

# Summary of Galatians So Far

by C.I. Scofield

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*Believers are not under the law as a rule of life, but under grace, and walking in the Spirit is the key to a holy and victorious life.*

**Scripture:** Romans 6:14, Romans 8:4, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22

**Topics:** "Justification By Faith", "Spiritual Victory"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield preaches about the importance of understanding the relationship between justification by faith and the law, emphasizing that believers under the Abrahamic covenant are no longer under the law as a rule of life but under grace. He delves into the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in the believer's life, highlighting the victory over sin that comes through yielding to the Spirit's control. Scofield also addresses the misconception of 'character building' and contrasts it with the biblical concept of Christian character being the fruit of the Spirit, not of self-effort or law.

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## Transcript

Let us gather up in a brief word that which was before us yesterday. We saw, first of all, that at verse 25 of chapter 3 the subject changes. Verse 24 ends the section on justification. Justification is shown to be by faith because it is under the Abrahamic covenant, which is a by-faith covenant. Under it Abraham himself was justified--declared righteous--and that before circumcision was instituted, and centuries before the law was given. It became necessary, therefore, for the Apostle to show the relation of the law to the Abrahamic covenant. Did it, for example, annul that covenant? Did it add a new condition to that covenant? No, says the Apostle; neither. In a word, the doctrine is that it was added to teach guilty man his absolute need of the grace of the Abrahamic covenant; and, moreover, was a rule of life, a pedagogue, over God's minor children, the Jews. But that was only "unto Christ."

Since, then, justification is by faith, the only question remaining is this: Are we who are the believers of this dispensation, and who are justified by faith, still under the law, the pedagogue, as a rule of life? The Spirit's answer is: "After that faith is come, we are no longer under the pedagogue" (3:25).

As this is the very crux of the controversy between the Gospel of God's grace and the Galatianized legalists, who, in much outward and no doubt sincere veneration for the law, insist upon setting it to do work for which it was never made, it may be well for us to turn for a moment to another great passage on this very subject--the sixth chapter of Romans.

In that passage, as in the fifth division of Galatians, the subject before the Spirit's mind is the rule of the believer's life--not at all the question of his justification, which has been triumphantly demonstrated to be by faith (Rom. 3:19 to 5:12). The question is, what shall be the manner of life of the justified one? The Apostle puts it in the strongest possible way: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1).

And that, friends, is the real question. The curse of sin is gone because of Christ's work; how shall the dominion of sin be broken? That is the subject from Romans 6:1 to 8:4. Accordingly, the demonstration follows the order of Galatians: death, resurrection, newness of life. But in Romans the discussion is ampler. Into the detail it is not at present our place to go, for we are studying Galatians, not Romans. Let it suffice, therefore, to note that in Romans the Spirit meets the contention that the believer is under the law as a rule of life with an even more emphatic negative than in Galatians.

The question, remember, is never one of evading the will of God, but of getting that will done--a thing the law never did (Heb. 7:18, 19). Here is the statement, a statement so concise and emphatic that it can be evaded by no possible device of antinomian legalism: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

Remember, once more, the matter at issue here is not a means of life, but a rule of life; not a way to escape the will of God, but a way to escape the dominion of sin. Here, surely, is an end of controversy. If I say I am not under law, and stop there, I am left in spiritual anarchy. If I say I am under the law and under grace, I am in the current Galatian heresy which seeks to combine law and grace. But if I say I am not under the law but under grace, I am giving a Biblical and Christian testimony.

But enough at this point. I have dwelt thus at length upon it because it is vital to a holy life. In resurrection the believer is not lawless, but is *en nomos* Christou--"inlawed into Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21).

And now we are ready to turn from the negative to the positive side of the fifth section of Galatians--the secret of a holy and victorious walk.

We shall find the principle and the power of that walk defined in the latter part of the section--Galatians 5:16-24.

The principle of the walk is briefly stated: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (v. 16).

The Spirit is shown in Galatians in a threefold way. First, He is received by the hearing of faith (3:2). When the Galatians believed, they received the Spirit. To what end? The Judaizers made little of the Spirit. Their modern successors make little of Him. Though they talk much of "power" in connection with the Spirit, it is power for service which chiefly occupies them. Of His sovereign rights, of His blessed enabling in the inner life, there is scant apprehension. But it is precisely there that the Biblical emphasis falls.

In Romans, for example, the Spirit is not even mentioned until we have a justified sinner trying to keep the law, utterly defeated in that attempt by the flesh, the "law in his members," and crying out, not for help, but for deliverance (Rom. 7:15-24). Then the Spirit is brought in with oh what marvelous results! "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Not--oh, hear and heed--not the Apostle's effort under the law, nor even the Spirit's help in that effort; but the might of the indwelling Spirit, breaking the power of indwelling sin.

Then, in Romans, the truth as to the Spirit of sonship is brought in: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:14-17).

In Galatians the order is reversed. First, as we have seen, the Spirit is received by faith; second, the Spirit giving the sons their place (4:4-7); and, third, the Spirit governing the life and delivering from the power of the flesh (5:16-24).

You ask, and necessarily at this point, what is it to walk in the Spirit? The answer is in verse 18: "If ye be led of the Spirit." But how else, friends, may we be led of Him unless by yieldedness to His sway? There is a wonderful sensitiveness in the blessed Spirit's love. He will not act in and over our lives by way of almightiness, forcing us into conformity. That is why "yield" is the great word of Romans chapter 6, where it is expressly said that we are not under the law, but under grace.

