

## Stand Firm In Freedom

Over and over, God's people are told to stand firm. And that's exactly what we find in Galatians 5.

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

That's the call: **stand firm in freedom!** God is in the business of setting His children free. Free from the weight of religious laws. Free from condemnation, guilt, shame, and even death itself. Free into eternal life with a good, loving, righteous God. The good news of Jesus Christ is the good news of freedom — for anyone who simply believes in Him.

But our world is full of different gospels that threaten to rob Christians of that freedom. And that was the issue in Galatia. Believers there were being swept toward false teaching — trading the freedom of Christ for the burden of religious law.

**GOD WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO STAND FIRM IN THE FREEDOM WE HAVE IN CHRIST.**

But that leaves us with a question: *How?* That's what Galatians 5 is all about. From this chapter, I want to

show you **three steps** to help us stand firm in the freedom Christ purchased for us.

## **Step #1 – Know the Truth of the Gospel of Grace (Galatians 5:1–12).**

When you know the truth of grace, you won't fall for the slavery of legalism. Christ did not die to make law-keepers better; He died to make law-breakers right with God.

God makes His definition of grace clear. Romans 11:6 says, “If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.”

*“For freedom **Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither***

*circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but **only faith** working through love.*”

The moment you believe in Jesus, God declares you righteous in Christ. He gives you His Spirit as the down payment of what’s to come. And by faith we wait for the day when we will be completely righteous in heaven—free even from our sin nature—and made like Jesus forever.

What about that phrase in verse 4: “*fallen from grace*”? Paul does not say, “You have fallen from salvation.” He says, “You have fallen from grace.” To fall from grace is not to lose salvation—it is to step out of the freedom of grace and back into the slavery of law. A believer who goes down that road wastes his life on things Paul says “don’t count for anything.” He leaves the grace-system for a law-system that cannot save.

Falling from grace also does not mean falling into sin. People sometimes say, “David fell from grace when he sinned with Bathsheba.” That’s not true. David didn’t fall from grace—he fell into grace. He fell into the arms of a God who disciplines, restores, and forgives His children when they confess their sins.

*“You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!”*

Legalism is dangerous. That’s why we must be careful. If a church lets law-keeping sneak in as a way of being justified before God (Romans 4:2), it can ruin the fellowship.

## **Step #2 – Know the purpose of the call into freedom (Galatians 5:13–15)**

When you know the purpose of freedom, you won’t fall for the slavery of license. God did not call us into freedom so that we could sin; He called us into freedom so that we could be freed from sin.

*“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law*

*is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”*

By the Spirit’s work in your heart, you no longer ask, “*How much can I get away with?*” Instead you begin to ask, “*How could I not please the One who loved me and gave Himself for me?*”

So don’t believe the lie that grace leads to sin. Grace leads to freedom, and freedom to love. Love for God and love for people.

### **Step #3 – Know the work of the Holy Spirit’s leading (Galatians 5:16–25)**

When you know the work of the Holy Spirit, you will enjoy liberty and freedom. The Spirit was not given to leave us in a mess; He was given to lead us into life. One of the greatest blessings of the New Testament church age is the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want*

*to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

Paul doesn't say you won't feel those desires—he says you won't fulfill them. That's good news. Every believer knows this inner tug-of-war between what our flesh wants and what the Spirit wants. The question is: who will we yield to? So how do we walk by the Spirit? By living in dependence on Him.

*19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. ESV*

If you belong to Christ, your flesh has already been crucified with Him. As strong as it may feel, the power

of your flesh is broken because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. So live like it. Depend on Him daily. And when you do, you'll find freedom from the flesh, and fruitfulness in the Spirit.