

**Galatians**  
**“Living Free”**  
**Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10**  
**C. 5:1-6:10 Responded Grace**  
**2. 5:13-26 Power of performance**

**5:13-18**  
**“The Fifth Freedom”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 13-15 Purple elephants and Ice cream Sundays**

**III. Vs. 16-18 New hard drive**

**I. Intro.**

On January 6<sup>th</sup> 1941 Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to persuade Americans that it was in their interests to align themselves against Nazism and dictatorship. He spoke of what America stood for in Four Freedoms including two values that went beyond the United States’ constitution – freedom from want and freedom from fear.

- The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.
- The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world.
- The third is freedom from want – which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world.
- The fourth is freedom from fear – which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor – anywhere in the world.

It is too bad that that Franklin D. Roosevelt didn’t include one other freedom, **a fifth**

**freedom:** *The freedom from our self and the oppression of our own sinful nature.* The legalist believed that they had the answer to the “*fifth freedom*” in laws; but no amount of outside regulations can change an inward nature. It is not law on the outside but love on

the inside that can change a nature. And the love on the inside is the power from the Holy Spirit. In this book there are over 14 references to the Holy Spirit it is His ministry within us that enables a believer to enjoy their freedom.

## II. Vs. 13-15 Purple elephants and Ice cream Sundays

Vs. 13 Jesus came to set the captives free not to put people into bondage. It's unfortunate that as far as the world is concerned they often see Christians as people that are more bound up than they are free. The one word that sums up the law is not legalism but LOVE! The antidote to struggling with the flesh is to serve people in love. Are you board? Are you battling the flesh in some area? Can't get along with a co-worker or someone else? I know how to fix your problem, get busy loving people and you will find more joy and peace than you knew was possible. Friend, freedom is the essence of all that encompasses being a Christian it is how we are to live our lives, "freed up".

The word "*opportunity*" in verse 13b is a military word that means *a base of operations, or the starting-point for an attack.* This leads to the fear from some that such freedom will be used as an opportunity to live according to the old fleshly nature. **Paul isn't questioning the possibility of this; he is challenging the antidote, legalism!** Having started this chapter with the exhortation to "*stand fast*" in "*the liberty by which Christ has made us free*" there is a question that needs to be properly defined: ***This liberty that Paul says the believer is to stand fast in must be understood in the context as one in which Christ as made us free.*** It is a liberty that Jesus has given us not one in which the world or the flesh has given us. It is a freedom FROM sin not a freedom TO sin! ***Why does God give us freedom with the possibility that we can miss appropriate this freedom as an opportunity to pursue our flesh?*** It wouldn't be freedom if we had no choice! The flesh

expects others to conform to us, and doesn't care about others. But when we, through love, serve one another we conquer the flesh. Think about Jesus; He had more liberty than anyone who ever walked this earth; yet He used His liberty to love and serve others. Notice that Paul is very specific; he says through "LOVE" serve one another. That love is the love of Jesus as it is our motivation.

Vs. 14 It's as if Paul says: "*You want to keep the law? Love your neighbor as yourself and you have fulfilled the law in one word.*" The question folks have is: ***What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?*** Some have twisted this into the idea of self-love as the foundation for a healthy self-esteem. But the **idea is that we are to love others as we naturally take care of ourselves.** "*The meaning is not that we must properly love ourselves before we can love others . . . but that we are to love our neighbor with the same spontaneity and speed with which we already love ourselves.*"

The truest measure of our spiritual state is **not: How much we pray, how much of the Bible we know, how many times we attend Church.** No the measure of our spiritual state **is:** "*How we treat others!*" Friend, you will not be able to accurately gauge your spiritual state on those that treat you well, or upon those you already love. No, you will need the nastiest, meanest, person who takes pleasure in hating you to see if you love this "*neighbor*" as you do yourself.

