

LIVE FREE

Week 7 - Free to Live Free!

Galatians 5:13-26

Pastor Stephanie Smith

I. Free, but...

- a. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free; stand firm....You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But..." (Galatians 5:1, 13)
- b. Paul warns the Galatians about dangers from without *and* within. Watch out!
- c. Living free:
 - i. When we live for Christ and accept His leadership over our lives, we belong to Him. He sets us free! (Galatians 2:20-21)
 - ii. We may get free from one form of bondage only to find ourselves in another: bondage to *self*. (vs. 13)

II. Free from sin. (vss. 16-21)

- a. When we are controlled by the Spirit, we are free from our *flesh*, or sinful nature.
- b. *Flesh* defined as "the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God"¹ – our desires, emotions, sense, reason, attitudes, actions without the Holy Spirit's control.
- c. My sinful nature, or flesh, and the Spirit are in conflict. (vss. 16-18, NLT)
- d. "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these." (vss. 19-21)
 - i. Romans 7 – The war between what I want to do vs. what I actually do
 - ii. James 1:13-15 explains the sin cycle.
 - iii. My flesh desires more (lust, longing, craving). What we feed, grows. Feeding desires leads to stronger desires, not satisfaction. (Galatians 5:9)
 - iv. Choices lead to consequences: "...anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God." (vs. 21b)
 - v. Take a long hard look into the mirror of God's Word (the Bible) to see the truth about ourselves and find true, lasting freedom! (James 1:21-25)

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4561&t=NIV>

III. Free to live by the Spirit!

- a. When we walk by and are led by the Spirit, we live by the Spirit! (vs. 16)
- b. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (vss. 22-23)
- c. “Against such things there is no law.” (vs. 23b)
 - i. “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (vs. 18) Why?
 - ii. The Great Commandment: Love God and love others. (Matthew 22:36-40, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18)
 1. Free to “serve one another humbly in love.” (vss. 13)
 2. Free to serve God and others – “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (vss. 14, 22-23)
- d. The fruit of the Spirit is:
 - i. Made possible through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.
 1. Believe + Receive = Become/Belong (Romans 8:1-9, 12-14, NLT)
 2. God never asks something of us that He hasn’t provided for already!
 - ii. Accomplished by the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. (Titus 3:3-7, 1 Corinthians 8:19-20)
 - iii. Evidence of transformation!
 1. Fruit grows and ripens over time.
 2. How do we view our spiritual lives? Straight line vs. spiral.²
 - iv. Cooperation with the Spirit’s work in our lives.
 1. “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desire.” (vs. 24)
 2. “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (vs. 25)
 3. “Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives.” (vs. 25, The Message)
 4. We must humbly come before God and admit that we are sinners. Luke 18:9-14 – The Pharisee and the Tax Collector, “O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.”

Reflection Questions:

- What “fruit” is showing up in my life – evidence of my sin or God’s Spirit?
- What truth is the Holy Spirit showing me today about myself?
- How am I cooperating with the Spirit’s work in my life, and where am I resisting?
- Living free begins with confession. What needs to change in my life?

² Illustration by Dr. Alicia Britt Chole.