

The Study of Galatians



The Defense of Christian Liberty
Galatians 5:13-26

- A Life apart from License
- A Life according to the Spirit



Dog that has law, but no liberty



Dog that has liberty, but no law



Dog that loves its master

Key Verse: Galatians 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.

INTRODUCTION: Paul's first admonition was, Stand Fast! Now, he says Walk in the Spirit! Our standing in Christ determines our walk in Christ. Paul closes this section of chapter 5 with the reminder that Christian liberty is not license to live as we want to.

1. A life apart from License: vv.13-15 The Christian who says "*I have liberty to sin*" does not fully understand what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us on the cross, nor the full extent of God's grace.

- When a person seeks to relate to God through law, that person must turn to his/her own resources, and this will activate the flesh.
- In contrast, the person who seeks to relate to God by faith turns to the Spirit, and the Spirit creates love in that person's heart, which spills over into every attitude and action which is right and good.
- Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.

I. The illustration of three kinds of dogs: During the week I see a number of dogs pass through the neighborhood. I have observed that there are three kinds of dogs: (1) the dog that has law, but no liberty; (2) the dog that has liberty, but no law; and (3) the dog that loves its master.

A. The dog that has law, but no liberty: This dog wants to be free, but they can not be free because they are held back by the chain around their neck.

- If they see something that they want to go after, to sniff at, there is that inevitable chain.
- If there is another dog and they want to make an acquaintance with that dog, there is the inevitable chain. That dog is unhappy because it has law, but no liberty.

B. The dog that has liberty, but no law: If dogs could speak, I would imagine that this dog would say to those who are under chain: *It would be wonderful if you could be like I am, my master doesn't use a chain. He lets me roam all over the neighborhood, even in the Carpenter's yard.*



A dog that has freedom and no law is likely to end up living at the Madison County Humane Society; worse yet, hit by a car or truck. That dog has liberty, but no law.

C. The dog that loves its master: He walks next to its master without a chain, he goes walking, hunting and obeys the master at all times.

- He is always under his master's control because he is regulated by the law of liberty.
 - He has a love for his master and the love for his master is the thing that dominates him.
- That dog is a safe and happy dog.

II. The illustration of manufactured forms of legalism. Throughout the Christian community there are certain taboos that have been invented by Christians. A measure for being spiritual:

A. Negative form of legalism: If a person smokes, drinks alcohol, do other so called worldly things they are unspiritual. But, if a person does not smoke, drink alcohol, etc. they are spiritual.



Not Attending Movies



Not Smoking



Not Wearing Lipstick



Not Drinking



Not Going to the Hair Dresser

B. Positive form of legalism: Christians can use the greatest things in a legalistic way.

- Daily reading the Bible makes you spiritual. Giving up a Baby Ruth candy bar on Mondays, Twinkies on Tuesdays and TV on Saturdays between 6 and 7 in the morning.
- Witnessing door-to-door to sinners on Saturday mornings. (to make points before God)

C. Christians can rational sin and easily overlook the popular inward thoughts of envy, jealousy and hatred.

In many church circles a Christian can be considered "*a spiritual Christian*" even though they gossip on the telephone and rip a fellow-believer up and down.

D. By love serve one another. We fulfill the law when we live in love. v.13 and **Romans 13:8-10**.

2. A life according to the Spirit: vv.16-26 God did not free us from Law that we might behave lawlessly, but so that by relying completely on the Spirit, He might transform us from within.

Every Christian possesses two natures: "*a sinful nature*" received at birth, inherited from fallen Adam; and "*a new nature*" received at the time of our salvation.

- Both natures have desires, the one for evil and the other for holiness. **Ephesians 4:22-32**
- They remain in constant conflict with each other. i.e. Ishmael and Isaac v.17 and chapter 4:29

Paul presents a contrast between the fruit produced by the Spirit, and the acts of the flesh.

A. The first list contains four distinct categories of acts of the flesh: (external) vv.19-21

- Sex sins: immorality, impurity, debauchery
- Religious sins: idolatry, witchcraft
- Interpersonal sins: hatred, discord, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, envy
- Intemperate sins: drunkenness, orgies

B. The second list is the fruit of the Spirit: (internal) vv.22-26 character traits:

- Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance