

# Let's Worship God

1st - 6th July 2024  
Galatians



# Galatians

## **Monday - Galatians 5:13-21 - Right and Wrong Uses of Freedom**

All through this letter Paul has been arguing that the Galatians are free. They're not to submit again to slavery by obeying the law in a futile effort to get right with God. Being a Christian means you're free! To use Paul's own words, it means you're not under law, but under grace! Your standing before God and your place in Heaven doesn't depend on what you do. And yet because we're sinful human beings, we tend to jump on that word 'freedom' and think: 'great, this means that we can live however we like!' And so Paul wants to leave the Galatian Christians in no doubt that this call to freedom isn't an excuse to live however they like.

'It doesn't matter what you believe - it's how you live your life that counts' Have you heard that said before? But the Apostle Paul shows us again and again that you can't just separate the two things so easily. What you believe will affect how you live. We see it here in this letter he writes to the Galatian churches. The first 5 and a half chapters are about what you must believe. And the last chapter and a half is about how you're to live. So first what you're to believe, then, in light of that, how you're to live. False teaching will affect how you live. If the Galatians follow the false teachers, it will eventually bear fruit in how they live. OR -- if they misunderstand Paul's arguments AGAINST the false teaching, it will also affect how they live. And so Paul warns them in v13. Being led by the Spirit doesn't mean you can do things which grieve the Spirit. Not being under law as a way of getting right with God, doesn't mean you can disobey the law. And so Paul says: 'Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh'.

While the works of the flesh include sins of the body, they also include sins of the mind, and sins of speech. We see that in these verses. The works of the flesh are the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in vs 22 and 23. The works of the flesh are living in any of the ways you used to live before you were a Christian. They're living the way people who don't have the Holy Spirit live. And the easy thing for us to do is to apply these things to the world around us. That can be such a get out clause for Christians. Giving off about how bad a world it is out there is easy. Whereas actually facing up to our own individual sins, confessing them, repenting of them, and fighting against them -- that's a lot harder.

### **Questions**

1. What affects how we live?
2. Why is it easier to point out other people's sins?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would look at our own sins and strive to kill them.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 86 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Tuesday - Galatians 5:13-21 - What Not To Use Your Freedom For

Look at some of the things Paul mentions here. V15: Biting and devouring one another. Those words describe what animals do to one another. But they also describe what churchgoing people do to one another. So how is your speech? How do you speak to your fellow Christians? How do you talk about them if they're not there. People in the world are absolutely vicious in how they talk about one another. Christians should stand out as different.

In V19 we have sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality. We live in a society that's obsessed with sex. Have you stopped trying to swim against the tide? Are your thoughts and actions in this area different because you're a Christian?

And then look at some of the sins mentioned in v20. 'Strife'. Do arguments seem to follow you around? Are you always falling out with people? If so, that's a warning sign that you may not actually have the Holy Spirit within you.

Then there's rivalries and envy. Are you always looking at other peoples' lives and wishing that yours could be more like theirs? In the last verse of the chapter, Paul will come back to envying again. It's a big deal. And notice that he's talking about envying other Christians. He uses the word one another.

The last two works of the flesh in v20 should be particularly uncomfortable reading for Scottish Presbyterian churches. 'Dissensions' and 'divisions'. There are divisions in congregations, splits in denominations. Occasionally these may be for the sake of truth. But so often they're little more than personality clashes dressed up in pious language. Beware of the tendency which says: 'if I don't get my way, I'm going to leave'.

Seeing some of the sins on these lists should frighten us. Now that's not to say that if you commit any of the sins listed here you mustn't be a Christian. This is a war. There are times you will stumble and fall. But the pattern of your life will be in the opposite direction. The pattern of your life will be one of obedience. And not reluctant obedience, but as v17 says, you'll want to do it. The overwhelming desire of your life will be to please God.

