

Read Galatians 5:1-25

So this is the beginning of the **small print** - Paul's been telling them about grace and how free they are - and then he gives them a new set of do's and don'ts?

What is really going on here is not a return to rules but Paul's **way of applying the message of grace to their ongoing lives**. Paul puts it like this -

> **living in the Spirit** (the salvation bit - freedom from the penalty of sin) and

> **walking by the Spirit** (the ongoing bit - freedom from sin in our lives)

Paul says that the **only way to get freedom from sin in our ongoing life is to walk by the Spirit** ¹⁶*But I say walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

1. Walking by the Spirit means to walk with a future perspective

¹³*For you were called to freedom - ¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery*

To walk somewhere **you need a heading**. So **where** are we heading? Looking back at the previous paragraph or so we can get more of an idea - Paul **contrasts Abraham's two sons** - Ishmael and Isaac. **Read Gal 4:21-28**

Ishmael was Abraham's **attempt** to achieve God's promise of being a Father to many. ^{23a}*the son of the slave woman was born according to the flesh.*

Isaac by contrast was God's way of achieving his promise ^{23b}*The son of the free woman was born through promise .or later on it says according to the Spirit*. Paul also says that this represents Jerusalem above - the **future** heavenly city..

We have a **series of contrasts**: Slave-free | Flesh-promise | Present- future. We go from one to the other when Christ called us and we responded in faith to his call.

Before Christ called us we were **slaves** to this world and the consequences of its rebellion against God - sin.

Before Christ called us we were of the **flesh**, ruled by our sinful desires.

Before Christ called us we were set firmly in this world and lived according to its values.

After Christ called us we gained **freedom** from sin and are no longer slaves to sin.

After Christ called us we became children of **promise** or Spirit.

After Christ called us we live according to **heavens** tune we are just staying here on temporary basis.

We have literally **changed address, changed status, changed destiny**. ³ *For thorough the Spirit, by faith we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness*

2. Walking by the Spirit means to walk with a new identity

²⁴*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*

Walking by the Spirit is **being sure of our identity** - what has happened to us and who we are in Christ

To understand this we need to look a bit closer at **verses 16-18**. It speaks of the flesh and the Spirit being **in opposition** to each other.

But when we begin to think about our ongoing life as a Christian we can often think of it as a **bit of an uphill struggle**. This though is **not the truth about us** - we **belong** to Christ - Ephesians 4:20-24 ... *the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

We have a **new identity** - we are no longer poor old sinners but the righteous holy people of God. Through our new identity in Christ **we gain freedom** from having to do all the flesh stuff we used to do - he has changed us!

3. Walking by the Spirit means saying no to temptation

¹³*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.*

So **how do I walk or maybe more pressing how do I stop behaving like the flesh is in control** and start behaving as if the Spirit is in control?

Firstly you need to realise that it is possible - your new status and identity make it possible - **the truth is as you have been crucified with Christ your old self has died**. **Read Romans 6:6-11**

Secondly you need to say no to the temptation and just stop doing it.

1Co 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability but with the temptation he will provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.*

Is the bible true? Yes so this must be true - that means we should have a new identity approach that recognises **that we will never be in a situation where we cannot resist**. **Read Romans 6:12-13**

Whatever your areas of potential problems are, take responsibility - don't; go there stop doing it. Don't yield to sin. As the old Nike phrase goes - **Just don't do it!**

Conclusion

We have spent a long time explaining grace and that all **that we have is down to God and his transforming of our lives** and the way **he forgives us and makes us right with him even when we don't deserve it**. This is a vital foundation.

What we have talked about today does not negate or go against that - it is the **natural outworking of God's grace** in our lives. The fruit of God's grace in our lives is **a life that reflects the character of God**. God saved us so we could glorify him and demonstrate his goodness. We have been freed for a purpose.

Grace motivates us to please God and make the right choices. We have a new **heading**, a new **identity**, and a **way out of every temptation** Satan puts in our path. This is all because of God's grace in our lives.

²⁵*If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit*