

Bible Thoughts

with
P.H.A.Hopkins

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

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bible-thoughts.co.uk

study@bible-thoughts.co.uk

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Introduction

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

WRITER. The Apostle Paul [Gal 1.1](#)

Date: DATE. It is thought that Galatians was probably written about A.D. 53 though some think much earlier 48 or 49 from Antioch. It is possible that it was written during Paul's third visit to Corinth though some students think it was written during Paul's visit to Ephesus in the third missionary journey.

Reason. It had been brought to Paul's notice that the church at Galatia, who were not Greeks, but Gauls, were developing errors in doctrine. They wanted to add to the Death and resurrection of Christ.

The Galatian had two main errors. They felt that obeying the Law must be part of and mixed with faith as the way for the sinner being made right with God - justification.

The second error was that they believed that the justified believer is made perfect by keeping the law.

Location of Church

There is a slight problem on the location of the Galatian church. *Galatia* originally applied to tribes which had moved from Gaul (today France) into Asia Minor creating "the country of the Gauls" Galatia. However under Roman rule this area was combined with several other local areas and called Galatia. So was Paul talking about the small original area or the greater Roman province? The matter is not settled but evidence suggests he was writing to the Southern area of Galatia which contained Antich, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, churches Paul had started during the first missionary journey.

The letter is broken up in seven parts as follows:

- 1) Greetings and Salutation. Authority for writing. Gal 1:1-5
- 2) Reason for writing, Gal 1:6-9.
- 3) Paul's Gospel is a revelation, Gal 1:10 - Gal 2:14.

- 4) Being made right with God, justification, is by faith without the law, Gal 2:15 - Gal 3:24.
- 5) The control of the believer's life is through grace, not by law or legal action, Gal 3:25 - Gal 5:15.
- 6) Being set aside for God, sanctification is through the Spirit, not the law, Gal 5:16-24.
- 7) Encouragement and conclusion, Gal 5:25 - Gal 6:18.

Chapter 1

Paul starts his letter to the Galatians by showing his authority from the Lord. Paul has three sources for his authority.

v1 "Paul, an apostle:" Paul had been called by God to be a special messenger for Him. The word [apostle](#) means "a person sent with a commission". Jesus had many followers and believers who became "disciples," or learners, while He was on earth. He chose twelve men who were His special chosen disciples and were later to become apostles. [Mark 3:13-19](#) The church decided that an apostle must also have seen the Lord after His resurrection. [Acts 1:21,22](#).

Paul was neither a disciple or an apostle as a result of the earthly ministry of Jesus, some had said he was therefore not a true apostle, but he had seen the risen Lord and received a direct commission from Him as the other apostles. [Acts 9:1-18](#); [1 Cor 9:1,2](#) Paul had also been the founder of the Galatian church [Gal 4:12-19](#), he therefore had great love for them but this was obviously not being returned.

v3-5 Paul restates the basic Gospel message, it was this message that the Judaizers were trying to change. The cross is often referred to by Paul in this letter [Gal 2:19-21](#); [Gal 3:1,13](#); [Gal 4:5](#); [Gal 5:11,24](#); [Gal 6:12-14](#). The price was paid by Christ on the cross but now the Judaizers wanted to add to this act of grace. Freedom in Christ or back into slavery, bondage by the Judaizers.

v5 Why did Paul do all this? To the glory of God.

v6,7 "I am amazed you have turned away so quickly" Paul is very concerned for the Galatians leaving the grace of God for another 'gospel', they were going from a life of grace back to law. They were leaving a gift of God, salvation through His grace. They had been called by God to salvation now they were rejecting it. [Eph 2:8-10](#)

Not only were they rejecting the Grace of God but the Judaizers were claiming that they were preaching "the Gospel", but their gospel was centered on 'works', the death of Christ plus works through the Law was what was need for salvation, according to them.

