

# Galatians 5

## Freedom

### PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,  
Paul R. Schroeder

## Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:  
The *gallon* on the milk can = **GALATIANS**
2. The CHAPTER:  
The *number* of gallons = **CHAPTER 5**
3. The THEME:  
The *fat-free* label. = **FREEDOM**

## GALATIANS 5: BACKGROUND

False teachers were trying to convince new converts that doing the works of the Law was still necessary for their salvation. In observance of the ceremonial law, they urged everyone to be circumcised. These false teachers were actually “bewitching” the people. They even accused Paul of being a false apostle.

Many false cults today also teach a slavish obedience to works and rules in the hope of earning God’s favor or living an abundant life. Nothing could be further from the truth. Salvation cannot be earned.

Paul, amazed that new Christians could so quickly give up their liberty and freedom in Christ, reviewed the correct teaching about salvation. Paul showed his own authority had come from god (Galatians 1: 11-24). He pointed out that he even had to correct Peter (Galatians 2: 11-21) for not being consistent in his teaching and practice.

Just as Paul would later write to the church at Rome, so also he clearly told the people scattered across Galatia, “You cannot be saved by your works.” (See Romans 8: 1-4; 6: 11-14; Galatians 2: 16-17; 4: 4-7).

Paul stressed the freedom the believer has in Christ. The moment we come to faith, we are free from the curse of the Law, free to serve.

Good works will be the automatic result in the lives of those who, through faith in Christ, have been set free. The Spirit of god at work in them will produce these works. These good works are not attempts to *earn* God’s mercy but are the praise and thanksgiving from those redeemed by Christ Jesus. (See Key Chapter booklet *James 2: Works*).

## KEY VERSES OF GALATIANS 5

### Verses 1

**It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

Freedom is in Jesus Christ. Don’t be stupid and slip back into the belief that you can save yourself.

#### Verses 3-4

**Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.**

If you are going to try to earn God's favor through keeping the Law, remember that God requires *perfection*. If you try to earn your way, you are no longer under God's grace. Either you believe in Jesus as God's *free gift*, or you don't. It's one or the other.

#### Verse 9

**A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.**

It only takes a small amount of error to contaminate completely. Keeping the Law to earn God's favor may seem like a small matter, but it affects the very heart and core of your faith.

#### Verse 13-14

**You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve on another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."**

Our freedom is not to be misused. Properly used it glorifies God as we show love to one another.

#### Verse 17

**For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.**

The desires of the flesh oppose the desires of the Spirit.

#### Verse 19-21

**The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: secular immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. This ugly list reveals our sinful nature.**

#### Verses 22-23

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. God's Spirit in us produces attitudes and behaviors in our lives that glorify God..**

#### Verse 24-25

**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

Those who belong to Christ have the Spirit. Since we live in the Spirit, Paul encourages us to keep in step with the Spirit.

# THOUGHTS ON FREEDOM

## Day 1

Freedom is seldom valued highly until it's in danger of being lost.

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Abraham's son Ishmael was born to Hagar, a slave woman, and did not inherit the blessing of Abraham. Isaac was born to Sarah, a free woman, and was the heir of Abraham's blessings. We are the children of God, not under bondage but free, and heirs of God's spiritual blessings (Galatians 4: 21-31). Beautiful Gospel: Galatians 4: 4-7.

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Faith is the only way to become a child of God. Without faith we are still under the bondage of the Law (Galatians 3: 23-25).

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The promise of the coming Savior was given to Abraham. There would not be several Saviors, only one. He is Christ! (See Galatians 3:16).

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The Law reveals our sin, showing how hopeless it is to try to save ourselves by our works. It demonstrates our need for a Savior, who can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Without the Law, we would be self-confident and deluded into thinking we are acceptable to God in our sins, without forgiveness. The unbeliever, under the Law, says, "God knows I'm trying. If God is fair, he will save me. "I'm a lot better than others I know. I always try to do what's right. That has to count for something, doesn't it?" Because of their lack of faith, unbelievers are unable to see their lost and helpless condition. Truly, they are in bondage! Only Christ can set them free.

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Because the Galatians were drifting away from the truth and beginning to listen to false teachers, they were losing their joy (Galatians 4:15) (See Key Chapter booklet *Philippians 4: Joy*.)

