

## Gal 11 – Two Religions – One Choice , Gal 5:1-12

The Commentator **John Stott** says; Galatians is a “**Polemical**” Epistle . . .

**Polemic** = *an aggressive refuting of the opinions or principles of another* - -  
**Webster’s** describes it as – “*the art of disputing*”

& that **is exactly** what Paul is doing – he is *aggressively refuting* the efforts of the Judaizers **to drag** the Galatian believers *back under the law*

**Since Ch 1** - He’s been refuting the “**false religion**” of adding *Works to Faith*  
But in this section – he *pulls out* all the stops . . .

& he’s going to **make it clear** today – The Galatians are *faced w/*  
**Two Religions** (2 ways to God) – but they can only make **One Choice** –  
& *it’s the same w/ us . . .*

we can either try to **Earn our Righteousness** thru Self-Effort and Works –  
or we can **Receive our Righteousness** Thru Faith in Christ . . .

*By Works* – or *By Faith* – **YOU CHOOSE** - but Paul will **show us** today –  
there can be **no mixing** of the Two

### **Let’s Pray**

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Paul **begins** today w/ a Reminder of why Christ came –  
& a warning to not abandon - what Christ died to give them

### **Gal 5:1**

*I Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

### **Gal 5:1 NASB**

*I It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

The **Judaizers** were deceiving the Galatians into *thinking they must add*  
the *Works of the Law* - to their *Freedom* in Christ

**& Paul says:**

“Stand Fast (firm) in **that Freedom** that Jesus Christ died to give you”

**don't go back** & get *entangled* again –

in that *unrelenting yoke* - of the bondage of **Self-Righteousness**

They were **being told** – following the law would be “**Adding**” to their faith . . .

But Paul says it's “*putting on again*”, the yoke **Christ died** to *free them from*

**[re-read v.1]**

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In **V.2** – Paul lays out the “*Either / Or*” truth . . .

That is – that we must **EITHER** ;

choose **Faith in Christ** to make us Righteous before God - - OR

choose the **Works of the Law** to make us Righteous . . . Either one . . .

But here is the **amazing truth** for today ;

**When** you *choose one* – you automatically **Forfeit** the *other one*

**Gal 5:2**

*2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.*

“**Indeed**” - an imperative word – used to *give emphasis* –

**NIV** says “**Mark my words!** . . .” – meaning he really wants us to listen

**Circumcision** was *originally instituted* by God as a **Symbol** of the *Covenant of Promise* - He made with Abraham . . .

**A Covenant** that *required* only **Faith** on Abraham's part

*However* – it had become a **Symbol** of a *commitment* to follow all of *the Jewish laws* – (a symbol God never intended it to be)

Paul is **referring to** circumcision here - as the **Symbol** it had become –

A **Symbol** of a commitment to *follow the Jewish laws* . . .

& he says – **IF** (after being Set-Free by Faith in Christ) – **You go back**  
to trying to **Earn your Righteousness** by following God's law . . .

***then Christ will profit you nothing !!!*** (end of **V.2**)

In other words – you pick one way to God or the other - - either ;

Thru **Faith** in Christ alone . . . or

Thru your **own efforts** of following the Law alone . . .

***But when you pick one – you must forfeit the other***

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**& in V.3** – it just gets worse for those who try it the Self-Righteousness way

### **Gal 5:3**

*3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.*

You **can't pick** which parts of the law you want to keep –

If you're **going to take** on this "commitment" to keeping the law (circumcision)

Then you will **be required** by God to keep the **WHOLE LAW** !!!!

& **not just** keep the law – but you must **keep it perfectly** !

### **Jas 2:10 - NIV**

*10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

There are **certain religions** who try to focus on just **one part** of God's law –

For instance – Which day of the week **the Sabbath** really is . . .

& **the extremists** in that religion believe - **which day** of the week you go to church on - is what **determines** whether you go to heaven or not ???

**That** is extreme legalism - & **it is exactly** the type of thing Paul's addressing –  
& He is **aggressively refuting** that type of legalistic bondage

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**Unfortunately** – it's *not getting any better* for the Legalists – it's getting worse because **not only** does choosing Self-Righteousness *cause you* to be a "**Debtor**" to keep the **Whole Law** (v.3) . .

But **even worse** – making that choice "**SEVERES**" you from Christ . . .  
& even causes you to "**Fall from Grace**"

### **Gal 5:4**

*4 You have become **estranged** [severed] from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have **fallen** from grace.*

about as **serious a warning** - as you *can find* in the Bible –  
& it's **directed** at those who think they've **Earned Something** with God

Let's put it on the screen together w/ the **NLT version** . . .

### **Gal 5:4 – NLT**

*4 For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been **cut off** from Christ! You have **fallen away** from God's grace.*

**Theologians** from every denomination "**Debate**" exactly what this means -  
to be "**Cut Off**" from Christ – or to "**Fall Away**" from God's Grace  
& they try to **get this Vs.** to fit into *whatever their doctrine* is on this subject

But that is definitely **NOT** what *Paul was doing* when he wrote it . . .