v8-10 Paul tells the Galatian that even if he or an angel comes with a different gospel to what he has preached, then he would be cursed by God. My message is to please God, not be popular with men.

v11,12 The message given by Paul is from God, not man, I received it from Jesus Christ in heaven. [1 Cor 15:1-10](#)

v13,14 Paul reminds them of his past attacks on the Christian faith. [Acts 8:1](#); [Acts 9:1,2](#); Paul thought that Jesus was a fake, an impostor and His message a lie. His persecution of the "Nazarene sect" was well known in the Jewish leadership.

v15,16 Paul meets Jesus through the grace of God. [Acts 9:1-9](#) Suddenly Paul's life is changed, how can you explain this change, the Judaizers gospel would not cause it, only God because it was part of His plan.

v16 Paul's life was full of religion but salvation came from God through His Son Jesus for the salvation of others through the coming ministry of Paul.

v16-23 Paul had very little contact with other believers following his conversion, God lead him into isolation so there was little contact with the Jewish church, as this would have been a problem in taking the gospel to the Gentiles. After a short period in Da-

mascus God leads him into Arabia for what appears to be three years v18. Paul initially returns to Damascus [Acts 9:23-25](#) but the Jewish leaders are after him. v18-20 He finally visits Jerusalem, but even then he had problems, with the church rejecting him at first. [Acts 9:26-30](#). All for the glory of God.

Chapter 2

Paul and Barnabas were very excited when they returned from their first missionary journey, God had opened the doors of salvation to the Gentiles and they travelled to Jerusalem to tell the church of the wonderful grace of God to the Gentiles. [Acts 14:27](#) This had upset the Jewish legalists who would not accept salvation was by Christ alone, they demanded that circumcision, a Jewish instruction from Abraham's time [Gen 17:7-14](#) must also apply to the Gentiles and thus accept the whole of the Jewish law as part of salvation. Unfortunately the Jew had lost the real spiritual meaning of circumcision, it had become a [ritual](#). [Deuteronomy 10:16](#); [Rom 2:25-29](#). A True believer has a spiritual circumcision [Col 2:10,11](#)

Luke records the account of the meeting of Paul and the Council of Jerusalem [Acts 15:1-21](#). Paul did not go because the church had instructed him, he went by "revelation," - the Lord sent him.

v2 Paul meets with the leadership, first to ensure any problems are sorted out, that they supported his work, v6b. They added "nothing to the ministry" of Paul.

v3-5 Following this initial meeting the full council meet, various people including Peter spoke who reminded them that God had given the Holy Spirit to the Gentile as He had done to the Jews, we were "one in Christ" [Gal 3:28](#).

It appears that Titus, a Gentile Christian, was a "test case". He had never been circumcised yet the church could see that he was saved, giving evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in his life. This shows the error in the Judaizers' claim [Acts 15:1](#) "Unless you are circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved." was a false statement. The Judaizers wanted to put believers back under the control of the Law, Christ plus obeying the Ten Commandments. Christ had offered freedom through His death, the Holy Spirit now supplies the power to worship and obey the instructions of God, in love we obey.

v6-10 The Judaizers had hoped that the Jerusalem Church would support them but this did not happen, instead the ministry of Paul was given encouragement, adding nothing to the message.

However, the church had realized that, though one in Christ, the ministry to the Jews was different to the Gentiles and that God had given the two ministries to different men. This does not mean that Paul did not try to bring salvation to any Jew, [Rom 9:1-3](#) tells he had a great love for his people and would always make first contact in a new town via a synagogue. Neither would Peter avoid the Gentiles if the Lord opened a door to them.

v10 The meeting encouraged the practice of helping the poor. So often does a church concentrate upon doctrine but forgets helping others.

Unfortunately the Judaizers did not give up and continued to interfere with the spread of the Gospel to the Gentile.

v11 Paul has to have challenged Peter over his behaviour, it appears that Peter was showing differences in behaviour when he was with Gentile or Jewish believers, it was done in such away that he appeared to be denying the Grace of God for Gentiles when with Jewish believers. [Gal 3:26-28](#); [Eph 2:8](#).