Some turned their back on God and renounced Jesus as their Savior—and so were once again outside of God's mercy and without salvation (Galatians 5:4). (See the warning in 2 Peter 3:17.)

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Our freedom in Christ is not a license for immoral or ungodly conduct. We are free to go anywhere, to do anything, with anyone, at any time—as long as it is to the glory of God whom we love. Love created by the Gospel is the motive. We are free to show our love toward God and toward people (Romans 12:2).

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## Day 2

Unbelievers think they have freedom. A clear evidence of their bondage is in their inability to choose to believe in Christ. It's impossible! First, they must be set free in Christ through faith. Then they can, and will, serve and follow Christ.

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What about those who seem to be seeking, who seem to want to believe? If the search is sincere—often it is not, because of reluctance to forsake some sin—God will send them his witness with the Gospel of Christ. It is God's desire that all people be saved. We must leave such matters to God's timing and his ways, which are beyond our comprehension. (See John 6: 38-40; 3:16; 1 John 4: 9-10; 1 Timothy 1: 13-16; 2: 3-6; 2 Peter 3:9; Ephesians 2: 1-9; Galatians 2:16; Romans 7: 24-25; 10: 4-13; Luke 15: 11-32.)

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Christ is the only way to heaven. Take a look at these beautiful passages that tell us about God's plan to save everyone who believes in Jesus. This is by no means an exhaustive list—but it will give you a review of this very important truth: Matthew 1: 21; 11:28; 28:19; Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10; John 6:35, 44; Acts 4:12; 15:7-11; Romans 1: 16-17; 10:9; 3:23-28; 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1: 21; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-19; Galatians 1:4; 2:6; 4:4-5; Ephesians 2: 4-10; Colossians 1: 19-21; 2 Thessalonians 2: 13-14; 2 Timothy 1: 9; Titus 3: 5-7.

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We are willing to do the will of God when we have had our will set free by Christ. When converted, we are converted as a total person—heart, mind, will and body. The will that was in bondage to sin now desires to serve God (John 7:17).

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Freedom of the will is necessary in order to love. You cannot demand love. It must be offered freely. God has not made us robots without choice. In Christ we are free. It is his desire that we love him. He first loved us. (See Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 4:19.)

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A little sin can corrupt an entire life sin is prolific. It always progresses-unless you repent. (See James 2:10; Galatians 5:9.)

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### Day 3

Those who have been set free by Christ have the gift of the Holy Spirit. As they walk in the spirit, his gifts will be growing in their lives (Galatians 5: 22-25).

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Paul was really upset by the false teachers in Galatia who were teaching salvation by works. They insisted that Gentile converts to Christianity abide by certain rites, especially circumcision. In nearby Phrygia, a false deity named Cybele was worshiped. The priests of this heathen cult were eunuchs. Paul was so disgusted with the false teachers in Galatia that he says, in effect, “They might as well end up doing what the heathen priests do”. (See Galatians 5:12).

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Our freedom is not freedom to sin but rather freedom not to sin.

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A dead person has not ability to respond to stimulation. Our reaction to temptation or the desire to sin is to be that of a “dead” person—the refusal to respond. (See Galatians 5: 24-25; Romans 6: 6-8.)

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The power to live the Christian life comes from Jesus, living in us, and from the presence of the Holy Spirit. (See Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4: 7, 19).

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God gives the fruit of the spirit to all believers (Galatians 5: 22-23). They are gifts of his grace, given by God to bless the fellowship of believers. Spiritual gifts enhance the welfare of the church—a blessing to the body of Christ.

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We cannot free ourselves from sin. Not even angels can free us. Only Christ!

### Day 4

Hebrews 10:22: Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Those who are freed from sin are also freed from an accusing conscience.

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Our freedom is complete. Not only are we free from the tyranny of Satan, we are also free from the wrath of God.

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The freedom we enjoy can be lost. Satan constantly attempts to lure us back into the captivity of sin. Worldly companions and undisciplined desires are his helpers.

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The desire for instant gratification leads to an undisciplined life.

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Freedom in Christ is a way of life. The more we practice it, the more spontaneous it will become.

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Ultimately, we will also be free from this sinful world.

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Most often, freedom is not lost by a single massive attack but by apathetic disregard and erosion.

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Galatians 5:9: A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.