### Questions

1. What is the warning about these sins?
2. What should be the pattern of our life?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would put sin to death in our life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 87 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## **Wednesday - Galatians 5:13-26- What To Use Your Freedom For**

What then are we to do with our freedom? Paul gives a shocking answer to that question in v13. 'Through love serve one another'. The freedom that we have in Christ isn't a freedom to do whatever we like. We have been set free to serve one another. The world's idea of freedom isn't sacrificial love for one another! But this is true freedom. It will be one of the marks of true followers of Jesus Christ.

In v22 Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. These fruit are above all a description of Jesus Christ. So if you want to know what love is like, look at Jesus. If you want to know what joy is like, what peace is like, what patience is like, and so on -- look at him. He was filled with the Holy Spirit beyond measure, and so the fruit of the Spirit is first and foremost seen in him. The primary fruit of the Spirit is love. Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian, said that whenever we see love in a list of virtues in the Bible, the other virtues are all just expressions of that love. Patience is an expression of love when you're being aggravated to be impatient. Kindness is an expression of love in practical ways to someone in need. Faithfulness is an expression of love in a situation where someone is trusting you to do something.

In v14, Paul says 'the whole law is fulfilled in one word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. We're more used to Jesus' summary of the law, which says it's about loving God AND loving our neighbour. So why does Paul only include loving our neighbour? Well partly it's because he takes the loving God bit for granted. If we don't love God, we won't know how to love our neighbour. But it's also because our love for God will be seen in how we love our neighbour. So what is love? It's the lifestyle that puts self to death. The attitude which says: It would be easier to do one thing -- but I'm going to do the other instead. And the more we walk by the Spirit, the more natural it becomes. And so in v25, keeping in step with the Spirit is being conformed to him, living how he wants us to live. How do we know what that looks like? Not by feelings, but by God's word.

What false teaching tries to do is take our eyes off Jesus: Take our eyes off him as our hope for Heaven, and look at ourselves instead. And take our eyes of him as a guide for living, and do what's right in our own eyes instead. What Paul is doing here is ultimately pointing us back to Jesus.

### **Questions**

1. Whom do the fruits of the Spirit describe?
2. How do we know how to walk by the Spirit?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would walk by the Spirit.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 88 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Thursday - Galatians 6:1 - Change

'Change is a community project'. That phrase is used by Tim Chester in his book: *You Can Change*. But what does it mean? Well the word 'change' talks about God's work in our lives to make us more like Jesus. It's about the calling we have when we become Christians to put to death our old way of thinking and living and walk in step with the Spirit. Healthy things grow. And the Bible expects us as Christians to be growing in holiness and in likeness to Jesus.

But what does it mean to say that 'change is a community project'? Well to put it simply, we're not going to become more like Jesus by ourselves. This change isn't going to happen if we just sit at home, read our Bibles by ourselves, read Christian books, and listen to sermons on the internet. Those are all good and helpful things. But we don't read in the New Testament about individual Christians. We read about communities of believers. The letters in the New Testament are written either to churches, or to those who were ministers of churches. A few of them are written to scattered Christians, but the contents of the letters assume that those scattered Christians are meeting together with other Christians, and they tell them not to give up doing so.

And we're not just commanded to meet together, we're called to be involved in each other's lives. We're called to encourage one another, build one another up, teach and admonish one another, be at peace with one another, confess our sins to one another. And here, Paul says in v1: 'If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him'. As we spend time with one another as Christians, we'll see each other's sins and flaws. And that's not something we should see as a risk or an unwelcome side effect. It's part of God's plan! As Sinclair Ferguson puts it: 'The church is a community in which we receive spiritual help, but also one in which deep-seated problems will come to the surface and require treatment'. He says that as part of being together 'We often discover things about our own hearts which we never anticipated'. And we also discover things about other people, which the easiest thing would be to ignore. But God is bringing those things to light precisely so that they can be dealt with.