Peter had been glad to eat with Gentiles, [Acts 10:28](#) but with the arrival of a group from James, the head of the Jerusalem Church, seemed to awake a fear in Peter for he separated himself from the Gentiles. This behaviour affected other Jewish believers v13. Peter's behaviour was not according to the Gospels teaching.

v14 Peter was a Jew and did not therefore have to live as a Gentile but he had been doing so, eating with the Gentiles until these men arrived. By his action he was telling the Gentiles they must live as Jews because their behaviour was wrong, they must take on the dietary laws and perhaps accepting the demands of the Law like circumcision. If this had continued there might have been the formation of a Jewish church and a Gentile church, this would cause the breakup of the unity in Christ.. There is no record if Peter ever replied in writing, but scripture shows that he admitted he was wrong. His two letters, 1 & 2 Peter, show the grace of God for salvation to all. In [2 Peter 3:15-16](#) Peter emphasis the complete agreement between Paul and himself.

We should also examine our own behaviour. "Am I trying to mix law and grace in my Christian life?" Salvation is by faith in Christ alone, nothing added to it. [Rom 5:1](#); I must walk in grace [Eph 2:10](#).

This event must also remind us that we, as believers, must examine the teaching of our church, to ensure it is not teaching "that salvation is Christ plus".

v16-21 Paul said that the Gentiles had been offered salvation in Christ alone, by now adding to this they were lowering the power of the Blood of Christ. The Law had helped Paul in understanding his standing with God but there was no way it could make him right with God, only the death of Christ could do that.

The result of this new life made by God was that Paul, and each who are believers, are crucified with Christ. The original text indicates that this action applies both to the passed and to a continuing action. The death of Christ brought us life, not the same life in the natural man, but a new life, a life with Christ living in the life of the believer.

This new life does not hide the human personality, "the life which I now live in the flesh,"v20 is lived in faith of Jesus, who died for me. To not trust Jesus completely in this way frustrate or prevent the grace of God. If the Law could make a person right with God, then the death of Christ would not be necessary and a waste.

Chapter 3

The Judaizers had used every possible means to capture the Galatian churches, but in the following two chapters Paul goes into battle with them. He uses six different arguments to prove that faith in Christ is the way of salvation.

v1-5 Personal experience.

To prove something based upon your experience can be dangerous because your experience may not be the same as others or may even be a wrong experience, but if this experience agrees with the Truth taught in the Word of God it. The Holy Spirit is mentioned 18 times in this letter and is an important witness in the proof. [Rom 8:8,9](#)

Paul asks the Galatian's to think back to the time when they first came to know the Saviour.

v2,3 How did you receive the Holy Spirit? By obeying the Law or by faith in Jesus? The Judaizers had tried to tell the Galatian church that what they had experienced was not complete, they needed something else, that "something else" was obedience to the Law of Moses.

v3 Paul calls them "fools" spiritually or having no interest spiritually, you started out in the Power of the Spirit, but want to end with the power of the flesh. Compare [Luke 24:25](#)

v3 The only real evidence of forgiveness in Jesus is the presence of the [Holy Spirit](#) in the persons life. [Rom 8:9](#) The Spirit comes into a believers life because of trust and belief in Jesus.

v5 The Father ministers the Spirit and so is able to "work miracles among you," changes within the believer and the church. Paul asks "are these done by the works of the law or by faith?"

v6-14 Using the Scripture.

The Judaizers wanted to take the believers back to the Law so Paul now uses Scripture to prove salvation is by faith.

v6,7 He starts with Abraham. Paul quotes Moses to show that Abraham was made right by faith in the promise [Gen 15:6](#), [Rom 4:1-8](#) "put to his account" [Rom 4:18-25](#). When we believe in Christ the righteousness of God is placed in our account with Him, our sin not in our account with God. [Rom 4:18-25](#); [Rom 4:7,8](#).

