

Those of you who've been waiting for the other shoe to drop: the closest Paul ever comes to dropping it is in chapter five. Alright, here we go. Read the first six or seven or eight words here with me, would you? *It was for freedom that Christ set us free.* Let's say it that way. It was for freedom that Christ set us free. It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Do you know that I don't know what that means? All I know is that it is almost limitless. It goes from eternity to eternity. Its implications are incredible. Therefore, keep standing firm in your freedom and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. And here he does not say to the law. He has made his case. Law, ordinances, the works of men trying to merit favor with God is bondage. It is slavery. Whether it be in salvation, and that's not what he's talking about here; he's talking about the Christian walk.

*Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you whatsoever.* Now, when Paul made this statement, he later felt he hadn't made it clear enough, and he brought it up again in chapter 6. I don't want to cover this but once. So, I'm going to slip over to chapter 6 and read a little bit more. Paul sometimes forgets what he says and has to rewrite it. Let's read verses 12, 13, and 14 of chapter 6, if we may. *Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised simply so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I should boast except in Christ. Verse 15, for neither is circumcision nor uncircumcision anything but a new creature, humanity, creation, species. That is what is reckoned as important. The rest amounts to nothing.*

So, I want to come back and gather all the passages here on circumcision together. I'm in verse six of chapter 5. *But in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything but faith working through love. You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?* That was Blastinius, but Paul doesn't know that. *The persuasion did not come to you from the Lord Jesus Christ, who called you. A little leaves the whole lump of dump.* Now, let's see. I want to make sure I gather all of this up before I make any comment on it. I want you to understand if you...and I'm going to use the word I should use...if you become a legalist in the sight of God, that's all right. If you choose legalism, just choose legalism. You're free to do that, but with it you accept an obligation, and that obligation is to fulfill all standards of moral conduct. And you're foolish if you ever take that upon yourself. How proud, my brother. How arrogant, my brother, my sister. How incredibly arrogant it is for you to turn around and take upon yourself the responsibility of all moral standards.

Why in the world would you want to do that to yourself? You Galatians have gone out there and let this guy Blastinius circumcise you. You go ahead and walk in your circumcision, and you have accepted the responsibility of fulfilling all the laws of the Jewish religion, and that, my friend, is some task. You have literally gone back to Judaism. You have stepped out of grace, and you have gone back to wrath and judgment; you have gone back to all of it. Now, the same thing is true for a Christian. You can either walk in grace and freedom. We'll get to the only qualification Paul puts on this in a minute, but if you are a Christian and you attach a right relationship of Christ to

authority, submission, prayer, Bible study, going to church, evangelism, and all of these other things, then that's how you're going to be judged. That's how your conscience is going to judge you. It is better to start with freedom and know you are free and stay free and work out from there by the unction of another life: His Life.

I don't think you will ever find a more helpful attitude of being a Christian than a little statement made by Brother Lawrence in *Practicing His Presence*. He just made it all so simple. He said, "I practice the Lord's presence at all times as much as I can, but sometimes I sin. Sometimes I fail." Read *Turkeys and Eagles*. And I say to the Lord, "Lord, that's just the way I am." End of quote. That's really healthy. Oh, then Gene, I'm really going to go out here and pull a big one and say, "Lord, that's the way I am." You know, brother, I really hope you will do that. I'm going to tell you, we really need to know that you're looking for an excuse to get into your flesh. We need to know where your heart is. I really hope you'll go. I encourage you to go "sin a big one." We really need to know that about you, and I want to tell you something: one or two of you in this room probably will, just fine. You got that right. Just go ahead and do it. I think I'll just quit that sentence right there. You go ahead and do it. You have that liberty, and you have that right. You're going to hate yourself, friend. You're going to hate yourself when it is over, and if you don't, it may be that the Spirit of God doesn't even dwell in you. I'm going to get off that subject completely. That's not where I meant to be.

Don't be in bondage to standards of Christian living that people have told you or implied to you that if you don't do them, you're not a good Christian. I'm going to go through them right quickly. I wouldn't get caught dead in the church. It is so boring. I wouldn't subject anybody to that. It's recorded...I don't mind... you can quote me if you wish. I tell you, give me the choice between sitting down in front of our clothes dryer for an hour or going to church for an hour, I'll tell you where I'll be less bored. I mean that. I'm dead serious. I am dead serious. Put all those dirty, wet clothes in there. Turn that thing on. Pull up a chair and watch them. Oh, look. There goes a sock. Wow. There goes my best shirt. Hot dog. It looks really nice and decent there. That would be a lot more fun than sitting in church on Sunday morning gagging with a tie. Two little kids sitting over here, you know, page 91, little note, turn to page 903, little note, turn to page number 21, turn to page 44. You know, that's the only thing they can do. Keep from going crazy.

Every once in a while, I preach in a church. I'm using their term, not mine. I preach in a church, and I'm always mortified when I stand in the pulpit, and I know that those people, and I am dead serious, are in a hypnotic trance. They have moved themselves into a gear where they'll be blank for the next 30 minutes. They haven't heard a message in years, and I don't let people do that. Nobody has ever successfully stayed in a hypnotic trance with me. Maybe a few. I start speaking to these people, and they get downright hostile because I've broken into their nap. I'm serious. You can see the resistance. This man is forcing me to listen to him, and they're not used to that. They're literally not used to hearing anything from about 11:30 to 12:00. I know that you must understand what I'm talking about. I don't feel obligated to punish myself that way. Concerning prayer, I would recommend fellowship with Jesus Christ, and let these things like praying for the president and

praying for the sick and the wounded and the afflicted and the poor and our boys over in Vietnam and all those things; let that come at the end of...and I don't mean the end of your praying but at the end of...let it be the last thing, if you must, the obligatory thing, but you don't start there. Dear brother, you will come to despise prayer; you won't even want to be around your Lord, because it is so boring.

