited, self-appointed people that spend their time picking apart other believers, looking for flaws and passing judgment. Such Pharisees usually strain at everyone else's gnats while swallowing their own camels – humps, hides, and hooves (Mt. 23:24). Jesus told such people to take the beams out of their own eyes before they started working on the motes in the eyes of others (Mt. 7:5).

Most of the time, we need to be concerned with working on our own faults and fixing our own character flaws. Please do not take this chapter or this verse and say to yourself, "That's right. Ol' Bro. So-and-so really has some serious flaws. I am going to set him straight." As we shall see, such an attitude probably exempts you from obedience to this command.

"If a man be overtaken in a fault." Everyone has faults, but not everyone has been ***overtaken*** in a fault to the point that they need to be restored. Overtaken means "taken by surprise." It means caught unawares or caught in the act. The word is used in comparison to a thief in 1 Thessalonians 5:4 - *"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."* Here is a believer caught

by surprise in a serious fault, in what appears to be sinful or erroneous behavior, or caught in some heresy.

"Overtaken in a fault" implies that this man has been involved in the fault for some time, and it has finally caught up with him. Here is a Christian that has been involved in something that he should not have been involved in. You can fill in the blank. For some time, it has been hidden. He has not been caught. He is unrepentant, but he has not yet been *overtaken* in his fault. Then, finally, his sin finds him out.

David was finally overtaken. Nine months after his adultery and the resulting murder of Uriah, Nathan said, (2 Sam 12:7,12) *"And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man...For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."* It took a long time for David to be restored – and, in fact, he wore the scars for the rest of his life.

This verse deals with a Christian involved in shameful behavior that is *"overtaken,"* caught by surprise. I have seen it happen many times. Every pastor has, and anyone that has been in church for more than a few years has. Don't mess with sin, folks. You will not get away with it. Get right with God about it and get back on track. Sooner or later, your sin will find you out! It is better to get it right before it overtakes you!

Galatians 6:1 tells us what to do with such believers that have been overtaken in their faults. We do not throw them away. We do not seek to destroy what is left of their lives. Someone has said that the Christian army is the only one in the world that kills its own wounded. God says that we are to seek to restore them after they have been overtaken in their fault.

II. THIS COMMAND IDENTIFIES WHO HAS BEEN GIVEN THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION.

"Brethren...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one." That exempts the carnal Christian. Carnal Christians are not suitable for the ministry of restoration, because they tend to fall into one of two extremes:

1. They *execute* the sinner out of a misguided *hatred for the sin*.

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2. They *excuse* the sin out of a misguided love for the sinner.

Pharisaical Christians want to take the fallen brother and brand him for life. They do not want to forgive and they will never forget. They will treat the fallen person like a second-class heathen for the rest of his life, and they will make sure they everyone in the future learns of the misdeed through their long-tongued gossip. They will say very pompously that they just hate the sin, when in fact they are simply carnal, divisive, and puffed up with pride. They are not like their Saviour, who told a repentant adulteress, "*...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more*" (John 8:11).

On the other hand, carnal Christians may attempt to excuse the sin because they have an unbalanced, misguided love for the guilty party. These bleeding-heart Christians want to take the fallen brother and excuse the sin without dealing with it. This point is illustrated every time a teenager gets pregnant out of wedlock. When the guilty teenagers are found out, overtaken in their fault, they are soon surrounded by a gauntlet of relatives excusing their behavior and daring anyone to judge the sin. Instead of bringing the faulty Christian to repentance so that they can be restored, the sin is whitewashed and swept under the rug. Sometimes, the parents will lie about the situation to cover up the sin. Often, they will get angry with the pastor, when he did not commit the sin. This misguided love does more harm than good, because the person at fault is not brought to repentance.

The Corinthian Church is a great example of carnal Christians that did not restore a fallen brother. (1 Cor 5:1-5) *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. {2} And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. {3} For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, {4} In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, {5} To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*

This young man was living in sexual sin, without repentance, though he had been found out. It was commonly reported that this behavior was taking place. The church's testimony was being badly damaged in their community. Instead of dealing with the young man and seeking to bring him to repentance so that he could be restored, they became puffed up about it. They excused him instead of dealing with him.

Paul said that since he was not repentant about this sin, the church needed to put him away. They needed to deal with him. (1 Cor 5:9-13) *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: {10} Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. {11} But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. {12} For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? **do not ye judge them that are within?** {13} **But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.**"*

To their credit, they actually did what Paul told them to do. The young man was to be given a choice: **get right, or get out.** If he remained unrepentant, he would be excluded from the church.

They dealt with this young man. In 2 Corinthians, Paul commended them for this. Apparently, this man had repented, and Paul told them to forgive him and restore him.

Repentance must precede restoration. (2 Cor 2:6-8) *"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. {7} So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. {8} Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."*

God's command is for spiritual Christians to seek to restore such an one. A spiritual Christian is one that is walking in the Spirit, and whose life bears the fruit of the Spirit. Love, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance are requirements for those that would seek to restore the fallen.

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At the same time, a spiritual Christian is going to stand for the truth of God's Word. A spiritual Christian is going to understand the mind of God concerning sin and restoration. The spiritual Christian is going to be like God in that he hates the sin while loving the sinner. A spiritual Christian is not going to violate the truths of God's Word in his attempt to restore a fallen believer. He is going to "go by the Book."

III. THIS COMMAND HAS A SPECIFIC GOAL.

"Restore such an one." "Restore" means "to bring back; to repair; to rebuild; to revive." Bring them back, repair what is broken, build them up again, and revive them again. Try to get them back to where they used to be before they were overtaken in the fault, or as close as possible.

David was overtaken in a serious fault. The whole *"matter of Uriah"* was the lowest point in his life. But at least he got right about it. He repented. He did what he could to get right about his sin. He never committed those sins again. He was restored. He would never be the same, but at least he did not continue on the path that he had slipped into. The sword never departed from his house as punishment for his crimes, but at least he was able to restore fellowship with God again. It cost him, but I believe that David died right with God.

If a Christian falls, we want to restore that person. The first requirement is genuine repentance on the part of the sinner. God wants genuine contrition and a broken heart over sin. There is no doubt that David was brought to true repentance after Nathan's rebuke. Psalm 51 records his cries for mercy:

- *(Psa 51:1-4) "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. {2} Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. {3} For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. {4} Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."*

- (Psa 51:16-17) *"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. {17} The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

If a person is not repentant, they cannot be restored. If they are repentant, it is up to the church to forgive, forget, and help that believer to overcome their sin and get back on track for God.

IV. THIS COMMAND TELLS THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN TO COME TO THE FALLEN CHRISTIAN WITH A "SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS."

(Gal 6:1) *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."* The spiritual Christian trying to help a fallen Christian must have a proper spirit of meekness, with an honest humility concerning his own weaknesses and failings.

I have rarely ever seen a spirit of meekness in those trying to "restore" another Christian. I have seen the spirit of superiority and anger, and the spirit of pride, and the spirit of arrogance, but rarely the spirit of meekness. I have seen Christians go to those that had offended them in anger, just to vent their steam, call names, and walk away without reconciliation. They may have thought that they were obeying the Word of God, but they were not, because they lacked the spirit of meekness the Word of God commanded them to have.

We need to remember our own errors, faults, and presumptuous sins. Doing so will help us to maintain the humility we need so that we can help those that are fallen. (Psa 19:12-14) *"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. {13} Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. {14} Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*

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(James 5:19-20) "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; {20} Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

I hope that none of you is ever overtaken in some fault that would require restoration for your life, but if you are, I hope this church will have the spirit of meekness and the willingness to restore your life.

Chapter Twenty-one

BURDENS TO BEAR & SHARE

(Gal 6:2-5) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. {3} For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. {4} But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. {5} For every man shall bear his own burden."

Some have fancied that there is a contradiction between verses two and five. Verse 2 says to bear each other's burdens, while verse five says to bear my own burden. However, there are no contradictions in the King James Bible. Our understanding may be faulty, but the Bible is not.

Verses two and five are not contradictory. They are complimentary. These are two separate sets of burdens:

- Verse 5 – Burdens to *bear*. These are personal responsibilities.
- Verse 2 – Burdens to *share*. These are personal infirmities.