The Jew is very proud of their connection and relationship to Abraham, unfortunately they thought that this would give them salvation. John the Baptist warned them that this was wrong [Matt 3:9](#). Jesus showed the difference between Abraham's physical children and Abraham's spiritual children [John 8:31-47](#).

v8,9 The promise to Abraham was to affect all nations, [Gen 12:3](#), sinners are made right, justified by faith, not keeping the law. The "children of Abraham" are the Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus.

v9-14 Are we Cursed?

"Curse" Has a number of meanings today but at the time of this letter it was an announcement of things to come, which could be punishment, rejection. God's curse is real, it will happen.

v10 Route to God by keeping the Law, but does not give salvation as cursed by keeping the law.

Who are cursed? All except Jesus, none of us can keep the law, [Rom 2:22-23](#), The Law was given to condemn us, it actually hurts God as we fail to follow His Law.

v12 The Law says "Do and live", but the grace of God says "Believe and live" [Gal 2:16,21](#); see [Phil 3:1-10](#).

The Law cannot give life, make a sinner right with God, give the Holy Spirit, make a believer the child of God - so why go back to the Law.

v13 The Law has set the standard of God, has put mankind under the curse of the Law, so someone had to take the punishment. Christ's work removes the curse, by doing this He became the greatest sinner ever, he took all our sins on Him. God had to reject Him

on the cross, our sins made Christ "cursed." [1 Cor 12:3](#)

But he redeemed us v13, and this is final. The normal meaning for "redeemed" was in the purchase of a slave, to become your slave, but Christ paid the price and let us become free.

v14 We are blessed through Jesus. This blessing is by our faith in Him. We receive the [Holy Spirit](#) as part of this faith.

v13 The Jews method of punishment was by stoning them to death. For a Jew, to die on a "tree" or cross was a curse [Deuteronomy 21:22,23](#).

If returning to the Law was so bad why were the Galatian Christians taking it on?

Legalism appeals to the *flesh*, we love to be religious, to obey laws, have special days, self punish by fasting etc. Nothing wrong with these actions if part of worshipping God and controlled by the Spirit, but we can use them in pride, boasting how "good and holy" we are.

People like to "see the worship" they have to have a religion which satisfies their senses. True Spiritual worship does involve the senses but they are all a "window pointing" to the true place of faith, we measure our worship in Christ not others. Consider [Gal 6:12-14](#)

v15-29 Why then was the Law given?

The word "promise" is used eight times in the passage, all referring to God's promises made to Abraham. These promises were made many years before the Law of Moses.

[Gen 12:2,3](#); [Gen 15:1ff](#); [Gen 17:1-22](#) The Judaizers were trying to now saying that the Law makes changes to these promises God made to Abraham. Paul argues that this cannot be right, if two people agree to a promise or covenant, a third person cannot later make changes, only the original two can do that.

At this point we must note that God made the covenants with Abraham, not Abraham with God, Abraham was a sleep during the making of one promise. [Gen 15:12](#).

Note that with each promise God did not set any conditions on Abraham.

v16,17 The promise made by God was made through His Seed, Jesus Christ, [Gen 3:15](#) this promise cannot be changed, "annulled", by the Law of Moses which came later.

v19-20 The Law is Greater?

Suppose the Law was greater than the previous promises. Paul replies that:- 1) The Law was only temporary v19 it was only "until the Seed should come". With the death and resurrection of Jesus the Law was done away with.

2) The Law required a mediator or third person v19,20 Moses and angels brought the Law to Israel. But the promise was made by God directly to Abraham, God was part of the covenant and it was permanent.

Therefore the Promise was greater than the Law.

v21-26 Is the Law against the promise?

