

Our Liberty in Christ

1Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,¹ and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. **2**Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.² **3**For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.³ **4**Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.⁴ **5**For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. **6**For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

The Leaven of Legalism

7Ye did run well;⁵ who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? **8**This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. **9**A little leaven leaveneth⁶ the whole lump. **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. **11**And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer

persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.⁷ **12**I would they were even cut off⁸ which trouble you. **13**For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.⁹ **14**For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.¹⁰ **15**But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.¹¹

Led by the Spirit

16*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. **17**For the flesh lusteth 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.¹² **18**But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

The Lewdness of the Flesh

19Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, **20**Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **21**Envyings, murders, drunkenness,

¹ We are “free” because of Jesus Christ - John 8:32, 36, Rom. 6:18, 8:2, 2 Cor. 3:17, Gal. 2:4, 4:31.

² This is a direct challenge to the legalism that was being taught in Acts 15:2.

³ If you’re going to try to be justified by the law, you can’t pick and choose which parts you are going to keep and which parts you are going to ignore. It doesn’t work like that, regardless of how much the lost, religious crowd wants it to be so. See Rom. 2:25 and Gal. 3:10.

⁴ Many take this verse out of context to teach that a believer who is born again can lose his or her salvation. These are lost religious people who have come to the threshold of salvation but have yet to cross the line of true repentance and faith from their own dead works. They have fallen from grace, not as believers, but as those who can be saved but won’t let go of their own self-righteousness.

⁵ It’s not about how you start – it’s about how you finish. The Galatians had started well right outside the gate, but now they had stumbled because of the bad influences they were listening to.

⁶ Leaven in the Bible is a picture of sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

⁷ Paul could have taken the “easy” way out and compromised the gospel message by not confronting these Judiazers. He did not. Therefore, he was the subject of persecution for his stand for the truth.

⁸ “Cut off” – Paul is wishing for their troubler’s demise. This is like his prayer in 1 Cor. 5:5 and 1 Tim. 1:18-20.

⁹ We have liberty to do the right thing, not the wrong thing.

¹⁰ The Law can be summarized by the Ten Commandments generally speaking. If you love your neighbor, you won’t kill him, you won’t commit adultery with his wife, you won’t steal from him, you won’t bear false witness against him, and you won’t lust after whatever he has.

¹¹ Many Christians, especially Independent Baptists, “Ruckmanites,” “Fundamentalists,” or “Bible Believers” have Ph.D.’s in devouring one another. This is in sharp contrast to the commandments of Jesus. See John 13:35, 15:12, 17

¹² The companion passage for this Romans chapter 7 in its entirety.

revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.¹³

Limitless Fruit through the Spirit

22But the fruit¹⁴ of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.¹⁵ 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.¹⁶ 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.¹⁷

**All commentary is by Pastor John David Howe, Th.D.*

¹³ Compare with 1 Cor. 6:9-11. This "inheritance" is not a salvation issue, but rather it is a reward issue for faithful service. Also compare 2 Tim. 2:11-13 and 2 John 8.

¹⁴ Very often, people refer to this as the "fruits" of the Spirit. But term isn't plural, it is singular. There are not nine different "fruits" – there are nine elements that make up *the fruit* (singular) of the Spirit. The believer ought to demonstrate all these elements if he is "walking in the Spirit" and not the lusts of the flesh. "Nine" is the number of fruitfulness in the Bible. God tells Noah and his sons to be "fruitful" and multiply in

Gen. 9:1. Note that Galatians is the 9th book of the Bible. The fruit of the spirit is mentioned in chapter 5, verse 22, which is 5 + 2 + 2 = 9. "King James" has 9 letters. "1611" is 1 + 6 + 1 + 1 = 9. Scholarship will tell you that ALL of this is a coincidence. Let the reader be the judge of such matters.

¹⁵ Compare also with Gal. 2:20 and 6:14.

¹⁶ To "live" in the Spirit and "walk" in the Spirit, you must first be "born" by the Spirit (John 3:3-7) and "baptized" by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Those are the prerequisites.

¹⁷ Note Jer. 9:23-24.