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Freedom in Christ

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
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or Roget's Thesaurus - **February 19, 2017**

Galatians 5:1-17

Introduction: This chapter is properly a continuation of the argument in the previous chapter, and is designed to induce the Galatians to **renounce** their conformity to the **Jewish law**, and to become entirely **conformed** to the **gospel**. In particular, it seems to be designed to meet a **charge** that had been brought against him, that he had preached the necessity of circumcision, or that he had so practiced it as to show that **he believed** that it was obligatory (requiring performance, imposing DUTY) on others. Under his example, or pleading his authority, it seems the **FALSE teachers** there had **urged** the **necessity** of its **observance**; see Gal. 5:11. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:1, Stand fast (be stationary [FIXED]) therefore in the LIBERTY (freedom [exemption from SLAVERY]) wherewith Christ HATH made us FREE, and be NOT entangled again with the yoke of BONDAGE.

NOTE: For freedom did Christ set us free: **stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage**- The second clause here makes the identity of the FREEDOM in the first clause easy to ascertain. "There can be no doubt that it refers to freedom from the **SLAVERY of the Law of Moses.**"^[1] As a summary statement, this also shows the meaning of "FREEDOM from LAW" as taught in the previous chapters. That it never had any reference to Christian obligations, whether in the realm of obedience to the primary ordinances of God, or adherence to the ethical commandments of our holy faith, is absolutely certain.

Stand ... therefore ... Paul, by this admonished the Galatians to **hold** their ground, **resist** the **Judaizers** and **REJECT** the **persuasions** of those who would entangle them in such things as **SABBATH days, feast days, circumcision** and **ALL** other **Jewish regulations**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Colossians 2:13-16, And you, being **DEAD** in your sins and the **uncircumcision** of your FLESH, hath he (*Yahweh*) **quicken together** with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; **Blotting out** the **handwriting of ordinances (LAW)** that was **against US**, which was contrary to us, and took it OUT OF the WAY, **nauling it** to his CROSS; Let no man therefore (for this reason) **JUDGE you** in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an **holyday**, or of the new moon, or of the **SABBATH days...**

Galatians 5:2, Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you NOTHING.

NOTE: Circumcision, **Christ will profit you nothing ...** There were **exceptions** to this rule, for Paul himself had been circumcised; and what is meant is "that circumcision

with any view to its **aiding** or **leading** to **one's justification** would be a **DENIAL of Christ**, a repudiation (DIVORCE, REJECTION) of the Christian gospel and the **forsaking** of **Christianity.**" As MacKnight said, "This general expression must be limited; because we cannot suppose that the **circumcision** of the **Jewish believers** incapacitated (disabled) them from **being profited** by Christ."

The deduction is mandatory that the **purpose** of the **Judaizers** among the **Galatians** had made this their purpose, to circumcise the Galatians, no doubt representing to them that it was no great thing and did not involve them in the more onerous (burdensome) and expensive **obligations** of **Judaism.**

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Thought 1. When Paul had Timothy circumcised, it was to make him more ACCEPTABLE to the Jews as he preached the gospel.

Acts 16:1-3, Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named **Timotheus**, the son of a certain woman, which was a **Jewess**, and **believed**; but his father was a **Greek**: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and **circumcised him** because of the JEWS which were in those quarters: for they **KNEW ALL** that his father was a **Greek.**

1 Corinthians 9:19-20, 22, For though I be FREE from ALL men, yet have I MADE myself SERVANT unto all, that I might **GAIN** the more. And unto the **Jews** I became **AS a JEW**, that I might GAIN the JEWS; to them that are UNDER the LAW, **AS UNDER the LAW**, that I might **GAIN them** that **are UNDER the law...**
To the weak became I AS WEAK, that I might GAIN the weak: **I am MADE ALL THINGS** to ALL MEN, that I might by ALL means **SAVE some.**

Galatians 5:3, For I testify again to **every man** that is **circumcised**, that he is a **DEBTOR** to DO the WHOLE LAW.

NOTE: ...he is a debtor to do the whole law. So it was no small thing at all the Judaizers had in MIND. They would impose the whole corpus (BODY) of Jewish law-keeping on the Christian converts of Galatia; and in the process, the gospel of Christ would be totally neglected and replaced.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Colossians 2:11-12, (Jesus) In whom also ye **are circumcised** with the **circumcision** made WITHOUT HANDS, in putting off the body of the sins of the **flesh** by the **circumcision of Christ:** Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the **FAITH** of the operation of God, who hath **raised him** from the **dead.**

Galatians 5:4, Christ is become of NO EFFECT unto you, whosoever of you **are justified** by the LAW; **YE are FALLEN from (drop away) GRACE.**

NOTE: Howard observed that "This, in capsule form, is his contention throughout the entire argument. All the other points climax in this" ...