Paul is sending a **Clear Warning** here – - it is a *very bad idea* to  
"**try to make yourself right with God by keeping the law**"

### **[read vs again]**

We must understand – Paul's context is - *you can't have it both ways* -  
you cannot be saved by **Faith** **AND** by the **Works of the law**

You **cannot** receive Christ by *Faith Alone* –  
& **also** attempt to be justified by your *Own Efforts*

& **what's worse** is - Choosing one "*cuts you off from the other*"  
**THAT** is the point Paul is making (& making very clear)

Paul says – **trying to add** your *own Righteousness* to the work of Christ  
actually **severs you** from Christ – you **become estranged** from Him

& not only do you "**sever**" yourself from Christ –  
but you have "**fallen away from God's Grace**"

**God's Grace** is the central truth - of the *entire New Covenant* –  
**all** of salvation (& everything w/ it) **comes BY** God's Grace . . .

& here we read - trying to **add** your own works - to the work of Christ –  
causes you to "**Fall away from His Grace**" –

We **MUST** choose – **EITHER**;

be Justified **BY** His Grace & **THRU** our Faith **ALONE** – or  
be justified **by** our Self-Effort and Works of the Law **ALONE** . . .

You can pick **either** approach – but you **CANNOT** pick **both**

& **any attempt** to add **Self-Righteousness** - to your *Righteousness in Christ*  
**Severs** you from Christ - - & causes you to **Fall** from God's Grace -

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Now – **this Vs** certainly brings up the "*once saved always saved*" questions

After all **V.4** says - you can become "**Severed**" from Christ –  
& you can "**Fall**" from Grace . . .

& **those phrases** certainly sound like a person *losing their salvation*

But - we **never** make a *doctrine* out of **One Vs.** in the Bible –  
**we only** make a *doctrine* out of the **Entire Teaching** of the Bible

**& the Entire Teaching of the Bible says Two things on this subject –**

**#1) - From God's perspective** - our Salvation is **absolutely, totally**  
**secure** and **guaranteed** – it is *finished & complete* – In Christ

**#2) - From Our Perspective** - we are to continue to Abide, to Obey, & to Persevere "In Christ" - - & **by so doing** - we will never be severed from Christ - & **by so doing** we will never fall from Grace -

The Whole of the Bible puts the Security & Guarantee of our salvation **on God** - **AND** - it puts the Responsibility to Abide & Obey - **On us** . . .

The difference is **Perspective** - - whether you're looking at it from **God's** perspective - - - or from **Our** perspective

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& in fact - in **V.5** Paul describes the "**Perspective**" of those who are truly Saved BY Faith . . .

### **Gal 5:5**

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

"**hope**" is a special word around here - since it's in our **Foundation Vs**;  
*"This hope we have as an anchor of the Soul, both sure and steadfast"*

**The Greek word** - & the meaning - is the **same** in both places . . .  
*"a confident expectation based on solid certainty"*

& Paul says: "we - thru the Spirit - are eagerly waiting for that **confident expectation based on solid certainty** of our Righteousness **BY** faith"

We **DO NOT Work** for our confident expectation of Righteousness - because if it were based on our work - it wouldn't be that confident would it ?

We **don't work** to receive it - We receive it **Thru Faith** in Him who promised it

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& continuing in **V.6** - Paul makes it clear - **No outward actions** can produce that Righteousness by Faith

### **Gal 5:6**

*6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

When you are “**IN**” Christ Jesus – there are **no works** that could **ADD** anything to your position – You are “**IN CHRIST**” – **nothing** can be added to that !!!

**However** - We are **NOT** SAYING - the life of Faith Does Not Include works  
**Notice** the Last words here – “. . . **faith working through love**”

### **Eph 2:10 says;**

*10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Here is the **Monumental Difference** about works - we must understand ;  
Our works are **the PRODUCT** of our Faith –  
NOT **a SUBSTITUTE** for our Faith

We don't work **FOR** our Righteousness – Our works **ISSUE FORTH from**  
the Righteousness we've received by Faith

**It's NOT to EARN – it's to RESPOND in love to what we've RECEIVED**

### **Col 1:10 says;**

*10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

**Not because** it gets you something –  
**because** it's a Response to what you've already been given

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in **V.7** – Paul changes gears - & turns his sights on the False-Teachers -  
those who are **willingly misleading** & **damaging** the Body of Christ

### **Gal 5:7**

*7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*

**Paul's response** to the False-Teachers – **is identical** to Jesus' response -  
**when Jesus** was dealing with the Scribes & Pharisee's

**When dealing** w/ someone overcome by sin –

both **Jesus** & **Paul** used compassion and love for the sinner –  
even while condemning the sin itself

**But for those** who Pervert God's truth - & Lead others into falsehood –

Both Jesus & Paul – had very **harsh words** of condemnation

& here in **V.7** – Paul begins by saying **these False Teachers** are  
*hindering the church from obeying the truth*

**he says**; “*you were doing great, who got you so off-track*”

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& then **V.8** – is a statement we **really need to understand** in the church today

### **Gal 5:8**

*8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*

Now let me ask you some very important questions . . . :

- 1) Were the Judaizers **Part** of the church ? (*came from within the church*)
- 2) Had they made **Professions** of Faith in Christ ? (*or they wouldn't be part*)
- 3) Was their **Persuasion** on the body from God?

