

## What takes place in our lives when we use our freedom in Christ as an opportunity to through love serve one another?

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. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

### 1. We obey God and build instead of destroying, 5:13-15.

- Our opportunity now—our base of operation—is to live as those who have been set free from our sins.
- Having been set free by Christ we will now choose to obey God and through love serve one another or we will use this as an opportunity for ourselves and possibly destroy each other.
- Using our opportunity to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ we will be builders in the kingdom of God.
- We are warned about the possible destruction we will bring into the lives of our fellowship if we do not lay down our lives.
- If we do not obey God, then we will bite and devour.

**\*How do we bite and devour? Grumbling, complaining, rudeness, gossip, etc.**

#### PARENTHETICAL INTERRUPTION ...

Preaching and teaching sound doctrine is being

diligent to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- (Ephesians 4:1–3 ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain [“make every effort to keep” (NIV) ... “being diligent to preserve” (NASB)] the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Please notice that in the Ephesians text it is “the unity of the Spirit.” Not the unity that we have conceived and nurtured on a mere human level, but “the unity of the Spirit.” God’s word; God’s will; God’s world.



**So let me then introduce you to Crazy Liberal Theology 101: Don’t preach doctrine because doctrine causes division.** You have heard this. I have. Who would teach such a thing? **Who could possibly be so foolish to teach that preaching the word of God is going to undo the unity of the Spirit of God?** Who would teach such a thing? Someone walking in darkness.

This doesn’t come from God. But they are right in this sense—preaching sound doctrine will divide the truth from the lie and separate light from darkness. Preaching sound doctrine creates a spiritual environment where the Holy Spirit works his unity, not ours. **Mere humans will try to create and nurture an environment where we invite God into our world—to bless our world. We want to create our spiritual**



**realm and then invite God in. Doesn’t work that way.**

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.

### 2. We walk by the Spirit, 5:16-17.

- Through love serving one another brings us to a place of surrender before God.
- Surrendered before God is walking by the Spirit of God.
- The only way to defeat our sinful nature is to walk by the Spirit. We cannot defeat our sinful nature; we trust the Spirit for that work.
- When we walk by the Spirit, we are at war with our sinful nature. And when we are walking by our sinful nature we are at war with the Spirit.

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

### 3. We are led by the Spirit and are not exploited and exposed by the law, 5:18-21.

- When we walk by the Spirit—surrender our lives by through love serving one another, then we live under grace.
- Living under grace, we do not live under the

law—a system of pursuing righteousness by attempting to follow a moral code.

- Living under the law EXPLOITS our sinful nature:** When we attempt to defeat our sinful nature by submitting to the “under law” system of attaining righteousness, we foolishly submit ourselves to defeat and enslavement.
- Living under the law EXPOSES our sinful nature:** The works of the flesh are evident in our lives. These “identifiers” are revealed in 5:19-21.
- We now live under the life-giving ministry of the Spirit and not the killing ministry of the law, 5:18, cf. 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.
- (Romans 7:5–6 ESV) **For while we were living in the flesh**, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are **released from the law**, having died to that which held us captive, so that **we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.**
- (Philippians 3:9 ESV) And be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law**, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.
- (2 Corinthians 3:5–6 ESV) Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be **ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**