

***“Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, Introduction —  
The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery, Part 5, Section 5”***

**Review:**

- ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding — According to Galatians, Final***
- ***The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace Given for Our Understanding — According to Romans***
- ***The Key to Christian Living Under Grace Is As Simple as Reckoning***
- ***The Key to Christian Living Under Grace Is As Simple as Reckoning***

***The foundational teaching of the gospel of grace itself having been laid, Paul has indeed proceeded to the practical. Yes, The Gospel of God’s Grace exhorts believers to holy living, not license. And not only that, the dynamic of Christian living under grace is empowered by the spirit .... But not as under the Legal Dispensation or the Pentecostal, or the Millennial Kingdom. Very differently indeed. Amen.***

***Just as a sinner becomes a saint, is saved, by taking God at his word as outlined in the gospel of grace, so also a person may live above the power of the flesh today simply by taking God at his word as it is written so clearly here in Paul’s letters. That is the intent in his Romans and Galatians letters as we have seen already the last several weeks. In summary then, he writes:***

***Gal. 5:24-25***

***24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.***

***25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***

- ***“Reckoning” is the word he uses so carefully in his similar teaching in Romans chapter 6. There we see that taking God at his Word, by faith receiving these transforming truths, counting upon them, loving them and thereby living them is the focus of his teaching on the Christian life.***

***If it has been declared that we have been crucified with Christ but nevertheless we live, how can we proceed without gladly receiving it? Or, as he writes in Romans chapter 6:***

**[READ ] Rom. 6:10-12**

**10** For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

**11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

***For it is then not we ourselves the live but Christ liveth in us as he writes in Gal. 2:20:*** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

- ***If only we would take God at his word receiving this truth and his abundant grace. What more can be said. Who can add anything to what stands written here so clearly and powerfully for our faith and our obedience?***
- ***Introduction:***
  - ***The teaching in Galatians assumes a knowledge of the gospel of the grace of God, of our salvation through faith alone apart from works of law. But the teaching there is all about life and the dynamic of living under the abundance of grace, isn't it?***
  - ***The idea that we are saved by grace though faith alone but are then empowered to obey the law by the power of the spirit is not what we find taught here though we often hear it preached and taught as if that were Paul's intent. But that false teaching implies that we believers are still “under the law” today. However, Paul writes otherwise, that we are NOT UNDER LAW BUT ARE UNDER GRACE.***
  - ***But what is the heart of his meaning here? Surely he is writing that we have a NEW DYNAMIC UNDER GRACE, and yes, the spirit is in the middle of that, but in a different way, a new way, than his working in other dispensations. So again, it is all about how God is working, isn't it?***

### **Our Outline for Today:**

- ***We Have Been Taught by Paul Concerning The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace, Given for Our Understanding – In Galatians and In Romans***
- ***Dispensational Contrasts Are Seen Throughout This Pauline Teaching***
- ***We Stand Exhorted Regarding The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace, Given for Our Understanding***

#### ***I. The Teaching: The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace, Given for Our Understanding – In Galatians and In Romans:***

##### ***○ The Teaching According to Galatians***

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- ***Galatians chapter 5, and especially verses 16 through 25, contain the most detailed teaching in Paul's letters on how the Lord God works in a believer. Let's read it again.***

***[READ ] Gal. 5:16-25***

***16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.***

***17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. [the spiritual life]***

***18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.***

***19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,***

***20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,***

***21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.***

***22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,***

***23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.***

***24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.***

***25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.***

- ***The life of the believer being blessed by reception of the abundance of grace (Rom. 5:17) is so much more than law keeping as the apostle writes here. It is the difference between the “fruit of the spirit” and the “works of the flesh” as Paul outlined here in a few words. The one therefore is all about fruit, the other is all about the works. The contrast is as concretely drawn here as possible.***
  - ***The summary statement of Paul’s Positive teaching is stated here in verses 16-18 where we see the two different living dynamics or ways of life in operation, the one, of the spirit (or spiritual) and the other of the flesh (or carnal) — spiritual on the one hand, carnal on the other. But are we grasping this distinction as so well stated here? And this is the challenge for us again today here as we open Paul’s letters together.***
  - ***So, from the highest level, as it were, he first lists the works of the flesh in verses 19-21. Then, in verses 22-23, he continues with the fruit of the spirit. The first list, whether “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, or Idolatry and witchcraft” and the rest, clearly describes the realm within which many unbelievers openly dwell.***
  - ***In these next verses we see the absolute contrast: The fruit of the spirit is positively enumerated here, with its differing characteristics of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.” These variously describe the lives of believers, who due to the new nature dwelling within, may indeed bear fruit as described there. Paul calls that fruit the “fruit of the spirit” highlighting its source and empowerment, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.***
  - ***Sadly, though, we believers also have a sin nature dwelling within and if we are not walking in the spirit as he has written here, we will also be demonstrating carnality in our lives. In other words, our lives may look much like that of an unbeliever’s.***
  - ***Then he ties in the issue facing every believer, that of legalism when he characteristically writes that “against***