Verses three and four describe two opposite mindsets in relation to those two burdens:

- Verse three corrects the self-centered, me-first mentality that keeps many from having a true servant's heart. *(Gal 6:3) "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."*

Here is a man or woman that thinks too much about themselves and too highly of themselves. This Christian thinks in their heart of hearts, "I am really something." They would not say it aloud. They just feel it in their hearts. This puffed up mindset keeps Christians from obeying verse two. This person is too selfish to help others with their burdens.

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The problem is that verse 3 says that this kind of a Christian is really “nothing.” He has been deceived by the pride of life. There is nothing more sneaky or deceptive about us than the pride of life that is in each of us.

The cure for this attitude is to stop thinking about yourself altogether. Think highly of others and little of yourself. (Phil 2:3-4) *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. {4} Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

Paul said that he was “less than the least of all.” (Eph 3:8) *"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..."* Most of us would have put ourselves somewhere in the middle – not the *best*, but certainly not the *least*.

- Verse four corrects the irresponsible, welfare mentality that keeps many from taking care of their personal responsibilities. (Gal 6:4) *"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."*

This verse corrects the person that wants others to do everything for him. They want you to bear all of their burdens. This is the basic idea behind many that expect the government to take care of their needs. They do not want to bear their burdens. They want others to bear their responsibilities.

Verse four says to do your own work so that you can prove it and be proud of what you have done. There is nothing wrong with the kind of pride that comes from a job well done. God was well pleased with what He had made in the Creation, and there is no sin in finishing a job and being proud of what you have done.

Do your own work. Do not expect others to do it for you. And then you can rejoice in what you have accomplished.

In verse 3, you have the self-centered Christian that is so busy being something that he does not have time to think about others. In verse 4, you have the lazy Christian that is so dependent on others that he cannot bear his own burden or take care of his own responsibilities. Verses 2 and 5 tell us how to be good burden-bearers. Let us look at the two different burdens that we are commanded to bear.

I. BURDENS TO BEAR.

(Gal 6:5) "For every man shall bear his own burden." This is a burden that I must shoulder by myself. It is my responsibility. Each of us has responsibilities that are ours alone. That is a big part of adult life.

People today are very irresponsible. They do not want responsibility. They want to play all the time. They work so that they can play. They do not take their marriages, children, finances, or God seriously.

People do not want to be responsible for providing for their families. They want the government to subsidize them. Men do not want to provide for the children they produce. People do not want the responsibility of marriage. They would rather shack up. Our society is sliding because adults do not take their responsibilities seriously. They refuse to bear their own burdens.

We all have burdens of personal responsibility to bear, and we need to bear our own burdens. I cannot run away from my burden. I cannot throw my burden down and quit. I cannot hand my burden over to others. If I am going to be a man, I have to be man enough to face my responsibilities and do whatever it takes to bear my burdens of personal responsibility.

My Basic Responsibilities include:

1. My responsibilities to God.

I have responsibilities as a child of God that are mine to bear. I am thankful that His commandments are not grievous. I am thankful that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, but that does not mean that I do not have a burden to bear for

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the Lord. His will is my responsibility. Christianity is cross-bearing, not cross-wearing. I need to shoulder that burden and do what God wants me to do. Our churches are crippled by people that are not mature enough or responsible enough to serve the Lord faithfully. They do not take their responsibilities to God seriously.

2. My responsibilities to my family.

I have responsibilities as a husband that are mine to bear. My wife is my responsibility and no one else's. Her parents are no longer responsible for her welfare. I am. If a man takes a wife, he had better understand his responsibility. It is not her responsibility to provide for him. The Bible does not command her to work by the sweat of her brow. I understand that emergencies come and sometimes things have to be done, but every husband needs to "man up" and shoulder his responsibility as the husband.

The husband is to be the head of his wife. That is also a tremendous responsibility. That means he needs to be the leader of the home. Some men are too wimpy and gutless to be the head. The wife bullies him or manipulates him until he is a henpecked wonder. Or, he just steps back and lets her do everything, and she has no choice. The man ought to be the decision-maker and the leader of his home. He ought even to correct his wife if need be. Job corrected his wife when she was wrong.

The husband is to be the provider, the breadwinner. The husband is responsible for the financial well being of the home. The husband is to be the protector of his wife. Being a husband is a tremendous responsibility, and every husband must bear his burden. He will answer to God for this responsibility.

