

# Galatians - Grace & Freedom to Live Right



*“For you have been called to live in **freedom**, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your **freedom** to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your **freedom** to serve one another in love.” Galatians 5:13 NLT*

- Are you confused about the difference between grace and works concerning salvation? Have you been trying to earn salvation as a trophy?

The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains that the book of Galatians: “...is indeed the ‘Magna Charta of Christian Liberty,’ proclaiming to modern generations that salvation from the penalty and power of sin comes not by works but by grace through faith in God’s provision” (p.587).

**Background:** Acts 15 details the Jerusalem council discussion and the controversy infiltrating the early church. Acts 15 helps us understand the background of the book of Galatians. Some people in the early church were saying, “**Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved**” (Acts 15:1). And “**The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses**” (Acts 15:5). Peter argued that no one has been able to fully follow the Laws of Moses. Salvation is available ONLY through grace. Peter said: “**10 So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke [the Law of Moses] that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? 11 We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus**” (Acts 15:10-11).

The essence of Galatians is that the **New Covenant of Grace** FREES us from the Old Covenant of Law and works. **Salvation and sanctification are not a trophy to be earned but a free gift of grace received by faith.**

Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, writes: “**Many religious systems today mix law and grace and present a garbled, confused way of salvation that is actually a way of bondage (Gal. 2:4; 4:9; 5:1). Keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, an earthly priesthood, holy days, obeying rules—all of these are swept away in Galatians and replaced by the glorious liberty the believer has through faith in Christ!**” Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament, p.515.

**Theme:** Christ freed us from sin and the old religious system of law-keeping.

- **Salvation** results in **freedom** from **sin and works**.
- **Sanctification** results in **freedom** from **the control of the sinful nature**. We don’t seek to **achieve** righteousness from our efforts to keep the laws. Instead, we **surrender** to the control and direction of the Holy Spirit. He empowers us to live right.

## Central Lesson:

God’s grace freed us from sin & legalism so we can freely live right.

**Key Words:** **FREEDOM** (2:4; 4:22-23, 26, 30-31; 5:1, 13). Used 14 times in the NLT. Freedom means - *able to act as one wishes, not under the control or in the power of another*. In the context of Galatians, it is not under the requirements of the Law of Moses. Also, **GRACE** used 5 times in the NLT. Grace means “**unmerited favor**,” or, **favor that is undeserved**.

**Author:** The book identifies the Apostle **PAUL** as the author (1:1). The vocabulary, style, logic, and theological development are consistent with Paul’s other epistles. Paul even mentions that the closing words were by his own hand (Gal. 6:11), whereas he often dictated his epistles to a secretary.

**Date:** Galatians was written about A.D. **49** from Antioch, before the Jerusalem council of A.D. 50 recorded in Acts 15.

**Title:** The book’s title is named after the recipients—Christians living in **GALATIA**. Galatia refers to the central part of Asia Minor and is not one particular city but a region. There were several churches in Galatia (1:2) “... *to the churches in Galatia*”.

**Key Verses:** The key verses are:

- Galatians 5:1 NLT “*So Christ has truly set us **free**. Now make sure that you stay **free**, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.*”
- Galatians 5:13 NLT “*For you have been called to live in **freedom**, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your **freedom** to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your **freedom** to serve one another in love.*”

**Key Chapter:** Chapter **5**. Free from the law, but not free to sin. Be filled (controlled) with the Holy Spirit.

1. Christ set us **free** from the Mosaic Law as the way to be **saved and sanctified**. God does not want us to be slaves to the law (5:1). At the same time, our **freedom** from the law is not a license to “**satisfy your sinful nature**” (NLT) or “**indulge the sinful nature**” (5:13).
2. Even though a Christian under grace *can* be sinful and still go to heaven, Paul emphasizes that no Christian should **abuse grace** as a **permit to sin**. Instead, we should use our freedom to serve others (5:13).
3. Paul also indicates that every Christian experiences the **battle between their sinful nature and the control of the Holy Spirit** (5:17). However, we must **choose to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading and surrender to His control and promptings** (5:16).
4. Paul paints a **picture** of the **FLESH-controlled life—fruit of the Flesh** (5:19-21) in contrast to the **Holy SPIRIT-controlled life—fruit of the Spirit** (5:22-23).
5. The Christian who intentionally considers himself dead to his sinful nature and surrenders to the control of the Holy Spirit will live a **sanctified life and avoid abusing his freedom in Christ** (5:24). Every Christian must continually seek and **yield** to the control of the Holy Spirit over his life (5:25).

**Outline:** Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, outlines the book as:

- I. **PERSONAL:** Grace and the Gospel (Chapters 1-2)
- II. **DOCTRINAL:** Grace and the Law (Chapters 3-4)
- III. **PRACTICAL:** Grace and the Christian Life (Chapters 5-6)

## Central Lesson:

God’s grace freed us from sin & legalism so we can freely live right.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.