Sin, like leprosy, infects everything.

## Day 5

There are many beautiful names for Jesus, our Lord. He is the Christ, the Messiah, Immanuel, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Good Shepherd, but also the Lamb of God. He is the Light of the World and King of kings. Many other beautiful names define and describe his work—such as Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. Each of these names has a beauty of its own, but one that stands out in an unusual way is found in Leviticus 16. Actually, Christ is not called by the name specifically, but the entire chapter leads us to understand that Christ became our *scapegoat*. By this means eh sets us free from the bondage of the Law.

Let me describe this further. Have you noticed that although we generally agree that we are sinful and that none of us is perfect, we find it difficult when the guilt begins to zero in on us *individually*? As long as we are talking corporately as a nation or even as a

church body, or as a family, we feel somewhat safe in confessing our sins because *we are not alone*. But when an accuser confronts us individually with a specific sin, we begin to squirm and feel uncomfortable. Now the spotlight is on *us*. The difficulty, of course, is that it is painful to repent. It is much easier for us to explain our sins and excuse them. Confession of sins requires humility, and we are not naturally humble.

The first man and woman found, after the fall, that they had the tendency to blame their sins—and the cause of their sins—on others. As we push our guilt on others, we attempt to squirm out of owning up to our personal guilt. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they were immediately aware that something had changed. They felt fear; they felt shame. When God came and called for them, they ran and tried to hide among the trees in the garden. In a vain attempt to hide their shame, they made clothing from leaves. When God spoke with them about their problem, we see that Adam, instead of confessing and repented, uses Eve as his “scapegoat.” In fact, he says, “god, it’s the fault of the woman you gave me.” Adam’s reply indicated that he was actually blaming God. After all, it was God who had given him the woman. Adam was saying, “It’s not my fault. I didn’t put her here. You are really responsible, god. Don’t blame me.” Then as the spotlight turns on Eve, we see that she too refuses to accept the blame and immediately tries to find another “scapegoat.” She is also blaming god. She says, “It’s all the fault of the snake.” The implication is clear. She didn’t create the snake, and she doesn’t want to be responsible for the fact that the snake tricked her.

It has been going on ever since. People refuse to accept their own guilt. They are always looking for a scapegoat. In Leviticus 16, we see a reference to the Day of Atonement, an annual festival celebrated by the children of Israel. One portion of it deals with two goats. As we see in Leviticus 16:15, the first goat was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled to purify the Tabernacle from the sins of the Israelites. The goat itself was innocent, yet its blood was shed and sprinkled on the atonement cover in the Most Holy Place to forgive sins.

But there was a second goat. In verse 20, we see that Aaron was told to place his hands on the head of the second goat. In so doing, he transferred all of the sins of Israel to the goat. After this was done, a special person took the goat out into the middle of a barren wilderness and left it there to wander off and forever be lost and forgotten. In this way, the sins of the people were forgotten and totally removed—never more to return. These two goats were types or examples of what our Lord and Savior would do for us by his suffering and death. We are told in the Scriptures that it is impossible to hide from our sins, and we cannot escape the judgment of god. He knows our very thoughts. There are no secrets from God. So it is foolish to attempt to push our sins off on someone else. We are, in fact, hopeless before a righteous God. There seems to be no way out.

Then comes the good news. There is a scapegoat—Jesus Christ. Our sins are placed on him. That’s incredible! But that is precisely what god does. He sent his son, Jesus Christ, to this earth in order to take our place—and in so doing, he has carried our sins upon himself to the cross. Through his death, we have been forgiven and set free. His innocent blood was shed for the guilty. As incredible as it must have seemed to the



people of Israel that their sins were forgiven by the blood of an innocent goat, so also it seems incredible to some that their sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. Yet, that is God's promise. Through the death of his Son, we are forgiven, if we trust and believe in him as our personal Savior.

As our scapegoat, Jesus has taken our sins and removed them from us. They are forever forgotten and no longer before the face of our Father in heaven. They are removed as far as the east is from the west. They need no longer haunt us, and there is no possibility that they can harm us any longer. When Christ forgives sin, he sets us free. We are new creatures. We have a new life in Jesus Christ. And by the power of his Holy Spirit, we are renewed to live a life of joy with daily assurance of Christ's forgiveness and love.