

## ***“The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live, Part 3?”***

### **Review: “Hope Through the Indwelling Spirit Abides In Christ Jesus”**

- ***We Have Liberty through Christ’s Gracious Free Gift***

[READ ] Galatians 5:1-6

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

- So we have liberty as a gift of grace, if we will “keep” it! But the enemy remains, is powerful, and is always ready to attack.
- The teaching regarding the living out of our lives under grace is as simple as it is taught here in the first six verses. The rest of the chapter will give important details.

Still, it is a teaching for believers who have already believed the gospel of grace and were instructed by Paul as to how to live, under grace and its fullness. But false teachers promoting a different gospel and a religion of works have been led into rebellion against God’s all sufficient grace and have now turned aside to the carnal works of law. For some, this even led to their denial of the true gospel of the grace of God.

- But, we have liberty now; we should stand fast in it, resting here in this liberty due to the unfailing promises of God, and never give in to the bondage of the flesh. Our hope should carry us through to the destination, as both the Romans passage and this passage here in Galatians state with such power. This liberty is to be lived out gloriously, and those who are justified by grace have at last a foundation of grace to stand upon, if we will.

But the law, with its required works, will surely always interfere with the working of Almighty God under grace, for legalism of any

kind always cancels, short-circuits, grace, and its workings. Why? Because it encourages the indwelling flesh with its power, and we are then even more easily brought back into slavery to it. See Romans 7:5-6 for that powerful teaching.

- Verses 5 & 6 are a summary of what has just been written in the previous verses and a launchpad to what is yet to come in the chapter.
- Verse 5 states affirmatively the essence of our intended walk by faith with the relationship to the Spirit now his central focus. The hope of righteousness is intended to guide us each step of the way, always, for that is our promised destination. Our justification demands that glorious result, and all are on that path of glory.
- God's desire for us is not the religious works of the flesh but rather the heavenly fruit of the Spirit. Our new life in Christ Jesus is always present and available to be manifested. But legalism is the enemy of the Spirit's work, and his fruit can never be borne when we lose the focus intended with the hope of righteousness guiding and directing us. Amen.
- And so Paul writes here that the ceremonial rite of circumcision, so fundamentally important to Judaism, could no longer stand once the cross of Christ had become a historical fact and the full blessings of that death and resurrection were proclaimed to all, even Gentiles.

And if not circumcision, then also all law. Romans chapter 7 shows that even the Ten Commandments is included. This does not mean that one should dwell in sin, of course, but simply that liberty from the power of the flesh demands that we are not motivated by legal rules or commandments but by grace itself. So much has been included in Christ's resurrection blessings for us. Praise God. Know->Reckon->Yield (or Present). Never forget it.

**Our Outline Today: "The Walk of the Believer Under Grace Is A High Road Indeed"**

- ***Our Gracious Walk Is Far Above Anything the Law Could Ever Offer***
- ***The Full Dynamic of the Normal Christian Life Has Now Been Revealed***

**Next Time:**

- ***The Works of the Flesh Or the Fruit of the Spirit Reveal Our Condition***

**I. Our Gracious Walk Is Far Above Anything the Law Could Ever Offer:**

- Our apostle explains in some detail the essence of the abundant life of the believer in Romans 6-8. I hope we have here in this study come to grasp that message well. But a quick review will be beneficial. We read this in Romans chapter 6:

[READ ] Romans 6:8-10

8 Now if [since] we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

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

- First the promise: that since we died with Christ, we shall also live with him. This is such an excellent promise indeed.
- Then the explanation: “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.”: So Christ’s perspective now is entirely in reference to life. If this were our mindset what a difference it would make. It is exactly like the difference between looking backward at all of our “dirty laundry”, as it were, and forward to all that Christ is making us to be, even transforming us into his very image, from death to life. That is the path we are on as we now, through the Spirit, may indeed co-operate with Christ in our abundant living.
- False teaching about how the christian life should be lived, however, promotes a condition of repentance followed by confession that can never bear spiritual fruit, for it is based not on the truths here stated, but on principles that can never be other than merely religious.
- Now we need to reckon or count it to be true, day by day and hour by hour. In other words, we need to take God at his word as written here by the hand of our apostle Paul. For, he writes concerning this “Reckoning That Counts”, as I have often called it:
  - In Christ, we died and were raised again
  - An exhortation to liberty abides always
  - Living as alive from the dead, is our privilege
  - Grace frees us from the bondage to sin

Verses 11-14 present the teaching that is so critical for our understanding:

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- “Likewise ...”: Lit. “In this way” or “in reference to” what was just written in verses 6 -10. What was that? It was all about what we must know before we can go on to his next exhortations. And that was all about how God sees us as “in Christ Jesus”, where the connection to Adam’s sin has been broken completely, and now we have only a real and living connection to our Lord himself and his perfect righteousness in its place!
- How is Christ thinking, operating, now that our sin debt has been paid? That is what we must reckon upon, and that brings true liberty from all of our enemies, beginning with the most intimate and personal of all, the indwelling sin nature.