I like to tell this story about an authoritarian group down in Southern California. Everything is down in Southern California. Absolutely everything. This group of people had an authoritarian young man leading them. They had to pray for an hour every day and two hours on Sunday on their knees. The elders, in turn, as I recall, had...I hope I'm quoting correctly... had to pray two hours every day and, on Sunday, three hours on their knees. This dear sister was telling me, and she said, "Gene, you don't know how a clock can literally die and its hands refuse to move." They had been taught spoken morality so much that she said one day she got out of the car, and the attendant came up and asked her how much gasoline she wanted in there, and, under the law she had been put under, she could not answer him. She had no business, she was told, talking to someone else who was not her husband, some other man. She stood there dumb, not knowing what to do, and I don't remember what she said. She either found someone else to say it or she wrote it out for him. Have fun, friend. Go live that way and ask yourself, "Is that what gives me joy?" And that kind of praying, the same way that praying doesn't have any joy in it. Doesn't have the promise in it. It doesn't have the blessing in it. It doesn't have the Lord in it. Go learn how to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alright, evangelism. I want to talk to you about evangelism as a former evangelist. There is no such thing as the Great Commission. I'm evangelizing. Don't misunderstand me, but I want to give you a little relief here. There's no such thing as the Great Commission. There was a prophecy made to 12 men, maybe 20, maybe 50. *You will be going into Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and you will be going into the uttermost parts of the earth.* He told them what they were going to do. He did not say go. He told them what they would be doing. You're going to get to travel a lot, and you're going to preach. You will find many verses in the epistles that indicate evangelism. Still, I want to remind you that those epistles were written to bodies of believers, not to you, the individual. They cannot be applied to you as an individual; they are addressed to a church. And brothers and sisters, a church that is doing evangelism, that takes the pressure off of you and the guilt off of you and puts it where it ought to be upon the church as a body.

Some of you will never be an effective personal soul winner. You know why? Because you have a weak heart. You could have a heart attack doing some of the things people demand of you. You know, I hope you can witness someone who comes to your door, bangs on it, and asks to get saved. I hope you can know how to carry them through the experience of salvation, and most Christians do not. If you have time, I'll show you how sometime, but ask some sweet little gal who can hardly even talk to her husband to go out and witness on the streets all day long. That's my responsibility. Responsibility of workers. Your responsibility is within the church. Whatever the church does, you can do well because the church is doing it. Furthermore, the church itself should be the greatest

instrument of evangelism, and that is just people needing the body of Christ, wanting their sins forgiven, getting free, and needing the community of the fellowship of the body of Christ and the fellowship of Christ, with Christ, in a corporate gathering of people. She will always be the greatest of all evangelists. She's beautiful. She's beautiful.

What else have I left out? I wouldn't study the Bible for nothing on earth. I don't study the Bible. Every once in a while, I study it a little bit. (laughter) Use it as an instrument to fellowship with the Lord and never turn it into a legal thing. It'll become a dead letter. Use it every day. Every day, but don't ever get under condemnation to use it, saints. And use it for life, not for knowledge. If you miss a day, quote brother Lawrence. "Lord, that's just the way I am."

He lived here once. He knows how bad off we are. That's why He invented grace, saints. He didn't invent it because we were so worthy. He invented it because we were so needy. If you want to put yourself under the obligation of all those things, then do so, for by those things you will be judged. I'd take a run for grace if I were you. Jesus Christ did not teach you legalism and law, and the Spirit within you, which causes you to which you got by faith, and causes you to run so well, did not burden you down with dos and don'ts. One day, I spoke like this about the Bible: "This is not a rule book." A woman came up at the end of the meeting and said she was horrified. She said, "If it's not a rule book, what on earth is it? I couldn't believe that. I'll tell you what most of the New Testament is: it's the fellowship of churches. It's the fellowship of churches between churches and between men who raised the churches up and the churches themselves.

By the way, Memphis, I want to say two things to you personally. One of them is don't deny me this privilege, and thank you for this privilege. I'm going to toot Memphis' horn here for a minute. This is a very loving bunch of people. Yeah, they really are, and I mean what you're seeing around here is a natural expression of their lives. Memphis is to me what Philippi was to Paul. It was that church that had the least pain about it and the most evidence of mercy, grace, love, and caring. The brothers and sisters here have been gracious to me in ways I have never been shown grace and graciousness anywhere else in the world, and I appreciate that, and you know I appreciate it. You mean a great deal to me. I just thought of that as I ran by here, that these letters are a fellowship between the worker and the church. Don't deny me the privilege of that intercourse with you, that commerce with you, and you haven't, and thank you. And don't do it in the future either. That's what I'm saying. Don't deny me the refreshment that you are. Okay? These are dear, precious folks here.

I don't even know where I am. I am being persecuted for preaching the cross. The cross is a stumbling block to those who are legalists, and it really is a stumbling block. First of all, you should know that the cross, in this respect, is not talking about our suffering or the Lord's suffering, but its destructive power. Its destructive power. Its ability to destroy Judaism, the law, all ordinances, the Sabbath, and all ritual. We know this from reading Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. The things that were crucified upon the cross of Christ: our old man, our sinful nature, all obligations, all ceremonies, crucified upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we also were

crucified, which would cause any of us to stumble because we know good and well we never even been to Jerusalem and we were crucified there; and then the entire creation is crucified there and that is a stumbling block to a man who wants to earn his faith.

