

## **“By Love Serve One Another”**

Galatians 5:13-15

### **Introduction:**

1. Someone has observed that “our society is saturated with ME-ism.” Accordingly, we are often advised to:
  - a. “Look out for number one.”
  - b. “Do it to others before they do it to you.”
  - c. Go by the philosophy of “what is yours is mine if I can get it, whether by hook or by crook.”
2. This philosophy is vastly different from the teaching of Jesus Christ in general, and the teaching of Galatians in particular.
3. In fact, instead of advising us to “look out for number one,” Galatians instructs us, saying, “*By love **serve one another.***” This brings us to our text, Gal. 5:13-15.
  - a. The admonition in verse 13, “*by love serve one another,*” constitutes the title of this lesson.

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. Background Information:**

- A. The Book briefly outlined:
  1. Chapters 1 and 2: Paul’s Defense of the Gospel and His Apostleship.
  2. Chapters 3 and 4: Justification by Faith Apart from the Works of the Law.
  3. Chapters 5 and 6: Concluding Exhortations.
- B. Chapter Five Outlined:
  1. Dangers of Apostasy, Gal. 5:1-12.
  2. Obligations of Liberty, Gal. 5:13-15.
  3. Warfare between the flesh and the spirit, Gal. 5:16-26.

**Note:** This lesson is primarily based upon Gal. 5:13-15.

#### **II. Examine the Text.**

- A. “*You have been called,*” Gal. 5:13.
  1. Paul was writing to the “*churches of Galatia,*” Gal. 1:1.
    - a. “*Church*” means “the called out.”
  2. These people had been called.
    - a. Called by the gospel. 2 Thess. 2:14 Gal. 1:6.
- B. Called “*Unto Liberty,*” Gal. 5:13.
  1. God calls us to liberty.
    - a. From sin, Rom. 6:17-18.
    - b. From error, John 8:32.
    - c. The law of Moses, Gal. 4:21-31; 5:1.
  2. But He does not free us from law itself.
    - a. Where there is no law, “*there is no transgression,*” Rom. 4:15; cf. I John 3:4.
    - b. All Christians are under law to Christ, I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2.
- C. “*Only use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh,*” Gal. 5:13.
  1. Liberty in Christ is not to be interpreted as license to indulge the flesh! Cf. Gal. 5:19-21; I Peter 2:16; Rev. 2:6,15.
  2. Many want freedom from all restraints: children from helping out in the home, many want freedom from having to study, the demands of work, even freedom from their marriage vows!
  3. Multitudes have used their political liberty, or freedom, in such a way as to become addicted, or slaves to the worst forms of bondage. Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, pornography, etc.
  4. Biblical “*Liberty:*”
    - a. Is not a starting point to digress into iniquity, but
    - b. A starting point to serve others!
- D. “*But by love serve one another,*” Gal. 5:13.
  1. Freed from the bondage of **the Law**, brought under the bondage **of love**!
    - a. Paul himself was under that kind of bondage. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:14.
      - (1) “*Love of Christ,*” 2 Cor. 5:14. His love for us? Or our love for Him? It makes no difference in the light of I John 4:19.
  2. Love is the antidote to strife, Gal. 5:14-15.

- a. Love is the motive behind our service!
- 3. Christians have been freed in order to serve!
  - a. Serve God.
  - b. Serve "*one another*," Gal. 5:13.

### III. A Willingness to Be a Servant is not Natural. It must be learned.

- A. The Pharisees loved the Pre-eminence.
  - 1. Matthew 23:5-7.
  - 2. Verses 11-12.
- B. The Disciples were concerned about who would be the greatest.
  - 1. Matthew 18:1.
    - a. Note the response of Jesus, Matt. 18:2-4.
  - 2. James and John and their mother, Matt. 20:20-21, 24.
    - a. Note the answer of Jesus in Matt. 20:25-28.
- C. The Message of Jesus, John 13:1-5.
  - 1. Chronologically, it seems to have occurred after the dispute mentioned in Luke 22:24-30.
  - 2. The message was not:
    - a. That we should have special foot washing services in the church.
    - b. If we can't see beyond the mere washing of feet we have missed the point of the passage!
  - 3. The message declared, John 13:12-17.

### IV. The Attitude Behind our Service.

- A. At best, we are "*unprofitable*" servants, Luke 17:7-10.
  - 1. What we have done is simply our duty.
    - a. It deserves no special mention.
    - b. The best of service is mingled with imperfection.
- B. We must serve because of love.
  - 1. The motive behind what God has done for us, John 3:16.
  - 2. The motive behind Paul's service; 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Cor. 9:19-22.
  - 3. The motive behind:
    - 1. Our service to God, Matt. 22:37-38; John 14:15.
    - 2. Our interaction with each other, Gal. 5:13; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 2:2.
    - 3. Our interaction with our neighbors, Matt. 22:39; Luke 10:29-36; Rom. 13:8.
- C. The good we can do for others.
  - 1. Often times it involves ourselves, our time, and our means.
    - a. Transportation to worship.
    - b. To a sick person's home, and a willingness to do whatever needs to be done.
    - c. To a shut-in, offer to mop floor, wash windows, mow law, run errands, etcd.
    - d. Just a friendly call, listening ear, etc.
  - 2. The place where it should begin – at **home**!

### Conclusion:

- 1. Galatians has been called "the Magna Charta of Christian Liberty."
  - 2. Paradoxically, all true Christians have obtained freedom; yet they remain servants!
    - a. They were "*servants of sin*," Rom. 6:17.
    - b. They obey the gospel and become "*free from sin*,"
    - c. And they also become "*servants of righteousness*," Rom. 6:18
  - 3. Have you, through obedience unto the gospel, become a servant "*of righteousness*?"
- Bobby Witherington, Jan. 17, 2016