The present tense in this verse must be read as indicating that SOME of the Galatians had **actually defected from Christianity** in the manner indicated, with the result that they had "FALLEN FROM GRACE." Apparently, Paul was no Calvinist.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Luke 8:13, They on the **rock** are they, which, when they hear, **receive** the **word** with joy; and these have no root, which **for a WHILE BELIEVE**, and in TIME of **temptation (experience of EVIL) FALL AWAY (desert, DEPART, withdraw self).**

1 Timothy 4:1, Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **SOME** shall **DEPART** from **the FAITH**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of **devils**...

Romans 11:19-20 ...The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted IN. Well; because of **UNBELIEF** they **were broken off**, and thou standest **by FAITH** (reliance upon **CHRIST** for salvation; **CONSTANCY** [fixedness]) **in such profession**).

Galatians 5:5, For **WE** through **the Spirit** **wait for (expect fully)** the **hope of righteousness (justification** [remission {forgiveness} of sin and absolution from guilt and punishment]) by faith.

NOTE: Through the Spirit - The Holy Spirit. We expect salvation only by his aid.

Wait for - That is, we EXPECT SALVATION in this way. The main idea is, NOT that of waiting as if the thing were delayed; it is that of **expecting**. The sense is, that true Christians have no other hope of salvation than **by FAITH in** the **Lord Jesus**. It is NOT by their OWN WORKS, nor is it by ANY conformity to the LAW. The object of Paul is, to show them the true nature of the Christian hope of eternal life, and to recall them from dependence on their conformity to the Law.

The hope of righteousness - The hope of justification. They had no other HOPE of justification than by FAITH in the Redeemer; see the note at Romans 1:17.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/brn/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:6, For **IN** Jesus Christ **neither circumcision availeth (have force)** any thing, nor **uncircumcision**; but **FAITH** which **worketh (be active, shew forth self)** by **LOVE**.

NOTE: This means "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is relevant to Christianity." The question of true justification does not regard such a thing in any manner whatever. Some have wondered why Paul included "uncircumcision" in this declaration; but, as many of the Galatian converts had been won from the Jewish synagogues (where **Paul** always **went FIRST with the gospel**), it was mandatory that none of them should be concerned with the fact that they had been circumcised long ago, nor concern themselves with trying to UNDO it. Some indeed had, **through surgery**, attempted to **become "uncircumcised."**

... As Howard correctly summarized it, "For salvation, circumcision had no value; and for salvation, uncircumcision had no value."

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

NOTE: but faith which works by love; faith has a concern in justification and salvation, not by way of causal influence, but as it is that grace which receives the righteousness of Christ, through which we are saved, and kept by the power of God unto salvation; yet not any sort of faith, but that which is **operative, is attended with good WORKS**; and which works itself **by love** to God, to Christ, to his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances. The Syriac version renders it, "which is perfected by love"; that is, is **SHOWED** to be **right, true, and genuine** thereby; see James 2:22.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:7-8, Ye did **run well**; who did **hinder you** that ye should NOT **OBEY** the **truth**? This **PERSUASION** cometh NOT of (FROM) him that calleth you.

NOTE: You ran well: Paul remembers their good start **IN the faith**, but he also knows that it ISN'T enough to START WELL - they are still in DANGER of falling from GRACE.

b. **Who hindered you from obeying the truth?** Paul knows that the false teaching comes from a person (who hindered you); but it didn't come from Jesus (**This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you**).

i. At the root of it all, the Galatians were leaving Jesus to pursue the FALSE and EMPTY teachings of man, in this case **legalism**.

ii. Lightfoot on **hindered**: “A metaphor derived from **military operations**. The word signifies ‘to break up a road’ . . . so as to render it impassable, and is therefore the opposite of . . . ‘to clear a way.’” (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:9, A little **leaven (ferment [that which causes fermentation, as yeast]) leaveneth (cause to ferment)** the **WHOLE** lump.

NOTE: c. **A little leaven leavens the whole lump:** The warning is driven home - the corrupting influence of legalism and other doctrines that diminish Jesus are like **leaven** in a **lump of dough**. A little bit soon corrupts the **whole lump**.

i. In the Jewish way of thinking, **leaven** ALMOST ALWAYS stood for **evil influence**. Paul is saying that the legalistic commitment they have right now may be small, but it is so dangerous that it can **corrupt everything**.

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:10, I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that **troubleth you shall bear his judgment**, whosoever he be.

NOTE: I have confidence ... Paul did NOT believe that the **Judaizers** would succeed in Galatia, and they did not succeed. All efforts to meld Judaism WITH Christianity were thwarted and checkmated by this very epistle and other New Testament writings. See under Galatians 5:12 for comment on "IN the Lord."

Shall bear his judgment ... The Judaizer (whether one or more) would bear the judgment Paul had written a moment earlier, that of being "severed from Christ," "fallen from grace," etc. (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:11, And I, brethren, if I yet **preach circumcision**, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

NOTE: If I still preach circumcision ... This evidently refers to the **allegations** (claims) of the false teachers to the effect that Paul himself **taught circumcision**, an argument they reinforced, no doubt, by appealing to the known instance of **Paul's circumcising Timothy**, whose mother was a Jewess (Acts 16:3). Paul's reason for doing that, however, had nothing whatever to do with Timothy's salvation, but was for the purpose of avoiding and **frustrating** Jewish persecution. Any allegation that Paul considered circumcision as related in any manner to salvation was effectively denied by the fact that "IF Paul indeed honored **circumcision** in any such way, the Jews would have **stopped persecuting** him."

The stumbling-block of the cross ... The **cross of Christ** was preeminently (supremely) above everything else the center and citadel (tower of strength) of Christian HOPE; and if Paul trusted circumcision for anything, **reliance** upon the Great Atonement would have been forfeited. But is NOT forfeited. The cross remains!

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:12, I would they were even **cut off (amputate; reflexively by irony) to mutilate the privy parts)** which **trouble you**.

NOTE: ...wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! Finally, Paul wishes that those who demanded circumcision among the Gentiles would go all the way themselves, and amputate their genitalia altogether, NOT merely their foreskins.

i. **Sacred castration** was known to citizens of the ancient world; it was frequently practiced by PAGAN PRIESTS in the cults in the **region of Galatia**. Paul's idea here is something like this: "If cutting will make you righteous, why don't you do like the pagan priests, go all the way and CASTRATE yourself?" Morris rightly observes, "This was a dreadful thing to wish, but then **the teaching** was a **dreadful thing** to inflict on young Christians."

ii. "This word was habitually used to describe the **practice of mutilation** which was so prevalent in the **Phrygian worship of Cybele**. The Galatians were necessarily familiar with it, and it can hardly bear any other sense." (Rendall)

iii. In writing this, Paul also wished that these **legalists** would be **cut off from the congregation of the Lord** as required by Deuteronomy 23:1: (*He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.*) (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:13, For, brethren, ye have been called unto **liberty**; only use **NOT liberty** for an occasion to the **FLESH (Carnality [fleshly desires, or the indulgence of those lusts])**, but by **LOVE SERVE** one another.

NOTE: I. That they should **not strive with** one another, but **LOVE one another**. He tells them (Galatians 5:13) that they had been called unto liberty, and he would have them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free but yet he would have them be very careful that they did NOT USE this liberty as an **occasion** to the **flesh**--that they did not thence take occasion to indulge themselves in any CORRUPT affections (FEELINGS, emotions, DESIRES) and practices, and particularly such as might create distance and disaffection, and be the **ground of quarrels** and **contentions** among them: but, on the contrary, he would have them by LOVE to serve one another, to maintain that mutual love and affection which, notwithstanding any minor differences there might be among them, would dispose them to all those offices of respect and kindness to each other which the Christian religion obliged them to. Note, 1. The liberty we enjoy as Christians is **NOT a Licentious** (unrestrained by morality) **liberty**: though Christ has redeemed us from the CURSE of the LAW, yet he has NOT FREED us from the **obligation** of it. The gospel is a doctrine according to **godliness** (1 Timothy 6:3)....

(Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:14, For all the **LAW** is **fulfilled** in **ONE word**, even in this; Thou shalt **LOVE thy neighbor as (LIKE) thyself**.