The wife also has responsibilities to her husband. She is to be his "help meet for him." (*1 Cor 11:9*) *"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."* The wife is responsible for submission to her husband's leadership. A rebellious or manipulative wife is not a good wife or a good Christian.

It is amazing how unbiblical our Christian homes are! They are totally out of order. Bear your burdens. Take care of your responsibilities. Work on being the best husband or wife that you can possibly be, no matter how your spouse responds.

Get things in their proper places. Take care of your responsibilities. It is no wonder that our churches and our society are a mess when our CHRISTIAN homes are not really Christian. They are heathen homes in disguise.

I also have responsibility towards my children. My children do not belong to the State. It does not take a village to raise my children. I do not want any “Village People” near my children. It takes parents to rear children.

Irresponsible parents want others to rear their children for them. As soon as they can, they ship them off the daycare and then into the public schools to raise. They want the government to feed them, clothe them, nurture them, entertain them, and teach them. I will thank the government to keep their nose out of the front door of my house. My kids are my responsibility and I will shoulder the burden of providing for them and training them up in the way they should go.

I have a responsibility towards my parents. I am to honor them (Ex. 20:12) and requite them in their old age (1 Tim. 5:4). “Requite” means to “pay back.” Do not abandon your parents in their old age because it would inconvenience your life to care for them. You were pretty inconvenient sometimes, and they took care of you. Pay them back.

3. **My responsibilities to my church.** I have a responsibility towards my church. I should support it and serve in it. I should support it with my tithes and offerings. Men especially have a responsibility towards their church. God has called us to leadership in His church. The men ought to stand up and be counted. They should not bail out or abdicate their responsibilities to others.
4. **My responsibilities to my country.** I am to love my country and submit to the higher powers, as long as they do not violate the law of God. I am to pay my taxes. I am to honor

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the laws of the land. If called upon to do so, I should be willing to fight and die for my country. I am to pray for the leaders of my government. Since I have the right to vote, I need to vote. It is an irresponsible Christian that allows himself to be “too busy” to cast his vote for his own government.

5. **My responsibility towards my society, to make it better and not worse.** I have no right to be a dead weight on society. As citizens of a free nation, the greatest nation on earth, we have civic responsibilities to take care of. Getting a divorce or fathering illegitimate children or living off welfare or engaging in illegal activities are harmful to the fabric of our society. Let each of us – especially Christians, the salt of the earth – take care of our responsibilities towards our society.
6. **My responsibility to my neighbors and those around me.** I have no right to be inconsiderate of them. I am to love my neighbor as myself. I do not have the right to risk other's lives by driving drunk or driving dangerously. I have no right to endanger others by my actions. I do not have the right to steal from my neighbor, or deface his property. I have no right to cause my neighbor any harm – physically or financially. This is the basis for much of our law, and for much of the law of God.
7. **My responsibility towards my employer.**

If I agree to work for a certain amount of pay, I have a responsibility to do the work that is expected. If I am paid for eight hours' worth of work, I should do eight hours' worth of work. See Ephesians 6:5-9 for the will of God concerning employers and employees.

These are burdens that I must bear. They are my personal responsibilities. I must not shirk these responsibilities. (*Gal 6:5*) "*For every man shall bear his own burden.*"

II. BURDENS TO SHARE.

Standing Fast in Liberty

(Gal 6:2) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." This verse takes us back to the last chapter - (Gal 5:13-14) "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. {14} For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Bearing one another's burdens is a ministry of love towards each other.

This kind of burden would include hardships, heartaches, difficulties, or anything else that requires a helping hand. I cannot take your responsibilities, but I can help you to get through a tough stretch. I can encourage you or try to be a blessing. I cannot take over your family finances, but maybe I can buy you some groceries and help you to get through a tough time. This is real Christian love and compassion: *(1 John 3:16-18) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. {17} But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? {18} My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

In my Sunday School class, I illustrated these truths using two backpacks and a large ice chest with two handles. I put on a backpack and gave the other to another man. The backpacks represented our personal burdens, our responsibilities. I must bear these myself. The ice chest represented burdens to share. While each of us bore our own backpack, we lifted the chest between us. We bore our own burdens, and shared a burden together. That made it easier for both of us. That is what God is telling us to do here in Galatians 5:2-5.