**such no law can ever condemn.” This is a precious truth.**

- ***Legalism really does cut deeply even to the very root of the gospel itself, as we have seen. That is its natural consequence. Indeed, the fruit of the spirit is so far above and beyond the works of the law that he continues to return to this issue. Even the purity of the gospel itself is at stake as he has written in the earlier chapters.***
- ***To summarize the teaching, Paul states here in Galatians 5, verse 24, the reason behind this so boldly worded declaration: Our flesh has already been crucified! The apostle uses such strong and compelling language here, doesn't he, because the fact is that God has already worked to defeat the flesh at the cross but the believer may refuse that teaching by attempting by the sin nature to “better oneself” through religious means, attempting to defeat the flesh using the very power of the flesh itself! Of course, that effort can never succeed as he wrote in the early verses of chapter 3:***

***[READ ] Gal. 3:1-3***

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

***3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?***

- ***But it should strike home in us readers. For attempting to use the flesh to improve the flesh according to a legal standard can never succeed. The whole teaching regarding the dynamic life of the believer under grace is stated in these three verses, verses 16-18. Let's look at them again carefully today.***

***Gal. 5:16-18***

***16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.***

**17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.**

**18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.**

- ***Verse 16 states a condition, in effect, that if (and when) a believer is “walking in the spirit” he is NOT ABLE to fulfill the lusts or strong desires of the flesh. This is NOT saying what so many want it to say, that we SHOULD NOT but rather that we WILL NOT. So SHALL=WILL here according to the Greek text.***

***It is also NOT saying what we often hear taught that we now as believers with the Holy Spirit’s help desire to obey the Law when before our salvation we were not so willing. No, the teaching here is so much more powerful than that as verse 17 makes clear as it begins with the word “for” explaining verse 16 (that is what the “for” is there for). This is the key to our understanding what Paul is revealing here. It is critical to understand this.***

- ***For verse 17 states how the spirit works WHEN the believer is “walking [in the realm of] the spirit’s desires and actions” today UNDER GRACE!***

***Then and only then the spirit dwelling within us wages direct and victorious warfare against our sin nature thereby disabling its power to influence us as long as we are “walking in the spirit”. That is what the rest of that verse means, “so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”***

***In other words, when the spirit of God is fighting the war, we are freed to bring forth the fruit of the spirit which our new nature is desiring. Then and only then we “cannot do the things that we would otherwise do”, that is, the bring forth the works of the flesh.***

***Why? Because then the Spirit is waging a victorious battle against the flesh. This is surely a wonderful teaching indeed and is so distinctive of how God is working today under grace. This was not true in other dispensations when no one possessed a new nature***

*and the work of the Holy Spirit was so controlling.*

- *But Paul again mentions the law here where you might not have expected it: “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” That is because his focus is always on the radical difference between being under law and legal-principle versus being under grace and gracious-principle. For, he writes, one cannot be UNDER LAW without losing the practical benefits of being UNDER GRACE. He calls that “falling from grace” in Gal. 5:4 as we have already seen.*

*So the Law has been taken out of the way for otherwise we would have been commanded to keep it!*

*And then there is another very important aspect of this that he is teaching. It is this: the law excites the flesh so that one cannot be under law and also enjoying the liberty that is in Christ by grace. That, he writes here and more directly in Romans 7, is because the believer living under law must be experiencing the direct warfare, the conflict between the flesh and the spirit himself. Instead of enjoying that deliverance from that conflict, he is waging that war himself against the flesh with the inevitable consequence that the works of the flesh dominate. Only while the spirit victoriously fights that battle are we therefore freed to enjoy the desires of God as prompted through the new nature.*

*The apostle goes on now to the next verses here he lists some of the works that will dominate the carnal believer's life therefore:*

**Gal. 5:19-21**

**19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

**20** Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

**21** Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

## **SKIP??**

- ***A quick note on the words in verse 21, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”: The word means to PRACTICE AS A WAY OF LIFE, as in the life of an unbeliever. Believers cannot PRACTICE this evil though they may commit such. See 1 Cor. 6 (and Eph. 5) for that teaching where we remember these words: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” So believers may indeed be carnal but they cannot be classified as those who are not saved, even in regard to their evil deeds. Praise God for his abundant grace.***
- ***This list is presumably long because its purpose is as a sign post pointing to our carnality.***
- ***Then follows a summary then of the way of life of a believer, in stark contrast to an unbeliever. It is simplicity itself:***