Is God contradicting Himself? Law and grace must be the opposite to each other, "No" Paul said, The law was not to give life, it controlled the life of the Jews but did not give spiritual life. The death of Jesus and faith in Him by the believer gives the life.

v21

The Jew was so committed to the Law that they did not see the way of salvation and rejected Jesus.

v22 The Law has shown that we all have failed the standard of God, it does not make

us sinners, just shows that we are already sinners. There is no way salvation can be obtained by keeping the Law, only God's grace can do that.

v23-26 The word "teacher" would be more a 'guardian' who made sure the children attended school. Often the "teacher" may have also taught the child as in the time of Paul the person was often an educated slave.

The Jew was therefore taught the law, the "teacher" was the child's protector and controller, it regulated the life but not essential to life as the Judaizers were teaching.

The "teacher" was also how the child learnt to become an adult, so was part of the preparation of the Jewish nation for the coming Messiah. v23 "before faith came, we were kept under the law,"

v25 The Saviour has now come and so there is no need for the "teacher", unfortunately the Jewish nation failed to accept so God had to destroy the temple and so stop the instructions of the law, no temple, no priesthood, no altar, no sacrifices.

v27-29 What the promise can do.

The law was not able to allow a person to have a close relationship with God, only the High priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, now the believer has access to the Father through His Son Jesus. A Believers faith has made them baptized into the Body of Christ [1 Cor 12:12-14](#), all one in Christ, no Jew or Gentile, slave or freeman, man or woman.

"Put on Christ", v27 is indicating a "change of clothing", 'dirty' sins clothes have been replaced by the robes of Christ [Col 3:8-15](#).

v29 The Law cannot make us heirs of the promise of God, only faith in Christ allows us to become heirs of the blessing of God.

Chapter 4

The Judaizers had persuaded the Galatians that using the Law in their worship made them better Christians, the 'old nature' responding to this idea because it allowed them to 'do things', they were able to 'measure' their results.

. v1-7 The state of their adoption

The true believer has experienced "Adoption" [Gal 4:5](#); [Eph 1:5](#). We enter the family of God by being "born again" into the family [John 3:3](#) not like adoption of a child in the world.

Not only does a believer become a member of the family of God but the word used "adoption" indicates adopted not as a 'child' but as an 'adult' with the status of an adult son (daughter). When a sinner is "born again" they are spiritually a baby, [1 Peter 2:2,3](#) but the believer has access to all of the Father's wealth as an adult son(daughter).

Paul now develops this idea.

v1-3 It does not matter how rich the child's father is the child cannot have true access to that wealth. The child will be under the control of the "teacher", often a slave in the times of Paul, and will have just the same rights as the slave.

This was the condition of the Jew under the Law period. The Law was the "teacher" until the coming of the Messiah. The Judaizers were now trying to make the "adult son" back into a "child", a step backward.

v4,5 The Actions of God.

When the world conditions were ready for the coming Saviour, God sent His Son, both God and man, "made of woman". Why? "to redeem those who were under the law," v5, to be set free by paying the price. To be adopted into His family.
v6,7 Sons and heirs.

The Trinity is involved, The Father sent the Son to die, then God the Son then sent the Holy Spirit to live in us, so being made part of the family of God and the divine nature [2 Peter 1:4](#).

Only a "son" has a "Father", the servant a "master". When the Spirit enters a believer they can speak to the Father, saying "Abba, Father.", 'Abba' shows a close relationship, meaning 'Papa'. No servant could use that title.

Our adoption is still to be finally completed when Jesus returns to takes us to heaven [Rom 8:23; 1 John 3:1-3](#).

v8-11 What was happening.

The Galatians were giving up their freedom through Christ for the bondage or restrictions of the Law. At one time they were slaves to pagan and false gods, then had experienced the grace of God and the freedom of Christ and were now giving this up, destroying all the good work Paul had done for Christ in them. The words "weak and beggarly elements" tells us how far they had gone away from the gospel. They were adopting the Old Testament system of religion with its "special days" etc., hoping to get "spiritual rewards" for doing this. See [Rom 14:4-13](#) If a person thinks that celebrating a special day saves themselves or grows in grace then they are guilty of becoming legalistic.

v12-18 Paul talks of his love for them.