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Chapter Twenty-two

THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

(Gal 6:7-10) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. {8} For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. {9} And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. {10} As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

It is important to understand that the universe and everything in it runs according to the laws of God. God created everything, and everything must operate within the laws that He established for His Creation. The Universe is *not* lawless chaos, as the evolutionists would have us to believe. It is orderly, operating by divine laws. What we call nature is really just God's organizational structure for His Creation.

Men must work with the laws of God in the natural realm. NASA can put men in space and launch probes into deep space, but NASA scientists have to find ways to operate inside the laws of God. Doctors must operate within the laws God has designed for the human body. Everything is under the laws of God for His universe.

One of the most important laws of God that the Christian should be concerned about is **the law of sowing and reaping**. This is the law of cause and effect. There are consequences for every action. This is both a natural law and a spiritual law. It is first referenced in Genesis 8:22, which says that God has ordered "...seedtime and harvest..."

Every Christian needs to understand the law of sowing a reaping. You will reap what you sow, in due season. What we sow is going to determine what we reap in this life, and in the life to come.

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I. THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING IS SET AND IRREVERSIBLE.

(Gal 6:7) *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* You cannot get around this law. You will not make a mockery of God and His law. Whatever you sow, you are going to reap. God will not cancel out this law. He set it and will not change it.

The farmer has to abide by this law. If he wants a crop, he has to sow the seed, and sow it at the right time. The farmer does not make up his own schedule and expect God to rearrange His law to help the farmer. The farmer knows that the law of sowing and reaping is set and irreversible. So, he sows his seed at the right time, and in the right way, and he then waits patiently for the harvest.

Christians who sow to the flesh think they can get around the law of God. They mock God and His judgment and holiness. The backslider or the sinner always believes that he or she will be the one that gets away with it, that gets by with it. Somehow, I will sow but I will not reap.

Millions of lost sinners are hanging on to the thread of hope that somehow they will get by with their sins and get into heaven without Jesus. They will not, and the Christian that sows sin and thinks that he will get away without reaping is blinded by the devil.

Whatever you do, you need to realize that there is reaping involved sooner or later. There are consequences for our actions. David thought he could sow with Bathsheeba, but not reap. He even tried to make sure he would not reap by having Uriah killed. But he reaped a sword in his house for the rest of his days. Even on his deathbed, Adonijah tried to steal the throne. Samson thought he could sow with Delilah and not worry about reaping. But when the Spirit of God left him, he was blinded and made a joke to the Philistines, and ended up committing suicide. I could tell you stories of many Christians who thought they could sow their seed to the flesh and never reap, and they have always reaped – they reaped heartache, disease, broken marriages and homes, lost jobs, lost ministries, and some lost their lives.

When you go against the laws of God, you get hurt every time. Go on the roof of the building and say, "I'm going to defy gravity."

And jump off. See how well you defy gravity. When you go against the law of sowing and reaping, you will not defy it; you will just reap from it.

So, work with the law of sowing and reaping, and sow to the Spirit, and not to the flesh. Sow goodness so that when you reap, you reap goodness. Work with the law of God, instead of against it.

II. THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING HAS THREE DEFINITE FACTS INVOLVED:

1. You will always reap *what* you sow.

If you sow grass burrs, do not expect a harvest of tomatoes. If you sow corn, do not expect to reap watermelons. You will reap what you sow. If you sow sin, you will reap heartache. If you sow righteousness, you will reap good things. You will reap what you sow, so be very, very careful what you sow.

2. You will always reap *later* than you sow.

A farmer plants his seed, and he does not expect a harvest overnight. It takes time before the harvest grows, and longer before the reaping begins. Sometimes, it takes years to reap what you have sown. Concerning David and Bathsheeba, it was about a year before he really started reaping. And he kept on reaping for the rest of his life.

Some people think that just because they sinned and did not reap immediately that they got away with it. Not so. (*Eccl 8:11-13*) *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. {12} Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: {13} But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."*

And sometimes a person thinks that the reaping is over. And then a fresh crop comes up, and more heartaches come. David may have thought it was over when the baby died. But then Amnon and Tamar. Absalom killed Amnon. Then Absalom stole

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the kingdom. Then Absalom was killed. Then he could not build the Temple. Then Adonijah tried to steal the kingdom from Solomon. David spent about 20 years reaping from a one-night stand and a few months of deception, dishonesty, and the murder of Uriah.

