

# BE FREE AND IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT

**THE PROBLEM:** *Humanity needs to know how to be free from the influence of our sinful nature that only Jesus can provide.*

The Apostle Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia confronts the tension between the power of legalism and the power of sin in contrast to the freedom from legalism and sin, that is only experienced through a relationship with Jesus.

Paul's letter to the Galatian church was written to refute the militant Judaizers and to call the believers back to the pure gospel of Christ that is for all people - Jews and Gentiles alike.

In *Galatians 5*, Paul explains that no amount of legalism or Jewish laws can change a person's basic sinful nature.

**OUR FREEDOM:** *Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. Galatians 5:1 (nlt)*

**We are free in Christ.**

*You will know the truth (about Christ and this) truth will set you free. John 8:32*

However, we are not free to disobey the teachings and example of Jesus.

*Galatians 5:13 (gnt) “As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you.”*

Our freedom should be used to love and to serve others, and not to damage or injure one another.

*Galatians 5:10-15 (gnt) “But I still feel confident about you. Our life in union with the Lord makes me confident that you will not take a different view and that whoever is upsetting you will be punished by God. But as for me, my friends, if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary, why am I still being persecuted? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no trouble. I wish that the people who are upsetting you would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves! As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead, let love make you serve one another. For the whole law is summed up in one commandment; “Love you neighbour as you love yourself. But if you act like wild animals, hurting and harming each other then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.”*

**THE CONFLICT:** *God’s Spirit within us and our fleshly sinful human nature are at war with one another - a spiritual warfare or spiritual conflict.*

*Galatians 5:16-17 (gnt) What I say is this: let the Spirit direct your lives, and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature. For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do.*

Our sinful nature desires to control and influence our body and thought life when we walk in unison with the lusts of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit controls, directs and influences us when we walk and keep in step with Him.

The Spirit of God within us and our sinful nature have different appetites, and this is what creates our conflict within – which is mostly played out in our minds.

We cannot avoid this tension of calmly walking and living in the Spirit and the unpleasant action of fighting against our fleshly appetites.

*We have to fight to keep our faith. Try as hard as you can to win that fight... It is the life you were chosen to have when you confessed your faith in Jesus... 1 Timothy 6:12*

**THE SOLUTION:** *To surrender our will (our minds and will power) to the Holy Spirit.*

*Galatians 5:18 (nabre) But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

Paul is conveying the concept that no amount of legalism or Jewish laws can change a person's basic sinful nature within.

Being "led" and "walking in the Spirit" is the opposite to yielding to the desires of the flesh.

*Galatians 5:19-21 (nlt) When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties (orgies), and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living (habitual living) that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

**OUR CRUCIFIXION:** *The old sinful nature must be crucified!*

*Galatians 5:24 "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*

**Romans 6** explains the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

- Christ not only died for us, **but we died with Christ.**

- Christ died for us to remove the penalty of our sin, but **we died with Christ to break sin's power.**

*Galatians 2:20 (niv) "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

It is our responsibility to believe this and to act on it through faith and obedience.

We must not make "*provision for the flesh*" (**Romans 13:14**) by feeding it the things that it enjoys.

**PRODUCING FRUIT:** *The Holy Spirit enables us to produce the good fruit of character.*

*Galatians 5:22–23 The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.*

Fruit is alive and in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:25 "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

- Jesus desires that we produce "*much more fruit.*" (**John 15:2, 5**)

- Our Christian character is built by applying these nine fruits of the Spirit into our daily lives.

The cultivation process of fruit is important. Spiritual fruit grows in a climate of walking in the Spirit and the application of the Word in our daily lives.

*Galatians 5:25* means to “*keep in step with the Spirit*” - not to run ahead and not to lag behind – but to walk in rhythm with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works within us to be free from the grip of sin and self. He enables us to fulfil the law of love, to overcome the flesh, and to bear fruit.

**Will you yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him do His work in your life?**