The results of walking in the Spirit are twofold--negative and positive. Walking in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The "flesh" here is the exact equivalent of "sin" in Romans 6:14: "sin shall not have dominion over you."

And the reason is immediately given (5:17). The Spirit and the flesh are contrary, and the Spirit is greater and mightier than the flesh. Deliverance comes, not by self-effort under the law--that is Romans 7--but by the omnipotent Spirit, who Himself is contrary to the flesh. Permit me to detain you here until this vital truth is made clear.

The believer is the subject of a threefold conflict. Until a sinner believes, he is "flesh," "sin," as to his nature. How absolutely he is such is to be learned only from Scripture. No sinner feels the extent of his badness. Living under the stimulus of the Christian ethical ideal now disseminated throughout Christendom; and under the repressive influence of public opinion, formed, roughly speaking, upon that ideal, his heart, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," easily persuades him that he is not so bad as Scripture asserts. With belief and the new birth comes the new man, the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Instantly there is a conflict, the conflict of the two natures; of the two "I's"; Saul of Tarsus and Paul the Apostle, so graphically described in Romans chapter 7. The issue of that conflict is defeat. The new man is "a babe" (1 Pet. 2:2) and the flesh is strong in dominion. Moreover, the effort to produce a holy character under the law is foredoomed to failure.

The second phase of conflict of which the believer is the subject is that which is before us in Galatians 5:16-24. But here, and this is the important point, a new antagonist against the flesh is present--the Holy Spirit. It is no longer the two "I's" of Romans 7; it is flesh and Spirit. The believer feels the conflict, for it is within him, but he participates only by yielding all to the Spirit. He is not a combatant, but the subject of the conflict. Austria and Prussia, in the time of Frederick, warred for Silesia. Silesia felt the shock of the conflict, for it was waged upon her soil, but mightier contestants were deciding the issue. So the believer is just heart and soul on the side of the Spirit against the old self, the flesh, but the Spirit wins the victory. The result is inner peace and outward victory over the works of the flesh.

The third conflict is not "against flesh," but "against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly" (Eph. 6:12) and is not at

present the subject of our study.

The point to hold is that, negatively, the works of the flesh may not be done by the believer who is walking in the Spirit--i. e., is yielded to the Spirit's sway and control.

The works of the flesh are enumerated. It is very searching. Some of these "works" we abhor. We are quite ready to be delivered from adultery, murder, and drunkenness, for example. Are we quite ready to give up variance, emulation, wrath? If we consciously hold to anything contrary to holiness we are not walking in the Spirit. May the Lord make our yieldedness thorough--a root and branch matter!

Then we come to the positive side of the walk in the Spirit:

There is abroad in the land a most pernicious and misleading phrase--"character building." It is set before us in countless sermons and with most wearisome reiteration that the business of a Christian is to build character. And character building is conceived of after this wise: Character is made up of certain attributes, graces, which may be conceived of as building-stones. Faith lays the foundation, Christ. On Him we build, let us say, honesty, courage, humility, piety, courtesy, etc.--laying stone upon stone. And we are told that character building as a process is carried on by two master masons, Choice and Habit. The favorite platitude is, I believe: "The sum of our choices determines character; habit fixes character." Doubtless the mistranslation of 2 Peter 1:5-7 ("Add to your faith virtue, etc.") is responsible for much of this--the true rendering being: "In your faith provide virtue, etc.," as all know. But the legalistic spirit is at the root of it all--even of the mistranslation.

But Scripture conceives of holy character far otherwise as to method and results--far otherwise, and far more vitally:

"Reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

"For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21).

Note, now, how simply yet how adequately both the quality and the method of the true Christian character is set before us in what is here said upon the affirmative side of the walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

What, first of all, is Christian character? It is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And every one of these graces is an exotic, foreign to the soil of the natural heart. Whence come they? Out of the heart, the nature of Christ. What is Christ, essentially, and apart from His offices and relationships? He is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Christian character, then, is Christ's excellencies reproduced by the Spirit in a renewed life.

Now we ask, what is the method? How, or by whom, are these graces produced in the renewed life? Ah, that is the vital question. For the beatific character is not set forth as an external model to be imitated, but as something which we are to become. We are, somehow, to be love, joy, peace, and the other six lovely graces. What is the method? Can law effect this transformation? Can the law make me love, joy, peace? Hear the Apostle: "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me"--love, joy, peace?

No. "All manner of conspiscence" (Rom. 7:8).

Precisely there, at the method of the holy and beautiful life, is God's controversy with the antinomian legalists who, seeming to honor His law by putting His dear sons under it as a rule of life, really prevent Him from producing in them the righteousness of the very law they pretend to honor--a righteousness which He can only produce in those who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).

But what, finally, is the method?

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Christian character, then, is not an edifice, but a fruit. And the fruit is the fruit of the Spirit, not of effort, nor of law. In that one "fruit" resides a ninefold quality, substance, flavor, so to speak. It is vital, aggressive, militant, triumphant. It has in it every element of character which perfect obedience to the law could produce, and beyond law, perfections and graces never contemplated in the law--the very perfections and graces of Christ Himself. One who keeps all the commandments is "an unprofitable servant." Was Christ an unprofitable servant? Were Paul, and Peter, and John, and Barnabas, and Timothy, and Persis, and Phebe, and Priscilla, and Tryphena, and Tryphosa, and the great host of the saintly and of the "quiet in the land," who have walked in the Spirit in holy liberty down to this very day, unprofitable servants?

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