### Questions

1. Should Christians be isolated from other Christians?
2. What does this verse tell us to do?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for your church family.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 89- See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Friday - Galatians 6:1-5 - Getting Your Hands Dirty

Sometimes we'll see sin in others' lives - and they'll see sin in ours - and we'll just want to leave it there. But just seeing it isn't enough. We're called not to look the other way, but to address it. That's not to say we're to point out all the rough edges we see in each other. Paul is talking here about things that are actually sinful. Now, not all sins are to be treated in this way. Some sins must be dealt with more severely. Paul comes down hard on the false teachers in Galatia because they're leading others astray. When people are deliberately and knowingly rejecting the law of God, a gentle correction from a fellow church member isn't what's called for. They're way past that point. Instead, what's needed in that situation is the leadership of the church to intervene and try and get across to them the seriousness of what it is that they're doing. Paul's talking here in v1 about being caught, or overtaken, in transgression. As someone has put it: 'The phrase "caught in any transgression" doesn't refer to deliberate, habitual sin'. But lesser sins are still serious. In fact, all big sins start out as smaller sins. If they're not dealt with, they'll grow.

We can be all too good at noticing other peoples' sins and identifying what the problem is, but then just talking about it among ourselves, judging them, condemning them, and not doing anything about it. Nor can we avoid getting involved because we feel inadequate. If this is something that God calls us to do, then saying 'well who am I to correct them?' isn't going to cut it. But maybe you object: "it says in v1 'you who are spiritual'. And there are people who are far more spiritual than me". But this isn't a description of some sort of super level of Christian. It's simply a reference to those who are living out the Christian life.

If you have a bad smell coming from somewhere in your house, and you get a plumber out to investigate. You don't want one who's too polite to say that they smell something! Neither do you want one who'll identify the problem and then just leave you to sort it out yourself. You want someone who's prepared to get their hands dirty, and get to the root of the problem. In the same way, the surface sins in our lives are usually signs of deeper, underlying sins in our thought and attitudes. So other Christians who ignore those sins aren't helpful. Neither are other Christians who screw up their faces and say: 'that's horrible. How could you do something like that?' We need others who're going to love us enough to get their hands dirty and get involved.

### Questions

1. What is the danger of minimising sin?
2. How can Christians be helpful to other Christians?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the help and support of other Christians.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 90 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## **Saturday - Galatians 6:1-5 - Community Change is a Dangerous Project**

There will be dangers as we seek to help each other overcome the sins in our lives. That's not a reason not to do it. But it is a reason to be prepared. Our attempt to intervene could be done harshly -- or from a sense of pride. That's why Paul says in v1 that we are to restore others in a spirit of gentleness. The sin we're being called to deal with here isn't obstinate rebellion against God. It's that of genuine believers who have been ensnared by the devil in one of his traps. And if we genuinely want to see them restored, coming down like a ton of bricks isn't the way to go about it. Paul goes on to say at the end of v1: 'Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted'. He doesn't mean by that: lest we too are tempted to do the same thing that they're doing. But: lest we too are tempted and fall into the sin of pride. That's why he says in v3: 'For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself'. Our biggest temptation when correcting others will be to do so out of a sense that we're better than them. But if we come with that sort of attitude, it means that we've become proud and self-righteous.

V2 here is a verse that's often quoted. 'Bear one another's burdens'. And we tend to assume that means to bear peoples' practical burdens. The principle certainly applies to those things. But in context, the burden we're being called to carry is the burden of others' sins. If we're not ready to bear the burden of someone else's sin, then according to these verses the root of our problem is pride. That might be the pride that comes from a fear of man, where we wonder what they'll think of us. It might be the pride of thinking we're too good to get involved. But if we really care about the person, we'll try and help them.

V4 is another warning about the danger of pride. It's saying: don't make comparisons. Don't compare yourself to others in the church to try and make yourself feel better. The only person who the Bible calls us to compare ourselves to is Jesus Christ. And we all fall far short compared to him. The last verse of our passage, v5, reminds us that judgement is coming. We won't have to answer for others' sins. We'll have to answer for our own. So don't get distracted by comparing yourself to others.

### **Questions**

1. What are the dangers of pride when trying to help someone?
2. Who should we be comparing ourselves to?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

**Praise: Psalm 91 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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