A few months ago, I was talking to some Christians, they're evangelical Catholics, and they're really evangelicals, and that's what they are. They don't even have a priest among them, and they're a community. A neat bunch of folks, but this brother told me...and I said, "Brother, you can't do that. I can't do that. I can't live the Christian life. It is not possible for me to live the Christian life." He got so upset. He said, "Well, God wouldn't ask us to live the Christian life if we couldn't live it." Don't put it past him. He (The Lord) said, "You have been told of old, an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. I say you love your enemy. You have been told, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' And I tell you that if you so much as look upon a woman with lust, you have committed adultery. You have been told not to murder, but I tell you, if you get angry with your brother and hate him, you have murdered him." Oh yeah. Yeah. He jacked the law up right out of the stratosphere. Just pushing it right up into the heavens, and making it impossible for you to live the Christian life. Why would he talk that way? Listen to Him again when He declared that *He* could not live the Christian life. Now, if the Lord Jesus Christ cannot live the Christian life, I have hope. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Without my Father, I can do nothing."

Now, you've heard this. I know you've heard it on a recording. I'm going to say it to you publicly. You can hear it face-to-face. There is only one Christian in the universe. There is only one person who can live the Christian life. There has never been but one Christian. There will never be but one Christian. And there is only one who can live the Christian life. No one else can, and we are cut off from living the Christian life. He alone lives the Christian life. He is the Christian Life. He's the one who's free and does everything He wants to do, and what He wants to do is be a Christian. And so, He is...and that is God your Father. And if you do not have His Life in you, first of all, you're a reprobate. Secondly, you have no engine within you that could possibly fulfill the standards of the Christian life. You, dear child of God, can only set Him free to be Himself. That's all you can do. It will be the engine of His life that lives the Christian life; there is no other. I think you ought to say thank you, Lord, or praise the Lord, or something.

The cross is a stumbling block to all of this self-effort of man. And yes, you can get persecuted for preaching this way. You wouldn't believe that, wouldn't you? Would you believe that? Would you believe a guy could get in trouble talking this way? I'm going to tell you again, this brother probably got killed because of this book right here. When he got back to Jerusalem years later, they were hunting for him because they said he had said the law of Moses had been done away with, and that's exactly what he said. Verse 12 is a very ugly, vicious statement made in rage. I don't know if he would have ever made it again after that. I think Paul mellowed, but nonetheless, this is how verse 12 should read. I will read it exactly the way it should be. He's referring back to those people who are just so into circumcision. He said, "Alright, fine. If they're so into circumcision and they're troubling you, I wish they would get into circumcision so much that they

would castrate themselves. He had a mean pen, saints. For you were called to freedom, brethren... and now, the other shoe drops, and I think it's beautiful.

This is the only place where Paul backed up from anything he said; he qualified it, and I think we should read it together. *Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh.* Will you read that with me now? Here. I'm going to repeat it. I'm going to say it. You repeat it after me. *Brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh.* Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. He did not say, "Do not use your freedom to break the Ten Commandments." He shifts this thing totally, watch him move it totally away from rules and regulations into this right here, the flesh. He shifts it from rules and regulations to a living thing. And brothers, that's all I have to say to you this week. I will not qualify it in any other way. You are free. Just don't use your freedom to give your flesh an opportunity. That's all. You're free to break all laws; just don't use your freedom. You're also free to obey Him. Now, you do it for the testimony of Jesus Christ. You're doing the world a favor. Besides, sometimes it's a nuisance to break them. I mean, paying the fine is not worth it. You're free to break them. You're free to keep them, only don't use your freedom to get into the flesh.

Now, it looks like it's time for the Ten Commandments, doesn't it? But I'm going to say to you again, He shifts to the flesh. Now, He says, "Instead, use your freedom for serving one another with love." And I'd even say that can be a bondage, so let's be a little careful here. This is going to get a little clearer in a minute, but why would Paul talk about freedom in relation to loving one another and caring for one another? There seems to be no relationship to me. Freedom. Use your freedom to love and care for one another. Why? **Audience:** because you can't help it. This flesh is really self-centered, too.

I believe all this is correct, but I appreciate that. The flesh is so self-centered. It serves itself. You think about that. Is that not true? It serves itself. Use your freedom to pour out love and care. By the way, it's needed from sea to shining sea. How many of you in this room right now could really stand a little love and care? Would you please raise your hand? Wouldn't hurt you a bit. Little encouragement, a little love from somebody, kind of. Yeah. Absolutely. Don't use your freedom for an opportunity of the flesh, but rather love and care for one another. Serve one another in love. We're going to come back to that in a minute. It gets clearer. Nonetheless, it is that which is not centered on yourself.

I love verse 14. *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* By the way, what commandment is that? Do you know what commandment that is called? That is the second...I think it's something else. Jesus Christ. He's quoting the Lord Jesus Christ here. The Lord Jesus said, *"You may fulfill the entire law from sea to shining sea in one word. Love one another. Love your neighbor as yourself."* Jesus Christ left this world with one commandment, and you cannot fulfill it. He got it down to one, and you can't fulfill it. That's right. Nonetheless, let us hear it. Love your neighbor as yourself, and you'll fulfill everything God would ever expect of you. And now I'm going to warn you: you cannot do that. You can't even do that one. You'd be

making a hypocrite out of yourself, or you can get into bondage over it, but you just can't do that. Alright, we will find out why in a minute.

