

## THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

### Part Thirteen Practical Section

#### VI. Paul's Application of the Gospel Galatians 5:1 - 6:18

- A. Exhortation to Stand Firm in Christ (5:1-12)
- B. Exhortation to Love One Another (5:13-26)

Paul exhorts the Galatians to love one another, and in so doing, fulfill the Law. This principle is at the very heart of the Christian faith. Paul clearly shows that love is the biblical alternative to legalism.

##### 1. Liberty and not Licence (verse 13)

- a. "use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh"

The word translated "occasion" is a word which was used to designate a military base of operations by the classical Greek writers. A free translation might read, "Don't turn your liberty into a base of operations for the flesh." One of the most widely used arguments against justification by faith is that such a doctrine leads to licentious living. When the restraining influence of the Law is removed, an individual is apt to indulge the flesh, it is argued. The sixth chapter of Romans refutes this argument. Even though we are under grace and not under the Law we are not free to do as we please. In fact, we should reckon ourselves as being dead to the desires of the flesh. When Christ died, we died; when Christ arose from the dead, we arose from the dead, and now we live according to a new guiding principle. This principle is the "Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus" referred to in Romans 8:2. Freedom to do as we would please is no freedom at all. We would soon find ourselves in bondage to the appetites of the flesh. Real freedom is freedom to obey and please Jesus Christ. As Augustine has said, "To serve God is true freedom."

##### 2. Love and not Legalism (verses 13 and 14)

- a. "by love serve one another"

The verb translated "serve" means 'to be a slave, to be in bondage.' The Galatians were moving toward bondage to the Law, legalism. This was a servitude which would lead to misery and death. Paul introduces a new kind of bondage, bondage to love. This was a voluntary bondage that would lead to happiness and life. This does not mean that we are only to become slaves of one another. It means that we are first to be in voluntary servitude to Christ and then we are to serve one another by looking out for one another's welfare. (Compare I John 4:20,21) Paul called himself a bond slave of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1) This servitude is unbidden, for Jesus said in John 14:14,15a, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants ..." Paul did not have to be the bondslave of Jesus Christ, it was simply that he wanted to do so because of his love for the Lord.

Slavery is uncommon, if not unheard of, in our day, but there was a time when it was quite prevalent. The story is told of a young girl who was being auctioned off in the square of a large town. The bidding was being vigorously carried on by a group of men of low character. A distinguished gentleman stepped into the crowd and began bidding for the young slave. Finally the gentleman had gone higher than anyone else wanted to go and the slave girl was delivered to him. Her hands were chained behind her back but she kicked and spit at her new master to show her hatred toward the master she thought to be a vile man. As soon as the two were away from the crowd, on a deserted side street, the gentleman took the key from his pocket, unlocked the chains binding the girl's wrists, and said in a tender voice, "You are free to go now." The slave girl could not believe her ears. She slowly repeated the wonderful word "free." She then fell at the feet of her emancipator and cried, "I will serve you as long as I live." She was so appreciative of the gift of freedom that she was willing to serve voluntarily.