- Verses 9 & 10 summarize his teaching in those verses:

Romans 6:9-10

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

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

- This is all about Christ himself. But the point of Paul’s teaching here is that we are “in Christ” and therefore what is true now of Christ regarding sin is also true of us. But will we receive that truth? That is the question.

The point of this is that our resurrected and ascended Christ now lives above and beyond the issue of our sin and our sins!

He has already paid the full penalty for them, and his payment has been accepted by Almighty God as his glorious resurrection proves, for if his death and burial were not sufficient, he would still be in the grave. For otherwise, since our sins had become his, his death eternal separation from his heavenly father would be the consequence.

But he is risen, praise God almighty, and is seated in the heavenlies gloriously at God the Father’s right hand. He is risen. And consequently, his righteousness has become ours. And so the Lord God sees us as “in Him”. But how do we see ourselves? That is the question Paul is now addressing here in the Romans.

**So our response is intended to be like his, to live unto God and not as a slave to sin. It is that simple. These truths written so simply**

**and so boldly here should indeed lift all believers into the heavenlies. And so he follows with these words:**

“Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves ...” This was hinted at earlier in verse 4:

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

- This is the pivotal verse here in this chapter. Reckoning is taking God at his word in its most basic meaning. An analogy would be in the discipline of financial accounting. Note that accounting is a discipline based on counting both debits and credits and comparing the two. So, reckoning upon a statement of truth is to respond to that truth by faith, by taking it as true. But what is that truth as stated here?
- “... to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”: It is as simple (but profound) as to be translated from one realm of living where death and its shadows are enslaving us over to another realm of living where death has no relevance at all except the glory that shall then come to us. Indeed, that other side has to do with being alive unto God through Jesus Christ. That relationship is for us to be just as vivid and compelling and undeniable as the former was, or, as Paul testified, even more so!

And all of this teaching is so very unique and therefore powerful that we may want to stay here some time meditating upon it. Amen. But we must go on to the next, equally compelling, verses:

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

- Here, the verb “to reign” is a present active imperative with a negative particle so the meaning is “stop sin’s reigning or ruling in your mortal bodies (which are liable to die)”.

The stain of sin is still upon us as he writes here, in our mortal bodies, so damaged from how God originally created them. But we now dwell in liberty, he writes. And as such, we are called to stop allowing sin to dominate us as it always did when we knew not the Lord and were in bondage to trespasses and sins:

- “... that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof”: He adds the consequence of not taking verse 11’s truth to heart by faith, by describing the normal functioning of the mortal body with its inward strong desires [the sin

nature] to bring forth evil and sinfulness.

So the teaching is simple and clear, and therefore so powerful. We have been translated out of the realm of sin and death and into another place altogether, a spiritual reality created just for us, a realm of life and peace in Christ Jesus. And that means we have already been granted the power to live above and beyond the passions of our flesh.

The liberty God has entrusted us with is a privilege indeed. For the possession of the freedom to refuse the lusts of the flesh, of which we all are so prone, is marvelous and far beyond our limited ability to comprehend. The opportunity is ours. But will we avail ourselves of it?

- The apostle is nearly finished but must go on to repeat his teaching in the next two verses with additional details, and thereby continuing his gracious exhortation:

Romans 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

- First the negative, stop, and then the positive, in both cases, he writes, our living under grace is all about “yielding” or “presenting” [better translation perhaps] our members (a generic and all inclusive term here), NOT as instruments of unrighteousness and sin, but rather “as those that are alive from the dead, and [our] members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”
- We have the liberty for this way of living, he writes, for the truth is clear and our reckoning has liberated us to be living in this way. And this all is graciously granted to us based on our reckoning!!! To reflect back to our Lord what he had accomplished on our behalf in this way should now be our highest honor. For that is glorifying to him and his work

And follow those wonderful and encouraging words expressing that truth so well taught here in these Pauline letters. For what is it that has freed us from the bondage of Adam’s sin, but his abundant grace?

- The reckoning that counts, living as alive from the dead, is our privilege. So the bar has now been raised above all the Law could offer, far above! And so he finishes the section with these words:

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- This puts the focus here on his main point overall, and it is glorious indeed: For sin shall not [under the teaching before us concerning the reckoning, but not otherwise ...] have dominion over you! This is the plan of God for US redeemed ones, and we can live in this freedom — but only if, only if, we know — reckon — and yield, or present ourselves to God, as alive from the dead!
- “For ye are not under any [condemning] law ...”: There are no definite articles here. He is not speaking specifically about the Law of Moses, but any law at all. For all condemn, and none can give life. Being free from law with grace taking its place, is Paul’s concluding statement there. So there are no legalisms here. For we now live under grace:
- “... but under grace”: Praise God, we are under grace, and that has changed our entire walk before Almighty God. It is grace, therefore, that is at the heart of this dispensation, and only that grace has the power to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

**So we live with a new empowering, a new dynamic. Otherwise, there would be no possibility of living on this higher plane. But with it, we have been set free to enjoy the Lord of glory into whose resurrection and heavenly glory we have been translated.**

**The full dynamic of the normal Christian life has now been revealed!**

## **II. The Full Dynamic of the Normal Christian Life Has Now Been Revealed!**

- But now we must return to Galatians, where we find a most needed teaching. For though there is a strong imperative here, there could be none if we were not enabled to fulfill it as written in these verses. We have here Paul’s (and the Spirit’s) words designed to give us an enduring hope for all of this life with its many joys and sorrows.