*But if you bite and devour one another, take heed lest you be consumed by one another.* This sentence may not mean much to you, but I'm old enough to know what it means. We're here in church life. Don't look at this like the Beatitudes. Brothers and sisters, there's heartbreak in that word. This is an apostle, a church planter, writing to a people. He knows that something tragic has happened at your church in Pisidia. You've had some fights over the law, and some of you have yelled at one another and bitten at one another, and it's breaking Paul's heart. And he said, "Be careful. Are you going to devour...what?" One another. What does that mean? I'm going to get up there and what? "There were two cats from Kilkenny, each thought there was one cat too many. So, they fought, and they scratched, and they bit, 'til instead of two cats, there weren't any." I didn't even know I could quote that. Did you catch it? If you keep on doing this, by the time I get there, there's not going to be a church left; there's just going to be some claws and some teeth and the ends of tails. You will have devoured the body of Christ. You'd better find out how it is God loves, being as you and I can't because we are all bound to this place right here. That's why I don't recommend Atlanta because I'm going to be working with people who don't know the cross of Christ, and they don't know how to live in their spirits, and until they learn and until they know how to go to the cross, there are going to be a few little problems. Memphis...say amen. There are going to be problems, and you can also learn to love one another. She comes out of the cross of Christ; that's where she comes from.

Okay. *But I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.* Alright, here is where it gets important. Are you in the spirit? Answer me that question. Yes or no. You are put there on the day of your salvation. You are plunged into Christ. You are plunged into His Spirit. You are clothed by Him, but there is one thing to be in that realm...and it is a realm...it is a locatable place. To be in spirit is to be in a geographically locatable place. It is another thing to walk around inside that place. You are there. It is possible for you to step out into the flesh, but you are...your home...your place: you are in Spirit. It is another thing to learn to walk in that realm, and therein is the difference between the typical Christian and a few other Christians. We're all in His Spirit; not all of us know how to walk around in another world, in another realm. The more you learn to walk in that realm...Drew, you reported back from that realm this morning, an experience you had with the Lord Jesus Christ; that's another realm, and many of us have never had even 10 minutes of the privilege of walking in that realm. And I'm not speaking of tongues. I'm not speaking of some aesthetic thing or something mysterious; I am telling you there is a realm, and you can walk there.

By having the exercise and experience of walking in that realm, the spirit grows, and in the growth of the spirit, there is the diminishing of the desires or the power...I'm going to call it the power of the flesh. Learn to walk in the Spirit. Come to Atlanta this summer; we will get practical about it. Learn to find the other realm and walk there, and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Have you ever been in the flesh while you were in Spirit? Have you ever been in the flesh while you're

in Spirit? Absolutely impossible. It can't be done. That's like being in heaven and hell at the same time. You can't do that, saints. Well, when you're tempted to be in the flesh, what do you do? Make a beeline for your spirit. That doesn't work too well and works very rarely, but sometimes we can report such an incident. The best thing to do is to spend a little time walking around in that realm every day, and that is your best guarantee that you will not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.

Now then, verse 17, and this is really exciting. *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.* Now, it doesn't say the spirit lusts against the flesh. It says the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, but the implication here is that the spirit lusts against the flesh. Now, you wouldn't think of the spirit as lusting, would you? Because it's an ugly negative connotation. So, I'm going to change that a little bit and say the flesh lusts against the spirit, or I will say the flesh desires against the spirit and the spirit desires against the flesh. What in the world are they desiring? Do you have any ideas? **Audience:** Dominion?

Dominion...yeah, but that's no good. That doesn't tell me anything in the world. What are they both? Yes, brother. Will you stand up, brother, and do that where we can all see it? You don't have to say a thing. Just do it. That's right. That's what the flesh is after: *You*. And that's what the spirit is after, and they battle one another. We have spirit. We have flesh. We have soul...and that's you. The spirit is taking over the realm of the human. The flesh wants to, and they battle. You don't stand a prayer. I mean, take a choice. You don't stand a prayer. You're outclassed. In your flesh dwells a living thing that is more powerful than you are - sin. And in your spirit dwells the living God, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit. You're outclassed. One way or the other, friend, you're outclassed. Either way, you are outclassed. Choose who you want to win. One of them is going to get over there and walk in this realm, or get over there and walk in that realm. You will be conquered.

Now, I want you to watch the most un-legalistic man in the whole world. And by the way, I really wish we had the opportunity here to spend some time on experiential things about walking in the spirit, and I will try to give you a little at the end of this message. If you walk in, if you are led by, if you live in, if you experience and grow in the other realm, if the Spirit leads you, you're not under law. He did not say you are not under flesh. He said you are not under law. If you are not under law, you are not as vulnerable to the flesh. I'm going to illustrate this one more time.

Let's say that we're walking down Fifth Avenue in New York. They got some of the longest blocks in the world. Beautiful, beautiful part of the city. Showrooms with exotic gifts, exotic furs, dresses, and suits in them, and you're watching, and you've gone now, you may have walked a mile just enjoying the showroom windows, and then you come to one glass pane that says, "Do not throw a brick through this window." It has never occurred to you during all this time to sin. You have just been enjoying the view, walking down the street, when you come to a window that reads, "Do not throw a brick through this window." Now, I'm telling you, I'm not asking you, what is your first impulse? If you were going to insure every window on that street but one, which one would you

pick not to ensure? It is so obvious what you're going to do, or somebody is going to pick up a brick and put it through that window. That's the law that provokes sin, but if the Spirit leads you, you're not under the law, and that provocation to throw the brick through that particular window, you have been delivered from it. Isn't that wonderful?

Now, brothers and sisters, here is Christianity at its best - verse 19. Paul says, "Okay, you're new Christians. I'm just going to make it really simple for you. I want to tell you what the works and the deeds of the flesh are." And he gives you a list. Sexual immorality, impurity, living by your five senses, worshiping idols, witchcraft, which would include drugs, enmities, strife, jealousy, and you know, at this point, I'm rather surprised. I see a switch in the list after sorcery. Do you? I do. Enmity, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger. Some of that surprises me. Outburst of anger doesn't seem to me to belong under the flesh. I'm dead serious. Every one of us has had an outburst of anger, but I want you to remember that at the end of this list it says, 'those who continue in it.' I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, we live in the flesh when we have no control over our temper, when it just happens again and again and again.

