



Galatians 5:1-6 Notes

You Are Free, So Stay Out of Bondage!

With his illustration of the children of the slave woman vs. the children of the free woman, Paul has emphasized that believers now have freedom. We have been rescued, we have been purchased out of the slave market, we have been set free by the work of Christ. Now Paul wants to emphasize that believers should continually live in the freedom that Christ purchased for us.

Christ set us free so that we might live in liberty (5:1)

- For Freedom = this was a technical phrase from a legal document in Paul's day for freeing a slave. Here Paul continues his illustration of being purchased from the slave market and then being given one's complete freedom in Roman society.
- Christ set us free from our natural state, but He did not do this in order to bring us into another form of bondage. It was *for freedom* that He set us free.
- Therefore... as a logical result of what Christ has done, Paul gives a *POSITIVE* step and a *NEGATIVE* step for us to take:
 - Positively, we are to *keep standing firm* in the freedom we now have.
 - Negatively, we are *not to be captured* and held within bondage, or return to being under the burden of slavery.
- We must keep standing firm in our freedom. We must not be captured again or return to a life of slavery to the sinful world, the desires of the flesh, or the promptings of the devil.

The era of the Law has gone, never to return. If you attempt to go back to that era, then what Christ has done for you will be of no benefit to you (5:2)

- "Behold, I Paul say to you..." = Paul might just as well have said, "LOOK - I am telling you with all the force of my personal authority as an apostle..." This is a very strong phrase.
- Here Paul returns to the issue of circumcision. Circumcision is the sign of subjection to the Jewish "yoke" of the Law.
- This "*If...Then*" statement does not imply they had already been circumcised, but it indicates they were in danger of allowing themselves to be

circumcised. If they take upon themselves the Jewish Law as a means of justification before God, then Christ's work on their behalf would be of absolutely no benefit to them.

Going back to the Law means you are obligated to keep every provision of the Law - which is an impossible task (5:3)

- Paul wants to make clear what taking up the "yoke" of the Law means. Submitting to circumcision commits the person to obeying the entire Law.
- under obligation = *a debtor*, one who has assumed an obligation that must be repaid. It makes the person a party to the Mosaic Covenant, and this requires perfect fulfillment of the entire Law.
- It would be absurd for a person to do this, especially in light of Paul's statement that when Christ came the time of the Law was over (see Gal. 3:19).

By going back, you are cutting yourself off from the deliverance that Christ bought for you (5:4)

- "You who are seeking to be justified by law" = this indicates that they were *attempting* to be justified before God by obeying the law. This is a clear statement of what the false teachers were leading the Galatians to do.
- Using very strong language, Paul communicates the consequence of attempting to be justified before God by one's own human effort.
 - Severed from Christ = *cut off from* Christ. Their union with Christ will be dissolved. This is a graphic way of saying that Christ will be of no benefit to them.
 - Fallen from grace = a word that was used of flowers that wither, die, and fall; of banishment or exile; of being deprived of an office; of actors being hissed off the stage. Paul is saying, "By putting yourselves under the realm of *salvation* by law, you have fallen out of the economy of salvation by the grace of Christ. You left the sphere of the grace of Christ and took your stand in the sphere of works as your hope of salvation."

In contrast, salvation is based completely on God's grace and must be received by faith, apart from human effort of any kind (5:5)

- for we... - Here Paul is contrasting himself (and those who hold to the true gospel - "*WE*") with what was happening in the churches of Galatia.
- Paul emphasizes "*By Faith*" as opposed to "by works of the Law." The Galatians should be following Paul's example of salvation by faith alone.
- It is "through the Spirit" that we are able to receive justification by faith in Christ.

The only thing that counts as far as our standing before God is concerned is faith in what Christ has done on our behalf (5:6)

- **in Christ Jesus** = *in the sphere of the economy which Christ has instituted. In the new dispensation the distinctions between Jews ("circumcision") and Gentiles ("uncircumcision") do not count for anything.*
- **means anything** = *to have force, to be effective, to be capable of producing results. The only thing that means anything (in this sense of the word) is **FAITH**.*
- In the life of one who is already a believer there will be evidence of loving actions toward God and others. Paul's comment here anticipates what he is going to say later about how believers should live by the Spirit.

We must recognize what Christ has done for us, and we should express our gratitude to Him for His grace, mercy, and love. We must be on our guard against the world system, fleshly desires, and the temptations of the devil - they will constantly try to capture us again. **Stay Free!**

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"I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15)

Our primary responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12)

We meet regularly for verse-by-verse teaching from the Word of God;
for encouragement and support as we grow in faith;
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