This also applies for good sowing. We expect to reap right away, but sometimes we have to wait awhile for “due season to come.” We must be patient.

3. You will always reap *more* than you sow.

If you plant one kernel of corn, and a corn stalk may produce a couple of ears of corn with a thousand kernels each. One tomato seed will produce many tomatoes. One peach tree seed will produce many harvests of peaches.

You reap more than you sow. It multiplies. So, take heed to what you sow, because you will get a whole lot of it back. If you sow to righteousness, you will have a good harvest. But if you sow to the flesh, you will reap much more than you have sown! Be careful what you sow!

III. THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING APPLIES FOR BOTH GOOD AND EVIL.

As Christians, we can either sow to the flesh, or sow to the Spirit. What we sow and where will determine what we reap. (*Gal 6:8*) *"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."*

1. Sowing to the flesh.

God says if we sow to the flesh, our sinful nature, we will of the flesh reap corruption. If you sow sin, living in the flesh, living to please yourself, living for the pleasures of this world – you won't reap pleasure and peace and happiness and joy and prosperity. You will reap corruption. You will sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. You will sow seeds that hurt others, and you will reap a hundredfold.

If you sow to the flesh, you will reap unwanted pregnancies, hasty marriages, quicker divorces, disease, poverty, shame,

sorrow, misery, heartache, and maybe even an early grave. I am telling you the truth. TV does not show you the truth. TV is make-believe. I am telling you the truth of the matter. What people show you is not the truth. You see the smiles but God sees the sorrow. You had better listen to God.

The world makes an affair look glamorous and exciting. Read Proverbs 5,6, and 7 for the truth. The world makes smoking, drinking alcohol, or doing drugs look cool. The Bible tells you the truth. The world makes being sexy and flirting seem like the way to be – but God tells us the truth about such things.

If you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption in your life. It will hurt you now and shame you at the Judgment Seat if you are saved. And if you are not saved, it will hurt you now and damn you at the Great White Throne Judgment.

2. Sowing to the Spirit.

Thank God, there is another kind of sowing we can do, and another kind of reaping. I can sow to the Spirit, and of the Spirit reap life everlasting. If sowing to the flesh produces corrupt things, sowing to the Spirit produces good things.

Sow righteousness. Sow obedience. Sow faithfulness. Sow generosity. Sow love. Sow some kindness. Sow some mercy. Sow some helpfulness. Sow some grace. You will reap it back one day. You reap what you sow.

Ask yourself, “What do I want to reap?” Then sow those things. Sow to the Spirit.

IV. THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING ENCOURAGES US TO KEEP SOWING, AND NOT TO FAINT.

(Gal 6:9) "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Be patient. Do not be weary in well doing. Do not get tired in your minds because you do not reap an immediate harvest. Keep sowing the good seed, because “in due season we shall reap.” This is a certainty. The one condition is that we “*faint not*.” Quitting cancels

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out the good reaping we might have received. At least, we will not be there to reap it.

There are at least three forms of sowing that have special promises of reaping attached:

1. Sowing **goodness** to others.

(Gal 6:10) "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Joseph sowed some goodness to the butler and the baker while they were in prison. It was two full years before he reaped, but he did reap. Little deeds of kindness and helpfulness will come back to us one way or another. Be careful to watch for opportunities to be a blessing to each other – *"especially unto them who are of the household of faith."* Jesus said when you give a cool cup of water to one of His people, you have given it unto Him.

2. Sowing **generosity** to those in need.

Christians are to give to God, and be generous to the cause of Christ.

- *(Eccl 11:1) "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Throw your bread upon the waters. You will find it again after many days. One preacher said, "It will come back buttered!"*
- *(Luke 6:38) "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."*
- *(2 Cor 9:6-10) "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. {7} Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all*

things, may abound to every good work: {9} (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. {10} Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)"

3. Sowing the ***gospel*** to a lost and dying world.

(Psa 126:5-6) "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. {6} He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." If we would sow the precious seed with a burdened heart, we would be bringing in some sheaves. I think we are missing the tears – the broken heart for souls destined for hell.