### **Gal. 5:22-23**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,**

**23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

- ***But to reassert his teaching concerning the dangers of the law he again here references the law but in a way that should greatly encourage us. For the challenge is great and the law attracts the sin nature to assert itself. But love and the fruit of the spirit is so far above the requirements of any law that he then adds: “against such there is no law”. Amen. So be it. That settles it.***
- ***Cast yourself onto his grace and accept the free gift! It is that simple, because of verse 24: Those In Christ “have crucified the flesh with its lusts” .... All who are in Christ! The key to this life of living above the desires of the flesh is here, in reckoning upon this precious truth that having been crucified with Christ our reckoning upon this truth allows the spirit to subdue the flesh therefore allowing the new nature’s desires to be borne in us as the fruit of the spirit.***



- *Therefore there is an insurmountable, great gulf between a life dominated by legal works and a life filled to overflowing with the grace of Christ who indwells every believer. Paul has summarized it so well here, hasn't he?*

*And yet have learned in over 50 years of teaching these truths of grace that most believers continue to dwell in the realm of legal obedience and therefore failure and anxiety over our acceptance before Almighty God, whom we incorrectly assume will still hold all of our sins against us some day.*

*But, believers, isn't God's abundant grace so wonderful? Amen.*

- *The Teaching According to Romans:*

- *We looked Romans, chapter 7 last time where we saw how the apostle revealed the life of a believer who has chosen to live under a legalistic system from the inside out. He writes here of a person he seems to know well, and he should, of course, for that person is Paul himself! And there is a false teaching that goes to these verses for support which we must consider. For here the apostle describes the conflicts in the life of a believer who is "carnal", NOT those in the life of an unbeliever:*

*[READ ] Rom. 7:7-13*

*7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

*8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [= lust or strong desires]. For without the law sin was dead.*

*9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

*10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

*11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

*12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

**13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.**

- ***Paul was a believer and writes here about being a believer. What he writes cannot possibly be true of an unbeliever. He writes here of giving up the liberty that he had in Christ under the sufficiency and fullness of his grace, for the sake of a legal righteousness defined by the Law. The result was not what he had expected. Sin became even more sinful as it was in fact magnified under the domination of a law, and, even more significantly, the Law of Moses to which he refers here.***

***These phrases make this so clear:***

- **7 ...Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet [*or, have strong desires*].**
  - **8 ... sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [*= lust or strong desires*].**
  - **13 ... sin ... by the commandment might become exceeding sinful [*Gk. = thrown beyond literally*].**
- ***So it is clear. A life of carnality for a believer is overwhelming with a battle of one's flesh against one's spirit that cannot be won. Defeat is inevitable. The bondage by the old nature becomes even more real. Liberty has been sacrificed by a legal, religious system. Consider the dominating religious systems of our day, even those that call themselves "christian".***
  - ***Verse 6 is key and that is the only place here until Chapter 8 and verse 1 where the Holy Spirit is mentioned. The rest of the chapter is for the most part about the conflict between the flesh and our own human spirit, which although alive to God, has been when we are carnal, defeated by the untamed flesh dwelling within. He concludes the chapter finally in verses 23-25 characterizing the ongoing conflict in the life of a carnal believer:***

**Rom. 7:23-25**

**23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

**24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**

**25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

- ***My own testimony includes such a struggle as Paul describes here, that I was “living” once in the truth of this and was finally delivered by “reaching” the end of the chapter and the beginning of the next. Amen. What about you?***

## **II. Dispensational Contrasts Are Seen Throughout This Pauline Teaching:**

- ***The Law Versus Grace contrast is seen everywhere. Take note!***
- ***This signifies clearly a change in dispensation, first of all regarding the gospel and then also regarding the dynamic of living for the believer. For it is indeed “The Reckoning that Counts” as a very well written small booklet by Miles Stanford is titled.***
- ***There are also other dispensationally significant teachings that we must understand well. For the differences are often more important than the similarities. This is all about what God is doing. If we do not know that, how can we possibly know what we should be doing as coworkers with the Lord of glory? Think about it. That is a profound question indeed. And we do need to know how to answer it.***

**Some areas of difference would include these:**

- ***The work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation is so different.***
- ***The former place for religious and legally required works is no more valid today.***
- ***The provision of signs and wonders worked by believers has passed away. Love and the fruit of the spirit have replaced them.***
- ***The promises of God for earthly blessings such as health, food, safety, etc., were given by God in the context of legally required works. But those legal requirements have passed away.***

**III. We Stand Exhorted Regarding The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace, Given for Our Understanding:**

- *We must follow Paul therefore as he is our example and great teacher.*
- *The test of it all is this: How Pauline are we? The heart of Paul's teaching on the life of the believer living under the fulness of grace is here. Will we receive it gladly or will we submit ourselves willingly to law with its inevitable and unfruitful works of darkness? That is the question. Will we?*

***Gal. 2:19-21***

**19** For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

**20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

**21** I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.