Vs. 15 Paul warns that the loveless life is a life lived on a level of animals who are only concerned for themselves. They bite and devour one another! What would happen if every time we said an unkind word about another person, rolled our eyes uncaringly, acted in a way that showed indifference we would feel the pain that our words and actions caused others? Would we be doubled over in excruciating pain? Ah but what it feel like if every

time we treated folks the way Jesus treats us we would experience what they felt by our words and action? The key to walking in the Spirit friend is not “*suppressing the flesh*” it’s “*surrendering to the Spirit*”! Far too many are battling the “***Sin-drome***”. The law says to the flesh, “*Don’t think about purple elephants!*” But as soon as it says that all we can do is think of purple elephants. Grace places before us a chocolate Sunday with all the fixings and says dig in and you know what happens? As you pick up the spoon for your forth bite you have totally forgotten about the purple elephants. Think about Moses who we are told twice that he didn’t eat or drink 40 days and nights. Was the reason for his fast to impress God? Nope, he was in the presence of the Lord during this time and was so enjoying the Lord that forgot to eat or drink! No amount of writing down and pledging to never think of purple elephants is going to keep you from dwelling on purple elephants. So whatever your purple elephant is the way to not be overrun by your heavy pachyderm of a problem is going to be found in replacing your purple elephant with pure blessing and joy of our glorious Sunday!

### **III. Vs. 16-18 New hard drive**

Vs. 16 If we walk in the Spirit (*instead of trying to live by the law*), we naturally will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The fear of the legalist is that walking in the Spirit gives license to sin, and that only legalism can keep us holy but that is wrong. Our walk is to be in the “Spirit” which speaks of three things:

- a. First, it means that the Holy Spirit lives in you
- b. Second, it means that we are open and sensitive to the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives
- c. Third, it means we pattern our life after the influence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit doesn’t move in us to gratify our fallen desires and passions, He guides us in the path of Jesus.

Vs. 17 The Greek word translated flesh: *“Means all that man is and is capable of as a sinful human being apart from the unmerited intervention of God’s Spirit in his life . . .”*

*Paul tells us that walking in the Spirit is not a scenic leisurely walk picking daisies; it’s a battle field where trying to avoid landmines of the flesh.* The **“new you”** doesn’t get along with the **“old you”** and when the old you is winning the battle you don’t do the things that the new you wishes to do. Even though the old man was crucified with Christ, and is dead and gone (Romans 6:6), his influence lives on through the flesh - and he will battle against us until we experience God’s final antidote to the flesh: a resurrection body. I believe ignorance of the fact that we are in a battle with our old nature is satan’s biggest advantage because if we don’t realize this truth we will always lose the battle.

Martin Luther said, *“When the flesh begins to cut up the only remedy is to take the sword of the Spirit, and fight against the flesh. If you set the Word out of sight, you are helpless against the flesh.”* It’s like we are a computer, and we have two hard drives in us. One is programmed according to the Spirit, and the other is programmed according to the flesh. In any given situation, we have to decide which “drive” we will access. You **can’t** take the “drive” of the flesh and make it as efficient as possible. God wants you to run off the “drive” of the Spirit of God. **The law is like an error message that keeps popping up on your flesh “drive.” It doesn’t fix the drive, and it sometimes makes the system crash – but it does tell you something is wrong, and it points you in the right direction.** Instead, the Spirit “drive” has programming on it that will make your software run better – and one day, when we get to heaven, God will replace that “flesh” drive with a resurrection upgrade. Until then we are told in Jeremiah 31:33 the Holy Spirit will *“put His law on our minds, and write it on our hearts; so that we will operate as He is our God.”* This is

the great work of the New Covenant, promised in the Old Testament. The inner influence is far more effective than the outer influence. The mistake that is made is that the Mosaic law is substituted for the restraint of the Holy Spirit, and with disastrous results. Only in Christianity could you ever have a true democracy, because in a true Christian state everyone would only think as much of their neighbor as they do for themselves. Christian freedom is not a license to sin, for the simple reason that the Christian is not a person who has become free to sin; they are a person by the grace of God who has become free NOT to sin.