Now I see another list, another switch in the list. I don't know what they are, but I can feel them. Can you feel it with me? Immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery. He starts with the worst ones. Disputes, dissensions, factions, enmity, envy, and the last two seem to me belong at the top of the list. I think Paul had another one of those, 'Wait a minute. I left out a couple.' The drunkenness and carousing, and then he says in such a way, and that's for your conscience to tell you. Now these are the deeds of the flesh. Do you notice that he does not say "Do not do these things." Neither does he lay down a law that says, "These things are not to be done." Here is the difference between the Christian and the Old Testament Jew. The Old Testament Jew got a list of outward things. You, dear friend, are given a peek at inward things. Not the mouth of the river, but the source of the river. Not the outward dos and don'ts, but a living creature. Sin dwells in your flesh. That's the New Testament. Sin livingly dwells in your flesh. Has no place in your spirit, fights to gain hold in your soul, and thereby takes you from Christ, and its instrument is the law. Paul is doing away with the law and telling you to look at this thing not from an outward list, but spiritually. Look at it spiritually. Look at sin working in your flesh, and these are the things that sin, working in your flesh, does. Immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, drunkenness, carousing, backbiting, envy, strife, outbursts of temper, party spirit, and a few other things like that.

Now, brothers and sisters, walk in the Spirit so you will not give the flesh opportunity for these things. That is so beautiful. Maybe it's not to you, but to me it's so beautiful. There is no command here not to do these things, even though you are not supposed to do them, and it is quite evident, but there's no rule laid down. He lists the things that the flesh does, and he says, "You are not in the flesh nor of the flesh. You are of the Spirit." But if anyone is not informed as to what they are, here they are. The Ten Commandments don't read like this at all. The Ten Commandments say, "Obey the Sabbath." The Ten Commandments say, "Do not steal." The Ten Commandments...what else do the Ten Commandments say? "Honor your father and mother."

Things like that, and it also says do not commit adultery, but its list of negatives is not as long. When you walk up to those commandments, all you can see is black and white rules and things to do and not to do. Pick and choose. Some of that's flesh. Some of that soul. Some of it, you don't know what it is, but here you are given the source. Here you are shown the place from which the wrong things come. The things of death come. The things of another life form. Angelic fallen sinful nature. The rebellion of an archangel. It comes. Having indwelt your flesh, it comes from your flesh.

I would say to you, as a believer, just read that list once, get a good fix on it, and know that it is a spiritual list from other realms. It originated in rebellion at the throne of God. It is a spiritual thing. There is something of other realms brought into you from a spiritual being, a fallen angel. Sin was put into you through the fall, and this is where it is now close at hand in your life, but also close at hand in your life is another form of Life, higher than angels, higher than sin, and it is the Life of the Living God, the Father Himself, who is a Christian.

Well, again, this will get a little clearer as we go along. I warned you before; I warn you now. Those who practice these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Do you have any idea what that means? Do you have any idea what that means? If you do this, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do you know what that means? Do you know what it means? You don't know what that means. Not really. Honestly, theologically, you could not answer the question of what that means. Neither can I. I don't have the foggiest idea what that means. I mean, I can bluff, but I don't really know what that means, and it makes me nervous. If I practice doing that list, I'm not going to inherit the kingdom. Now, I'm a Baptist who believes in once saved always saved, but I'm also a Christian who knows that if I do those things, I will not inherit the kingdom of God. Does that mean I'm going to go to hell? It didn't say I'm going to go to hell; it said I'm not going to inherit the kingdom of God. Babs, what does that mean? Does it mean that if I don't inherit the kingdom of God, I go to hell? **Audience:** The kingdom is within you.

I'm not going to have the kingdom within me. Now, I love that; that's beautiful. I have no idea what it means, but I don't intend, I don't, Lord, I don't want to be left out. I'm a spirit being, and I come from another realm. My citizenship is in another realm. I have God's life living in me. I have all the opportunities. I have utter and total freedom from law and all rules and regulations, but there's a list of things going on in my flesh that have nothing to do with law. These are living things. Got nothing to do with rules. They exist as humans exist. There are living things going on in my flesh. Living. They are not laws. They are not rules. They are living. If I practice them...if I continually practice...if I keep on practicing them, I'm not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

Y'all do me a favor. Don't let me get away with that. I ask you publicly, don't let me get away with that. As a member of the body of Christ, don't let me do that. Help me. Don't let me do that. Keep showing me my spirit. Encourage me in my spirit. Keep reminding me how to be in my spirit. Tell me how you've been in your spirit. Remind me that I am in my spirit and that I am in His Spirit and I am in Him. I'm just going to wrap this up in one very simple sentence. Here's a list of things.

Read it once and know that those are living things in you that you should not do, and forget all the laws in the universe. Your instincts, your spiritual instincts, know what those things are. You don't need any man to teach you. You know. If you don't know any other way, you know how you can know? Ask the world. Even the world says that's sin. Even the atheist will say that's wrong, and if you're dumber than an atheist, I can't help you.

Now, that's what the flesh wants you to do. It's a living thing. If you do them and practice them, you're not going to inherit the kingdom of God. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love...Verse 22...joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.* So let us do these things. Right? Let us do these things. Right? It's a trick question. Let us *do* these things. Free to do them...you'll never pull it off. You see, and those of you who heard me say this before, you'll have to excuse me. Most of the saints here don't know this. One is deeds, the other is fruit, and there is a big difference, my friend. You cannot: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, kindness, meekness, mercy. I'm going to say it again. You cannot do goodness, kindness, meekness, gentleness, mercy, or love. You can't do those things, and there's no need to put yourself under bondage to do them, but there is growth in Christ. That is fruit.