They **were part** of the church – they **had made professions of faith** in Christ –  
But what they were doing - was **not from God** . . .

**if the enemy** could get someone inside the church - to **mislead** or bring  
**damage from the inside** –

Don't you think that would be **productive approach** for the enemy?

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**& Vs.9** tells us **why** that approach is so productive

### **Gal 5:9:**

*9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*



This is so **true of sin** in your *personal life* . . .

**AND** – it is true with those **in the body** spreading *false teaching* - or other **schemes** designed to *divide the body* from the inside

again – **V. 8** says;

*8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*

**The problem is** – it is very *hard to see* this when it's *actually happening* –  
**Most often** we *look back on it* & say Wow . . . that is what that was !!!

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But in **V.10** we see Paul has *confidence* - the Lord will *bring the Galatians* thru

**Gal 5:10** →

**Gal 5:10**

*10 I have confidence in you, **in the Lord**, that you will have no other mind [view]; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*

Paul has confidence - the Lord will ultimately **save the church**

**AND** he knows - God will **ultimately deal** with the *false teachers* Himself

I *think it's important* to note – that Paul is **NOT** trying to bring his *own judgment* upon the **False Teachers** – He's *leaving all that up* to God . . .

**Paul is focused** on turning the believers *back to Christ* –

He's **focused on building** the new believers *Faith in Christ* alone

**He's not taking** the judgment of the Judaizers *into his own hands* –

he knows **only God** can bring *judgment* on the False Teachers . . .

**However** – Paul does have *one simple "wish"* for them - - -

But we have to **skip down to V.12** to see it (*We'll come back to V.11*)

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Skipping down to **V.12** – Paul closes his "*Aggressive Refuting*" of the Judaizers with a simple "wish" for them

## **Gal 5:12**

*12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!*

a pretty **shocking statement** – one that would certainly **anger** & **offend** those **in the church** - who causing this division

The phrase “*cut themselves off*” – means **LIT:** “*mutilate themselves*” – & it seems to be kind of a “*Word Play*” on circumcision . . .

what **Paul’s saying** is – *he wishes* these *False Teachers* would just **remove themselves** from the *church at Galatia*

**Remember** – to those **overcome by sin** – The **N.T.** always *reaches out* in “*saving grace*”, in “*forgiveness*”, and in “*restoration*” . . .

**But to those** sowing **False Teaching** and **Destruction** in the body – The **N.T.** is never so kind . . . instead it **always seeks** to **protect** the body of Christ - from those *who would Divide It !*

As Paul says here in **V.12** . . . [re-read vs.]

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Now – I want to close today by going back to **V.11** – because there is a great truth hidden in that Vs . . .

## **Gal 5:11**

*11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the **offense of the cross** has ceased.*

Paul’s **probably responding** here to a “*False Accusation*” from the Judaizers - that he was *still preaching* “**circumcision**”

Paul **NEVER** taught that circumcision had **ANY** part in a person **becoming** a Christian – or **living** the Christian life . . .

**incl’d’g in Acts 16** – when Paul had **Timothy** get circumcised so he could *better minister* to the Jews . . .

which was **prob. the event** the Judaizers were **contorting** in order to claim Paul was preaching Circumcision

I've found **when people** are trying to divide the body – they will take a small truth - & **Contort it** greatly, in order to support their own purposes - - (**saw that in Gal 4:17**)

So Paul says **IF** he were still preaching Circumcision – not only would **he** cease to be persecuted . . .

but the message of the cross would also **cease to be an offense** – & **THAT** is the **great truth hidden** in this last Vs . . .

The **message of the cross** is an offense to those who desire to earn their own Righteousness - thru their **own** Efforts

The **pure Gospel Message** . . . ; that Righteousness can only be found at the **foot of the cross** . . .

is a "**Stumbling Block**" to the core character trait of our sin nature - it is a "**Stumbling Block**" to our **Pride**

**Listen to what John Stott says here:** *"The good news of Christ crucified is still a stumbling block, grievously offensive to the pride of men. It tells them that they are sinners, rebels, under the wrath and condemnation of God, that they can do nothing to save themselves or secure their salvation, and that only through Christ crucified can they be saved. If we preach this gospel, we shall arouse ridicule and opposition. Only if we preach 'circumcision' [which is] the merits and the sufficiency of man, shall we escape persecution and become popular"*

**If indeed** this is the case - Then may we **NEVER** escape persecution & may we **NEVER** become popular . . .

Because we have **One Message & One Message Alone** – & that is the **message of the Cross** . . .

That man can **ONLY** be made Righteous before God by Receiving the Gift of Christ Crucified on their behalf . . .

And that gift that comes only **BY** God's Grace –  
& is Received only **THRU** our *Faith in Christ alone* - - **w/ Nothing Else Added**

**Let's Pray**