We are not certain what sickness Paul is referring to in this passage, possibly affecting his eyes, but it must have made Paul's appearance objectionable, but they still accepted him and the message of salvation. "What has happened to this love?" Paul asks, "your love was so great you would have disfigured yourself for me."

v16 "Yet today I have become your enemy because I tell the truth"

v17 Paul continues, "These Judaizers are seeking you for their own gain and pride, they might even be using you Galatians to make themselves great."

The Galatians had not lost their salvation, but lost the fellowship of God, preferring to find satisfaction in "works" instead of grace.

Paul considers that he is the Galatians 'parent', Paul is very worried about his 'children' he longs to see Christ growing in them. He now turns to the Old Testament and uses the story of Ishmael and Isaac to compare basic Christianity and the Law of Moses. Gen 16-21.

v19-23 The History.

Abraham is called by God and promised many descendants (children) [Gen 12:1-9](#). Sarah his wife cannot have children but does not apparently believe God's promise. The promised son does not arrive so Sarah takes the matter into her own hands and suggests Abraham marries Hagar her maid, which he does. This action was quite normal in that time. [Gen 16:1-3](#)

Hagar becomes pregnant, Sarah becomes jealous and throws Hagar out. God sends Hagar back and promises to care for her. Abraham is 86 when Ishmael is born. [Gen](#)

[16:4-16.](#)

When Abraham is 99 years old God repeats the promise and the baby is to be called Isaac. Gen 17-18.

Abraham is 100 years old when a miracle occurs and Sarah has the baby Isaac as promised by God. [Gen 21:1-7](#)

Ishmael had been his father's only son, now he has a rival, which 3 years later when Isaac is three he creates a problem [Gen 21:8ff](#). Abraham has no choice and sends Hagar and Ishmael away, as instructed by God [Gen 21:9-14](#) v24-29 Paul now explains that there is also a spiritual meaning to this story.

Hagar the slave represents the Law while Sarah, being a freewoman, represents grace. Ishmael was conceived by the flesh, while Isaac was a miraculous birth.

So these two boys represent the physical birth, Ishmael v29 "born according to the flesh", and the spiritual birth, Isaac, v29 "born according to the Spirit".

Abraham represents faith, Sarah grace, so Isaac was born "by grace through faith "

[Eph 2:8-9](#)

Ishmael, the flesh, caused problems for the spiritual, just as our old nature competes with our new spiritual life.

Hagar was not Abraham's first wife, God's plan was with Sarah, God began with grace but man rejected and lost grace. Hagar was also a slave, even though married to Abraham. The Law was given as a servant, [Gal 3:23-25](#).

Hagar was not part of God's plan, it was Sarah's and Abraham's unbelief. Isaac was the heir, Ishmael could never be part of the spiritual inheritance.

Law and grace cannot exist together, Ishmael had lived in the home for seventeen years, but when Isaac came he had to go. so we are unable to mix law and grace, faith and works, God's gift or works.

v30,31 The Blessings

We are supposed to throw out our old nature, we are children of freedom, heirs of the freedom, our life should be spiritual "not children of the bondwoman"

Chapter 5

Many in Paul's time, and still today, feel it is dangerous to teach the "liberty in Christ", they feel it is replacing 'law' with 'license', they say it means "forget all rules and do what you like". These people are not understanding God's grace, and in the final chapters Paul puts the teaching into practice.

The Judaizers were the dangerous ones, they were attempting to make the "old nature" into a "new nature" which obeys God in all ways, the flesh is against God, it will always turn against God. However, a Spirit filled believer will follow the law in love, for his Saviour.

v1 Keep your liberty in Christ do not become a slave. See [Acts 15:10](#). The picture of a yoke shows slavery. The 'yoke' was used by farmers to control the oxen or horses, it fits across the neck of the animal, without it the farmer has difficulty in controlling the animals direction. The Galatians had lost the "yoke" of serving sin and taken on the "yoke" of Christ [Matt 11:28-30](#); [Rom 6:11-14](#) but were now going back to the old yoke.

v2-6 Paul refers to what they were losing:-

v2 "Christ will profit you nothing". You will lose the spiritual riches of Christ:- Grace [Eph 1:7](#); glory [Eph 1:18](#); [Phil 4:19](#); wisdom [Rom 11:33](#); [Col 2:3](#). We have all we need in Him [Col 2:10](#)

v2-4 If you submit to circumcision then you have to obey the whole law. This is where the Judaizers were falling down, they were only selecting parts of the law. The curse of the law is that all of it must be obeyed, [Gal 3:10](#)

v4 "fallen from grace" does not mean that they had lost their salvation, see [Gal 4:6](#), an unbeliever could not have that. No, it means that you have fallen out of the control of grace, law and grace cannot live together. v5,6 The life of a believer should be in grace, the power of the Spirit is in control, bringing love for God and others. One day that will lead to us to being perfect and right in God.

v7-12 Paul uses the image of a runner in the games, he had to be a citizen before he was allowed to run. Once running, nothing should be done to slow down the runner, Paul said that someone was getting in the way. See [Phil 3:13-21](#), we run to serve Him not obtain salvation.

Paul now turns to cooking, reminding them that a little leaven (yeast) can spread through food. In the Old Testament yeast was a symbol of evil [Exodus 12:15-19](#); [Exodus 34:25](#). Yeast is small but can soon affect the whole loaf, just like sin.

v10 The believers should be watching out for any "leaven of sin", "he that troubleth you" must be judged.

v11,12 Paul points out that if he preached that they should be circumcised then he would not be persecuted anymore, I preach Jesus crucified on the cross, and this is what is objected too.

v13-26 The work of the Spirit

v13-15 By the power of the Spirit we are called to the liberty of God, we are free from guilt of sin, free from the punishment of sin, but we must not use this liberty for old nature desires, we should love one another, v13, not hurt each other for our own gain. The Galatians were "bite and devour one another" and Paul warns that this will destroy the church.

Just think how many of the problems of life would disappear if we "Loved one another". [Rom 13:8-14](#). ;

v16-21 The Spirit allows us to beat the desires of the flesh.

v16,17 The Spirit and our old nature are at war, our physical body is not full of sin, it is how we use it that produces bad or good. If flesh mind controls the body it will sin, if the Spirit controls the body then we walk in the Spirit.

Consider : [2 Peter 2:19-22](#); [Rom 8:1-17](#).

v17 We are unable to control the old nature on our own "you cannot do the things that you would." [Rom 7:15,19](#).

v18 We should let the Holy Spirit take control, give Him full control.

v19-21 Paul now lists the "works of the flesh", see also [Mark 7:20-23](#); [Rom 1:20-32](#); [1 Tim 1:9-10](#); [2 Tim 3:2-5](#)

v22-26 In contrast Paul now lists the fruit of the Spirit.

v24 A believer must have "crucified" their old nature to Christ. This does not mean to

physically die on a cross, it is not possible to crucify yourself physically, but to hand over your life and desires to Jesus.

To produce the fruit of the Spirit can only be done through the power of the Spirit. It is important to separate "works" and "fruit", anything can by '*work*' produce an object or effect, but to produce '*fruit*' needs something living. The "life" for a believer comes from the [Holy Spirit](#), v25, This fruit can produce more fruit.

v26 Finally Paul reminds the Galatians not to do "works" for pride or praise. What ever we do must be to the Glory of God and His Son.