Now, if we had the horticulturalist here, he could help me. What is fruit? Fruit is that which is the result of a tree drowning in an overabundance of life. It is springtime, and life begins to flow into the tree. The tree has been dead all winter, yet life keeps coming into it through metamorphosis. It comes...my grandson reminded me of that...metamorphosis comes on up the tree, filling up the trunk completely. Comes out through the limbs, big limbs...fills that up. Sap everywhere. Life, an abundance of life springing up in the spring. Gets out and fills up the little branches. Got too many? Starts making more branches. More branches. Branches shooting out everywhere. The sap keeps rising. Goes all the way to the top of the tree. More branches filled, more branches created. The entire tree is full of sap, and it is drowning in life, and the tree says, "I am drowning in life. I've got to get rid of some of this stuff. I got too much life. I've got too much. I got more than I need."

And so, it begins to build big pods, and lets the life, this living sap, pour out into the pods and store it there until those pods, whatever they may be, so full, so heavy, break from the tree and fall from the ground. That's what fruit is, and that's the only kind of work a Christian ought ever to do. Did you follow me? Did you follow me? There's no law there, saint. Did you understand that there is no law there? That's self-protection. That is creating a way to get rid of excess life. That is the life of the Lord in you until there is a spontaneous overflow or a continual overflow. There's just more and more of Him, and it just keeps coming out, and the fruit keeps dropping. If winter comes, don't put yourself under the law. The best thing for you to do is to withdraw and wait. Wait before Him until life starts flowing again, and there is natural fruit. I want to tell you something; I refuse to serve you when there is no life. I am not going to get caught up in obligation to you, brother. I think one of the greatest tragedies of the ministry is that preachers have to serve the Lord all the time. I don't do that, man. Listen, you're looking at a quitter. There are times when I kick it in and retreat, but you see, I don't get paid for preaching. It's not my livelihood. I work for a living, but a preacher has to continually preach...dry, dead, no matter what, because that's how he gets his

income. I kicked it in. I quit. I get tired sometimes. Paul of Tarsus stopped. The Lord Jesus stopped. You've got to stop sometimes. I would encourage you to quit when there is no flow, but I would say that as you mature in the Lord, there is, generally speaking, speaking very generally, a constant coming up of life. There will come times of exceptions to that, and the fruit flows out, and it is the fruit that is God Himself in abundance in you.

The Spirit...with God in your spirit...living, pulsating, breathing out of simple fellowship, and whatever it is, and there come out of it some wonderful things. Joy is not manufactured. Joy is when you can't stand it; He is so good! Hallelujah. He's wonderful. That's the fruit of God in you. Excess life has got to come out. I do not find it difficult to love my brothers; I am not under an obligation to love you or serve you. The dear children of God have loved me, and there's nothing quite so beautiful or so encouraging as to see someone who's just got a little bit more life than he needs just pouring a little of it out on me, caring and loving. That is so wonderful. But brother, don't ever do that for me or anyone else out of law and obligation. You are not obligated to love me. You are not obligated to have joy. There are some things that you can do to encourage the joy that is in your spirit, and there are things you can do to encourage the love that is in your spirit, and all of it has to do with you personally walking in your spirit and fellowshiping with your God who lives within you - all of it. Don't...I have got to produce fruit. You're back under the law. Don't do that, saint. Attend to your inward parts, and the joy will flow. By the way, as you grow, it's going to hurt at times. Christians start getting to be Christians at about 45. There's hope when it stops being this and becomes something more like this, and the fruit is just there, and you become an evergreen. Do you understand what I mean by evergreen?

*Now, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against these things, nobody has ever passed a law. And there is no law that can ever be effectively passed to give you them. Again, these are internal things; they have to do with things that are living. Joy is a living thing. What in the world is love? It is God. What is joy? Christ is joy. What is peace? Christ is peace. There are no rules here. These are living creatures we are dealing with. And praise the Lord, there are no laws against any of them. And now he says it again. He comes back to that which is reality in the eyes of God. This is God speaking reality. Now those who are of Christ have crucified the flesh. It has been crucified. I want you to know that the flesh was crucified upon the cross. But Gene, I still feel the flesh. Then take a flying leap for your spirit saint, go where there is no space or time, and get into the reality of God. And don't ask me to say any more about that because I cannot. I'm not going to try to play a sleight of hand here to tell you that you have been crucified. In the sight of God, your flesh has been crucified, and in your spirit, that is a reality.*

Alright then, let us live by the Spirit. If we live by the Spirit, let us walk...let us walk by the Spirit. Let us follow Him, and then, of course, we will not challenge, envy, or boast against one another. And so, chapter five ends. It's the shoe that finally drops, and the shoe that finally drops is: don't use your liberty and freedom from all rules to give an opportunity to this living thing. These are

not rules here. These are living things. But rather, so walk and so fellowship in Christ that the fruit will pour out automatically.

Now, if you're really a young Christian, you may not even have any desire for the fruit of the Spirit, but you just get saved and walk long enough, and I'll tell you, friend, the world's going to drive you to the Lord, you're going to get dry out there. And thank God that your soul is sitting there in the middle wanting to do good and can't, screaming, "I don't want to do the things I'm doing. So, I'm going to pass more laws on things I will and will not do. I'll draw up a resolution. I'll not do these things." And it screams again, "I did every one of them." until finally you take your place in your spirit, and you give up the law which is driving you to sin. You're free. Now, walk in your spirit. Simple? Yes, brother. **Audience:** What do you see the seeds in fruit as a picture of?

The seeds in the fruit, well, I never thought about it, I don't guess. Reproduction is in fruit; it's not anywhere else. That's right. Thank you, John. Excellent. Thank you, brother. Life begets life, and death does not produce death, and law does not produce grace, and law does not produce the spirit.