So be encouraged, brethren.

[READ ] Galatians 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.

- The keyword now is here at the beginning, “walk”. Some background is needed.

- The “Peripatetic” philosophers and scientists were prominent in the fourth century B.C. Greece, largely the students of Aristotle, who was himself the student of Plato. They spent their days walking about and talking of matters of science and philosophy, and were therefore called “Peripatetic” after the Greek word for “walking around”. It was literally their “way of life”, for they were always walking about in serious conversation regarding science and philosophy. The residents of Athens called them “the walking philosophers”, usually with Aristotle or his students.

It seems centuries later that Paul referred to them and their descendants in his great “Mars Hill” speech:

**Acts 17:19-22**

**19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*?**

**20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.**

**21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)**

**22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.**

- And so “walk” came to have a secondary meaning of one’s way of life. We see the word often used that way in scripture. For example:

**[READ ] Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-10**

**1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

**2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**

**3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

...

**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:**

**9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

- So walking is one’s overall manner of living:

## **2 Corinthians 5:4-7**

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

**6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:**

**7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)**

## **Ephesians 5:14-16**

**14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.**

**15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,**

**16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

- Again, walking is one's overall manner of living.
- So, with this one word, "walk," Paul begins his detailed teaching in the letter to the Galatians on how we should live with all the blessings of God's grace through Christ. Here in verse 16 we find a strong command in the imperative followed by a statement of fact of astounding consequence:

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

- There is more here than meets the eye for the translation obscures its full intent: "Walk in (or by) the Spirit and you by no means may fulfill the strong desires of the flesh". The implication is that one walking in the Spirit is not able to fulfill or bring to completion what the indwelling sin nature always desires. That is the full meaning of the verse.

Paul then explains himself (as we surely would hope he would) in the following verse:

- Verse 17 describes a battle indeed, between the Spirit and the flesh. Both are "within" all believers. It is important, he teaches, for us to understand the nature of this battle if we would desire to live as God intends.

**"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 key to the abundant Christian life, even the normal Christian life, is here. What Paul is describing is not what he wrote about in Romans chapter 7. The better commentators agree on this point. Here he is describing the result of one's walking in or by the Spirit. The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit, not our human spirits as the KJV translators implied in their capitalization.

When we are walking in the Spirit, he writes, there is a battle between the Spirit and the flesh that dwells within every believer. The consequence of that battle is as he writes here, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." What he is saying is that what we would otherwise do, we would not be able to do, namely, that which the carnal nature desires.

He is not saying that we cannot do what would please God, but rather what would not. That follows from the proper understanding that the Spirit referred to here is the Holy Spirit.

That is most encouraging, is it not? The Holy Spirit takes charge of the evil within, and he is victorious over it. That frees us and enables our fruit-bearing rather than the works of the flesh dominating. But this is only when we are "walking in the Spirit".

- And so we are exhorted to walk in the Spirit. We are not told all that this means. Perhaps that is because we could easily see that as a legal requirement and thereby encourage the flesh as law always does. But we have already learned that co-operating with the work of the Lord is our highest calling for this life. And since the Holy Spirit always works to glorify our risen and ascended Lord Jesus, the teaching in the Romans summarized by these words, "Know, reckon, and yield (or present)" has prepared us well to live in the ways honoring our Lord. And that is what it means to "walk in the Spirit". It is that simple. Amen.
  - Verse 18 fits so well in the context here of Paul's insightful teaching: "

### ***Conclusions / Application: What we have learned***

- What walking by the Spirit IS: It is our personal spirits recognizing the complete liberty available to us in Christ Jesus and then by faith offering ourselves to the Lord God instead of to the flesh dwelling within. The Holy Spirit then fights the battle with the flesh and is victorious. We are liberated, therefore, to bear fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, ..." Amen and praise God.
- What walking by the Spirit IS NOT: It is our personal spirits refusing the freedom offered to us and therefore seeking to control the nature of sin dwelling within.

This is expressed in various ways, but a common one is this: Through merely religious works, we seek to become “more like Jesus”, attempting to “keep a law,” whether that is a commandment of God or only a religious principle imposed upon us by a religious organization. The result is the works of the flesh: “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, ...” May it never be so.

**Next Time:**

- ***The Works of the Flesh Or the Fruit of the Spirit Reveal Our Condition:***

[READ ] Galatians 5:19-22

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.

[READ ] Galatians 5:22-24

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.