Keep sowing that gospel seed. Pray everyday for souls. If we do not see the full reaping in this life, it will be wonderful to come before Jesus, bringing our sheaves to His throne!



The unchanging law of sowing and reaping. You cannot get around it. You won't mock God. Whatever you sow, you will reap. You will reap what you sow, more than you sow, and later than you sow.

So, make sure you sow the right kind of seed, and in the right place. Sow to the Spirit, not the flesh. Then be patient, and wait for God's "*due season*" for your reaping!

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Chapter Twenty-three

NO GLORY BUT THE CROSS

(Gal 6:11-18) "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. {12} As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. {13} For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. {14} But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. {15} For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. {16} And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. {17} From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. {18} Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

Verse eleven indicates that Galatians was the only Epistle that was written entirely by Paul's hand. The other Epistles were dictated to others but signed by Paul with an unmistakable signature. (2 Th 3:17) *"The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is **the token** in every epistle: so I write."* (1 Cor 16:21) *"The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand."* It is believed that Paul had serious eye problems, which caused him to write with very large letters, hence, *"how large a letter I have written unto you."*

In these last verses, Paul is going to summarize the entire purpose of Book. Galatians was written to combat the heresy of the legalists in the Galatian churches. Consider three final thoughts:

I. PAUL'S GRIEF.

(Gal 6:12) "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

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Let me remind you that Paul wrote this Book to defend the gospel and to attack the heresies of certain Jews that had crept into the Galatian churches with a false gospel of works. These Judaizers had taught the churches that God would not save Gentiles as Gentiles. The Gentiles had to be circumcised after the manner of Moses, which was the initiatory ritual into Judaism. They said that Gentiles had to become Jews before God would save them. They added a step to salvation. They said, (*Acts 15:1*) *"...Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."* Paul stood against this heresy and called it a false gospel.

Anyone that adds anything to God's plan of salvation is a legalist, a heretic, and is under a curse according to Galatians 1:8-9. They are teaching *"damnable heresies."* They are deceiving people into trusting in a false hope. Salvation is through 100% trusting faith in Jesus Christ and His perfect sacrifice for the atonement of our souls.

Salvation is never 50% faith and 50% baptism, church membership, or good works. Salvation is never 75% faith and 25% perseverance to the end. Salvation is never 99% Jesus and 1% you or your church. **Salvation is 100% Jesus – all the way, from the guttermost to the uttermost – or it is not salvation at all.**

These Judaizers wanted to make a trophy, a show, out of these Gentiles. They were not willing to suffer the persecution of the cross. They wanted to still fit in with the other Jews. Remember at this time that the Jews were the great enemy of the Christians. That is not anti-Semitic; it is New Testament fact. Read the Book of Acts.

We have these same groups today. They teach baptismal salvation, works religion, church salvation, works salvation, and temporary salvation. They have added unscriptural works to God's simple plan of salvation, and stolen some of the glory from Jesus Christ. They are leading their followers to hell unless someone reaches them with the true gospel.

Preachers need to quit trying to be nice and start being right. If someone teaches that baptism saves, I am going to preach against them – and just about all of them do. The Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Church of Christ, and others, all believe that baptism either saves or has a part in salvation. Baptism does NOT

save or have any part in it. How can we preach the true gospel of Christ without attacking the false gospels of our day?

In verse 13, Paul identifies that these people were frauds and phonies. (*Gal 6:13*) *"For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."* He said, "They tell you to keep the law, but they don't keep the law. They just want to glory in your flesh. They want to brag about their Gentile trophies." Paul said, "These men are frauds. They have ulterior motives. Their purpose is not the glory of God. They want glory for themselves.

These Judaizers were the great heartache and chief adversary of Paul's ministry. They are still the grief of every Bible-believer that desires for sinners to be saved. The rudest people I run into are those who are trusting in works or religion while claiming to be Christian. They have been blinded and deceived, and it is extremely sad.

