

"Free to Love" Galatians 5:1-15

Believers face a choice between three competing ways-of-life. The first, legalism, seeks to earn favor with God through self-effort. The second, license, seeks to satisfy the desires and cravings of our fallen human nature. Yet as opposite as these two ways-of-life sound, both lead to pain and destruction in our lives and harm those around us. Fortunately, there is a better way, the way of love. As we serve the needs of others in love we build one another up and fulfill all that God intended in the Law.

Avoid Legalism

- What it's not:
 - Obedience (Philippians 2:12)
 - Effort / hard work (Philippians 2:12)
 - Holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16)
 - Self-discipline (1 Timothy 4:7)
 - Good works (Ephesians 2:10)

- What it is:

the attempt to either earn a relationship with God (justification) or grow in a relationship with God (sanctification) through self-effort rather than through Christ's finished work and empowering Spirit

- What it involves:
 - For them: obedience to the Jewish Law plus circumcision
 - For us:
 - Turning grey areas black & white
 - Doing the right things for the wrong reasons

- Why we should avoid it:
 1. Proves a crushing burden (v3)
 2. Cuts you off from God's blessings (v2,4)
 3. Hinders your spiritual growth (v7)
 4. Is not from God (v8)
 5. Is contagious (v9)
 6. Leads to divine judgment (v10)
 7. Distorts the gospel (v11)
 8. Is worse for you than castration! (v12)

Avoid License

- V13a “opportunity for the flesh”
 - “flesh” here means “our sinful, fallen human nature”
- License: *the attempt to satisfy the sinful desires that come naturally to us*
- Why we should avoid it:
 - v15 – it hurts those around us

Pursue Love

- v13 – serve others in love
 - legalism serves **my** pride
 - license serves **my** desires
 - love serves **your** needs
- Why we should pursue love:
 - v14 – it fulfills what the Law intended

10 Commandments

Love God

- No other gods
- No idols
- Name in vain
- Sabbath

Love neighbor

- Honor parents
- No murder
- No adultery
- No stealing
- No lying
- No coveting

Application

Love your neighbor as yourself

- Who?
 - Whoever you can be a neighbor to!
- How?
 - give (e.g. anonymous gift card)
 - serve (e.g. shop or wrap gifts for someone)
 - welcome into your home (e.g. int’l students; new folks)
 - share Christ