

## Mini Study – Galatians 5

### Life in the Spirit

**Free in Christ.** That is the truth that rings out from the book of Galatians. Those who through faith in Christ are no longer slaves to the law, but liberated from its curse and from obedience to it to be right with God.

**Do we then live as we please?** By no means!! Rather, as those who have been justified in Christ, set free from the power of sin, our overriding desire is to now live a life that pleases God; one made possible through the Spirit's work in us, and which far from breaking God's law fulfils it. Let's turn now to look at this in more detail.

#### **OBSERVE**

READ Galatians 5:13-15 and:

- underline every reference to *freedom*.
- circle every reference to *love*.

<sup>13</sup>For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup>For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." <sup>15</sup>But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

**FLESH** – the unrenewed part of us, even as believers, that desires to live contrary to and without dependence upon the Spirit – seen in acts of self-righteousness or ungodly living.

#### **DISCUSS**

5:13 – What do we learn about our freedom in Christ?

5:14 – What happens when through love we serve our neighbour?

READ Romans 13:8-10 and:

- circle every reference to *love(s)*.

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet", and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

#### **DISCUSS**

13:8-10 – What more do we learn about *love* from these verses?

## RESPOND

What ways this week could you, through love, serve those in your church, workplace, or community?

## REFLECT

Such a life of love may seem like an impossible task. One only possible for the super saints among us. However, as we're about to see, such love will be evident in the life of every believer, albeit imperfectly, but nonetheless the guaranteed fruit in all in whom the Spirit dwells.

## OBSERVE

READ Galatians 5:16-24 and:

- underline every reference to the *Spirit*.
- circle every reference to the *flesh*.

<sup>16</sup>But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup>For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

**WALK BY THE SPIRIT** – “The word “walk” (peripateō) denotes the need to submit to the Spirit day by day...On the one hand, believers must choose to live by the Spirit, while on the other hand, the Spirit empowers believers to live a life pleasing to God.” – *Thomas Schreiner*

## DISCUSS

5:16 – What happens when we walk by the Spirit?

5:17ab – Why is this the case?

5:17cd – Why do the Spirit and flesh oppose each other?

5:18 – What is true of those led by the Spirit?

**NOT UNDER THE LAW** – those who have been set free from keeping the law to be right with God, redeemed from its curse through the death of Jesus, justified through faith in Him. No longer under the mastery of sin but empowered by the Spirit to obey God's commands from the heart (Galatians 3:10-14, Romans 6:14-15, Ezekiel 36:26-27).

5:19-21 – What are the works that Paul lists which clearly show someone living according to the flesh?

5:21 – What warning does Paul give about those who do (habitually practice) such things?

5:22-23 – In contrast - what fruit will the Spirit grow in those who belong to Christ?

5:23b – What law is against such things?

5:24 – What is true of those who belong to Christ Jesus?

## **REFLECT**

These verses contain a sobering reminder not to be deceived. That if our lives are characterised by sowing to the flesh then we have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. A warning that we, even as believers, need to take seriously.

However, in these verses is also a reminder of the wonderful freedom we now have in Christ. Those who through faith in Christ are empowered by the Spirit to live for the Father's glory. Those crucified with Christ, freed from the power of sin to enslave and the law to condemn, and those raised with Christ to live by the Spirit a life of love. A love that fulfils God's law and flows from us as we continue to live by faith in Him who first loved us, and gave Himself for us, and to whom belongs all the glory (Galatians 2:20; 5:6).