Now, we're going to leave, but before we do, let me tell you what to do. Tomorrow morning... by the way, tonight we're going to talk about chapter 6, which is church life. It's one of the few cracks we get into what church life was like in the first century. This is the first piece of Christian literature ever written; it's the first chance we ever get to see how churches did some of the things they did. Tomorrow morning, take that mimeograph copy you have, that Xerox copy you have, and get up and be alone with the Lord and read it out loud and let Jesus Christ speak to you. And with your voice, speak back to Him. One of the problems we have in prayer is not knowing what to say. Well, there are seven pages of what to say. He's talking. Let Him talk. Read slowly. Don't think; I mean, don't study. Oh, just really, I want to understand that better. Just let Him talk.

You have got a spirit, brother. You can find out how to let the Lord speak through what's written there on that Xerox copy, take it really slowly, say a sentence, and wait. Take another sentence and wait, and then tell Him, "Amen. Thank you, Lord. Praise Your name, Lord. That's wonderful." And then maybe you'll find another sentence wanting to come out too and tell Him whatever bubbles up. Whatever just kind of springs up, tell Him. Spend a few moments doing that tomorrow morning, would you? If you can't get up early in the mornings, then do it in the afternoon. Do it in the evening, but find a few minutes to be with the Lord to fellowship with Him in His own words to you, alone with Him, and then keep doing that inside a body of believers for about 20 years, and that's all you'll ever need to hear from me for the rest of your life. You got it? That's all you ever need to know. You got it? Then you got it all. Just do that for about 20 years.

Someday there will be a short meeting. See you tonight. Was there anything else I wanted to talk with you about? I have just finished going through Romans. By the way, I rarely ever do this. I don't go through books of the Bible. I've just gone through Romans 1-8 in Portland, and I brought the master tapes, a set of master tapes. If you would like to have them, the brothers and sisters here have a tape duplicator. Just let them know. How many tapes are there? 12 tapes. And Galatians and Romans are brothers. Romans is bigger; it's the bigger brother. If you'd like to have it, you

could write to Message Ministry, but you can get it cheaper here because these people don't know what they're doing. These people are running not only a non-profit organization but also an “in the whole” organization here. Take advantage of it. I realize that, that's why I was trying to defend you a few minutes ago, and don't forget what I said earlier. Okay. Is there a quick question? Yes, Brenda. No, no after meeting, anything. Yes, sister.

**Audience:** There's a question that I have, though it's about when Romans and other pastors talk about putting on certain things, putting on the Lord Jesus, putting on these things, and I was, you know, I know I can't deal with it.

Well, that's good, because this is the first and only piece of Christian literature in existence: Galatians. That's all there is. There isn't anything else. Let's not worry about anything else. We got enough right here to keep us busy for it's going to be another two years before another piece of Christian literature is written. This is enough, sister, right here. Now, be careful with this “put on” and “take off” stuff because people who teach and preach that don't know what they're talking about put you under the law. That's right. We are not living in a particularly spiritual age. We're living in a very surface objective age that does not understand other realms. **Audience:** It would probably be to remember Gene said, if you'll seek to walk in other realms on a daily basis, you'll put on what you need to put on.

You will have put on everything there is. Ephesians 6 - Oh, honey, you don't have to do that one. That's not for you to do. Forget it. It's not yours. Be free. The church is supposed to do that. That book is written to a whole church. You can't do that, huh? For you to do that would be, virtually, to take on trying to be Jesus Christ. You can't do that. Yeah, but don't listen to those people. Those people don't know anything about the church. Those are preachers, professional preachers getting up, preaching things they don't know anything about, putting you under the law.

That says, “Put on the new man.” You are not the new man. You are a part of the new man. The church is the new creation. The church is the new man. I slipped right past that verse. Sorry. That is for the church. The church puts that on. Now, you might be able to put on a shoe. Somebody else can pick up a sword. Maybe four or five of you together can pick up a sword. Six or eight of you hold up a shield, but I can't do all that stuff. I'd be better. I couldn't do more than David did, trying to put on Saul's armor. I couldn't come a lot closer to that. Me, put on the church's entire uniform? No. And by the way, when you get through putting it on, when the church is totally armed, you don't do anything. You don't fight. You don't go out and take a victory that you've already got. You just keep what you got. You just stand. Isn't that nice? Is that better? Praise the Lord, but that's a different conference, sister. (laughter) That letter won't be written for another 20 years. All you have to do is worry about Galatians right now. That's what I'm talking about. That's what I am talking about. That was written to a church. Yep. You, the church in Ephesus, put on the whole armor of God. For you, the church in Ephesus, is the new man. I am not the new man. You are not the new man. The church is the new species. Let me take just a second. Here we go. Science fiction will help you a little bit.

Here is this planet out in a galaxy far, far away, and it's disintegrating. It is going, going, going, gone, and just as it goes, utterly dissolves into nothingness. You see a little spacecraft leaving it, and that's the only thing that survived that planet. And you know what it's doing? It heads over here to a new planet just being formed. Brand spanking new. That one's very old and died. And the spaceship lands on the brand new, beautiful, perfect, pristine planet. Jesus Christ crucified that planet upon the cross, and there was only one thing that escaped it: a totally new creation that had nothing to do with that creation. God started creating again when He created you. You are a new species that does not belong to that world. God ended creation on the sixth day, rested, and then creation disintegrated, but when it disintegrated, He started a new creation that had never existed before, and you are that. But it is not you, the individual. It is you, a body of believers, who are coming into more of the new creation. What's inside that spaceship is going out to a new creation, and is part of the new creation, and was created when the old creation was collapsing. That was the church of the living God, a new species, a new humanity, a new creature, and that's what the church is. It is she corporately, not you, individually, and that's why you really need to be in the body of Christ.

First of all, you can't live the Christian life because only God can. And secondly, the Christian life was never intended to be lived even by the Lord except in a corporate setting. Even the Trinity is a corporate setting. For you and me, God has ordained the body of Christ, and that's why I really don't want just to have a church in Atlanta. I want one all over the world, but I'm not going to live to see that. I tell you, you need to be in the body of Christ if you're expecting anything to work out for you as a Christian. Everything that I have told you will become meaningless to you within a few weeks unless you're in a body of believers who are sharing and encouraging one another in it. You will forget these things, and you can't do them alone. You know, Drew can't get up every morning, and Brad can hardly ever get up in the morning, but you will be amazed at what the church of Jesus Christ can do corporately. This is something most of you have never had the privilege of being part of - an organic, moving, living, pulsating body of believers. Not something you report into every Sunday; that isn't it. No. That's what I'm going to share right now. Just now. Nothing, no more about that. They hadn't planned on this, and your sister cannot put on the whole armor of God. It is ridiculous, and any Christian in the first century would have told you that these letters were written to churches, and it is the church that is the new creation.

Please don't take my messages as individualistic. Try to remember, in the beginning, I said imagine you're the church in Pisidia Antioch and your hope for not getting back under the law is the fellowship of free men and your hope of walking in the Spirit in which you live is in a group of people bound together, determined to love one another and serve one another into walking in their spirit. **Audience:** Where does that leave out those outside of Memphis who will go home to the body that doesn't know anything about this?

Well, see, this is the most frequently asked question in my world. That's the most frequently asked question in the world. Well, here it goes again. You have got these choices. Go back home and forget it. That's probably the most merciful thing you can do. The second thing you can do is go

back home and pray that God will raise up a work in your home, in your city. He may do it, and it may remain and be prevailing. Chances are it will not happen, and if it does, it will last six or eight months. I just heard the death knell last night of a group of Christians in Atlanta who've been meeting and breaking up, who wanted the body of Christ, but they wanted it without any help. But God may bless your little town, or big town, and there may be something there already. Or you can move. I want you all to get really clear. Here's what moving is like. Is the tape still on?

Moving is like putting 364 cyanide tablets in front of you and one vitamin, all looking identical. There are 365 places you could very well move, and 364 of them will kill you dead. That's the truth. You're going to find legalism, fighting, weirdness, or whatever. There's one vitamin in there. Dare you pick one of those up, take some water, and swallow it? Dare you do that? That's the kind of Russian roulette you're playing when you move to go somewhere to be in the church. And remember, you heard it from me, and I warned you. Oh, Gene, there's Atlanta down in there somewhere. No, Atlanta may be one of the poison pills. I cannot guarantee you it is not. Did you hear me? I have absolutely no guarantee that it will not wreck your life. Best you go back home, forget the whole thing. Start a church, fine. To me, that is one of the most arrogant things in the world to do, and it usually ends up in heartbreak.

You know, stay where you are and die in your sand, or go and take a pill that very likely is cyanide. And that's the only two illustrations I can give you. Not very hopeful, is it? But let me tell you something. It was true in the first century. As far as I can tell, by the close of the first century, in a world population of, say, 100 million, there were probably 200 churches in Judea, and a hundred gentile churches in the rest of the world. That's 200 out of 100 million people across thousands of towns, and it's never been any better than that. Today, there are churches all over Memphis that meet in buildings, but if you're talking about the fellowship of the believers and the gathering of the body of Christ, we have about as many on this planet today as there were in the first century that are not cyanide pills. That's just kind of the mess we will always be in. It's just a fairly rare thing and probably will remain that way till the Lord comes. I hope not, but that's the way it's been most of the time.

Did you hear all of that? I'm being really honest with you, and I'm not recommending my work. I've always tried to recommend other men's work; I really have. Sometimes I get a letter: Gene, you believe only three or four churches around here have body life. I don't mean that by the wildest stretch of imagination. There are probably 500 or a thousand of them in this city, in this nation, having body life, but three years from now, you're going to see caskets as far as the eye can go in most of them. I don't know which ones, and I'm not taking responsibility because I don't know. Somewhere today in the North American continent, there's going to be church life spring up. It's going to be better than anything you and I have ever experienced. Six months from now, it's going to die. Yes? **Audience:** There must be another side to this because about half the books in Christian Books, like Jeanne Guyon's books, are for the individual with no real connection to church life.

Yeah, that's true. You can go home and, by an enormous exercise of devotion to Christ, establish a relationship with Him, but it's not scriptural. And I'll tell you something else. You might end up being like Jeanne Guyon. Well, that would be wonderful. Don't be too sure. I think I know that woman's life about as well as anyone has known it since she died, and that little lady could have well used the Church of the Living God. She was a little this way. On the other hand, if I had to choose between what she was and having nothing, I would take that.

Well, I want to tell you something - a 'Jeanne Guyon' comes around about once every hundred years. Now, brother, maybe you are one of those. I think we have him here. Here's another Jeanne Guyon. No, those people are very, very rare. And by the way, they bug the daylights out of me. They put me under condemnation. If you think I am a 'Jeanne Guyon', you don't know how to spell Edwards. You got the first name right. You got the last name all wrong. I'm holding on. I mean, I'm a Christian just by...I really feel like I'm the world's lowest common denominator here. I feel like if I can stagger and muddle through this stuff, anybody can. No, I'm not a very good Christian. I'm not a 'Jeanne Guyon', I'll tell you for sure. I told a group of Christians on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1969, that I can't live the Christian life without you, and you can't live the Christian life without one another, and that's where I take my stand. I'm not worth a toot outside the body of Christ. That's enough. We're going to quit, but those last 10 minutes are worth their weight in gold. And I don't have any good, clear answers. I wish I did. Ask me after the meeting. Let's stand up, and you're dismissed.