II. PAUL'S GLORY.

(*Gal 6:14*) *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

If anyone had the religious and moral qualifications to earn their way to heaven, Paul did. (*Phil 3:4-6*) *"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: {5} Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; {6} Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."*

Paul had the credentials to boast if he wanted to. Instead, he counted his credentials as "loss." (*Phil 3:7*) *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."* There was no profit in those things concerning his soul. There was no hope for him in those things. Paul gloried only in the cross of Christ.

A works-based plan of salvation steals the glory away from Jesus. It teaches men to glory in their religions, their personal

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morality, their religious observances, their religious leaders, or their own good deeds. This is glorying in the flesh.

God has so designed salvation that all the glory goes to Jesus, and none of the glory goes to the person being saved. (*Eph 2:8-9*) *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast."* No one in heaven will have any grounds for boasting. They are all there by grace.

If you could go to heaven today and do a "man on the golden street interview," asking those there how they got there, you would NOT hear: "I lived a good life. I was baptized. I was a church member. I was honest." They will all say, "We were sinners that got saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Listen to the redeemed saints in Revelation 1:5-6 - *"...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, {6} And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

Ask them, "How did you get here?" They will answer, "We were washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb." Who gets the glory? The Lamb gets all the glory! (*Rev 5:12*) *"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."*

No sinful flesh will glory in the presence of God. CHRIST is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (*1 Cor 1:29-31*) *"That no flesh should glory in his presence. {30} But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: {31} That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

If I were to ask you today, privately, one-on-one, this question: "What are you trusting in to take you to heaven when you die?" What would your answer be?

- "I try to live a good life." You get the glory.
- "I was baptized." Baptism gets the glory.
- "I am not as bad as others." You get the glory.
- "I am a church member." The church gets the glory.

Who gets the glory for what you are calling salvation? You or Jesus? Paul said, "I won't glory in my religion or my morals, I will glory only in the cross of Jesus Christ, where He died as the Lamb of God for my sins."

(Gal 6:15) *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."* Circumcision does not avail concerning salvation. Neither does baptism, reformation, church membership, communion, catechism, good deeds, etc. All that avails is a *"new creature."*

Tell me, how are you going to make yourself into a *"new creature?"* You can't change what you ARE. You might change what you do, how you act, what you say – but you can't change the kind of creature that you are. You can't change your nature. Only Christ can! (2 Cor 5:17) *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

III. PAUL'S GOODBYE.

(Gal 6:16) *"And as many as walk according to **this rule**, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."* "This rule" is the salvation rule. Salvation must be by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Anything else is a violation of the salvation rule. There is "peace" and "mercy" for those that obey the salvation rule.

(Gal 6:17) *"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."* In other words, leave my qualifications alone. Do not trouble me anymore. You will remember from chapters 1 and 2 that they had attacked his position as apostle to the Gentiles. Paul defended his apostleship and authority.

Now Paul says, "Leave me alone. You guys don't want to suffer the persecution of the cross. My body is covered with scars because of my service for the Savior. I was stoned outside of Lystra. I was beaten with rods. I have been beaten with the cat o' nine-tails. If I took my shirt off my back would look like a road map of scars. You don't have any scars. Leave me alone."

He expanded on this in 2 Corinthians, where he also defended his apostleship. (2 Cor 11:23-28) *"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak*

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as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. {24} Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. {25} Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; {26} In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; {27} In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. {28} Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Paul said, "You guys talk a big talk but where are the marks on your body? What price have you paid for following Christ?"

It is easy to sit back and play "armchair pastor." What have you done? You have not won anyone to Christ since Noah got off the Ark, but you criticize those who are trying to get folks saved. It is easy to sit around a dinner table and gossip about those that are trying to do something for God. It is easy to sit and gossip and criticize and slander. ***But where are your marks?*** How many churches have you started? How many souls have you won? How much money have you given? How many times has your heart been broken in God's service? What have you done other than pick apart the work that other men have built from the ground up? You never win anyone or get anyone in church, but you like to run off the ones that the soulwinners bring in.

Paul said, "Leave me alone. I started that church with sweat, blood and tears. I won those first converts, started the first classes, and built that church up. Now, you buzzards have come along and started tearing down what I built. Why don't you go start your own church and ruin it?"

May God deliver our churches from such harmful parasites!



Standing Fast in Liberty

(Gal 6:18) *"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."* The Book ends with the word "grace." Salvation is not through the law. It is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God for His amazing grace!