NOTE: Love is the sum of the WHOLE LAW as **love to God** comprises the **duties** of the first table, so **love to our neighbour** those of the second. The apostle takes notice of the latter here, because he is speaking of their **behaviour towards** one another and, when he makes use of this as an argument to persuade them to MUTUAL LOVE, he intimates both that this would be a good evidence of their sincerity in religion and also the most likely means of **rooting out** those **dissensions** and **divisions** that were among them. It will APPEAR that we are the disciples of Christ indeed when we have LOVE one to another (John 13:35)... (Source: <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/mhm/galatians-5.html>)

Romans 13:8-10, Owe no man any thing, but to **LOVE** one another: for he that **Loveth** another HATH **fulfilled (satisfy** [MEET requirements], **complete**; performed) **the LAW**. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, and IF there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt LOVE thy neighbour as** (just like) **THYSELF**. **LOVE worketh NO ill** to his neighbour: therefore **LOVE is the fulfilling (completion** [execution: performance]) **of the Law**.

1 John 3:22-23, And whatsoever we ASK, we receive of him (Yahweh), because we KEEP his commandments, and DO those things that are pleasing in HIS sight. And this is **his COMMANDMENT**, That we should **BELIEVE on** the name (authority) of his son Jesus Christ and **LOVE one another**, as he gave us commandment.

Galatians 5:15, But if ye **BITE** (reproach [shame] with sarcasm [taunt] {insulting INVECTIVE!)

INVECTIVE, a HARSH or reproachful (shameful, censorious, UPBRAIDING) accusation.

It differs from REPROOF (rebuke), as the latter may come from a **FRIEND** and be intended to the GOOD of the person reproofed (REBUKED, SCOLDED); but *INVECTIVE* proceeds from an **ENEMY**, and is intended to give PAIN or to INJURE.

...and **DEVOUR** one another, **take heed** that ye be **NOT consumed** (destroyed) one of another.

NOTE: If, instead of acting like men and **Christians**, they would behave themselves more like brute beasts, in **tearing** and **rending** one another, they could expect nothing as the consequence of it, but that they would be **consumed one of another** and therefore they had the greatest reason **NOT** to indulge themselves in such QUARRELS and ANIMOSITIES. (Source: <https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/mhm/galatians-5.html>)

Galatians 5:16, This I say then, **Walk (live, deport [behave]) IN** (by or through) the **Spirit**, and ye shall NOT fulfil the **lust (desire)** of the **FLESH**.

Flesh defined 4561, sarx; FLESH i.e. (by implication) HUMAN NATURE (with its frailties [physically or morally] and passions [the FEELING of the MIND; excitement, agitation of MIND; as DESIRE, fear, hope, joy, grief, love, hatred. EMOTIONS]).

Galatians 5:17, For the **FLESH** lusteth (long for, DESIRE) against the Spirit, and the **Spirit** against the FLESH: and these are **CONTRARY** the **ONE** to the other: so that **YE CANNOT DO** the things that ye **would (DESIRE)**.

Thought 1. Jesus brought in a New Covenant AFTER he fulfilled the Old Covenant, which, as we know, is **the LAW**. So, to **BE** OF the Spirit is to **BE** OF the New Covenant, **not under the law**.

When they **were** under the Law, they **WERE** "In the FLESH" (not born of the Spirit) and, as he said, Ye cannot do the things (*the good*) that ye would (DESIRE)." See also Romans 7.

Romans 7:5, 7-8, 18-19, For when we **WERE IN** the **FLESH**, the **motions (influence)** of **SINS**, which were by the LAW, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death ...Is the **LAW sin?** God forbid. Nay, I had not **known sin**, but by the **law**: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the **commandment**, wrought IN me all manner of **concupiscence (DESIRE)**.

...For I know that **in** me (that is, in my **flesh (human nature: old man)**), dwelleth no good thing: For to **will** is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I **would (desire)**, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Thought 2. Being **IN** Jesus means they were no longer **IN** the flesh, but "IN the Spirit" and therefore, now, **CAN DO** all things (even good) through Christ our strength, Phil. 4:13.

Romans 8:9, But ye are **NOT** in the **flesh** (*the old nature, the old man*), but IN the **Spirit**, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Galatians 5:18, But **IF** (since) **YE be led (BE)** OF the **Spirit**, **YE are NOT UNDER the LAW**.

Led defined 71, to lead; by implication, to BRING, drive, (reflexively) go, (specially) pass (time), or (fig.) induce (PRODUCE by influence): -- BE (COME into EXISTENCE).

Thought 1. Moses, the children of Israel, and all of the obedient prophets/prophetesses of old, were "**LED**" by God's Spirit, but were still **UNDER the LAW**. This means the translators should NOT have chosen "**LED**" as the meaning of the Greek word here.

Romans 8:14, For as many as are **led (BE)** [come into EXISTENCE] **BY the Spirit** of God, they are the sons of God.