Chapter 6

"Love one another", "Bear one another's burdens", "pray for one another" are key thoughts in this chapter. [James 5:16](#); [1 Thess 5:11](#); [Rom 12:10](#)

The Spirit led Christian thinks of others and tries to help them.

The Judaizers were doing the opposite, putting burdens upon the believers. [Acts 15:10](#), this was also one of the wrong things the Pharisees were doing in the times of Jesus.

[Matt 23:4](#)

The "Legalist" are also happy to mistreat wrong doing [John 8:2-11](#); [Acts 21:27ff](#)

The spiritual man tries to help the brother who has problems, the Judaizers (Legalists) would try to gain position or benefit from the persons problem, often condemning the person at the same time. [Gal 5:26](#). A believer who is walking in the Spirit does not compete with others, approaches the brothers problem with meekness, (quite or gentle), they do not try to make themselves look good.

When we try to help another with a problem, consider the warnings given by Jesus in [Matt 7:1-5](#) and instructions in dealing with a problem in [Matt 18:15-35](#).

v4 "proof his own work," compare their life with God's Standard and Will, not others.

v5 The word "burden" used here is referring to the "soldiers pack" while v2 is talking about an "heavy burden.". We are each responsible for our own life and family, others can help with problems, but the final responsibility is always ours personally.

v6-10 Fellowship Blessings

v6 Share with each other any spiritual blessing received.

v7,8 God has ordained that we "reap what we sow", if a farmer sows wheat he does not expect apples trees to grow. Paul here is telling the Galatians and us to watch what and where we *sow*, according to our *flesh* desires or *spiritual* desires. Whatever we decide to sow, we cannot change the harvest, it is for eternity. Note [2 Cor 9:6](#).

v9 A Promise - having worked in the Spirit as above, Paul now tells the readers that we shall be rewarded as long as we do not fail to get weary of the Lords work. We can all "work for the Lord" but not "work in the Lord", spiritually motivated and guided. We all need in our lives:- 1) *the Word of God*, [Matt 4:4](#), without 'food' we shall die. 2) Prayer, [Luke 18:1](#).

v11-18 Paul usually dictated his letters and only wrote the final greetings but in this letter he is so concerned about the situation for he is lead by the Holy Spirit to write the whole of the final section.

Many Bible students believe that Paul's thorn in the flesh [2 Cor 12:7-10](#); [Gal 4:14-15](#) was some kind of eye problem and this caused him to write large letters but in this case he is putting emphasis on his thoughts, that the Spirit filled and led believer does all for the glory of God, not for personal glory and praise.

v12,13 Paul describes the Judaizers as one who is always showing off, they wanted people to follow their teaching so that they could 'show them off', "they may glory in your flesh".

Paul also questioned why they preached "we must be circumcised", yet they did not keep the Law themselves, hypocrites, all they did was avoid being persecuted as Christians. Today we tend to forget the meaning of [the cross](#) and the act of [crucifixion](#), they have become just symbols or jewellery. To the Jew the cross was a stumbling block, to Gentiles foolishness [1 Cor 1:18-31](#).

v14-16 Jesus and His cross

Paul glorifies the cross, and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for each one of us. The Judaizers never glorified the cross, nor did they give Jesus Christ the glory due to Him. The cross was to bring "a new creature" or new creation, the Body of Christ, the one which had "freedom and liberty" in Christ. See [Rom 5:12-21](#).

v16 Paul also calls the new creation "the Israel of God.", one of the many names of the Church of Christ, [1 Peter 2:9](#). This does not mean it is a permanent replacement for the nation of Israel, just until the return of Christ. This must have been a terrible rejection to the Judaizers as they wanted to return to the tribe of Israel and all its laws.

v17,18 Paul said that he has "the marks of Jesus", marks which he received as part of giving Christ the glory, how different to the Judaizers who wanted to "scar" others for their own glory. Consider [2 Cor 11:23-33](#)

v18 Paul completes the letter in reminding them that all was through the Grace of Jesus.