

Gal. 5:13-15

I. You have been called into freedom (13a)

cf. 5:1

Contrasted with slavery in both places

In v.1, slavery was a bad thing – yoke of slavery

Here (13c-14) it is a good thing – serve one another

II. Therefore: Use your freedom for mutual good, not mutual destruction (13b-15)

A. Pos: Serve one another because of love (13b-14)

1. Neg: Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (13b)

Implication that flesh = selfishness and sin

ἄφορμῆν = base of operation, starting point, foothold

cf. Eph 4:27 – Do not give the devil a foothold – favorable opportunity/circumstance

2. Pos: But serve one another through the love that fulfills the whole law (13c-14)

a. Serve one another through love (13c)

b. Reason: The whole law is fulfilled in one word- love your neighbor as yourself (14)

Notice that Paul stresses fulfilling the law

This addresses the issue of the entire epistle

But law is fulfilled because of justification, not vice versa

Caution: beware of making love the new law

We can't fulfill the law of love by works any more than we can fulfill the Law of Moses

B. Neg: If you destroy one another, you will be destroyed (15)

1. If: You bite and consume one another (15a-b)

a. If you bite one another (15a)

“bite” is figurative for harm

b. And devour (15b)

i.e. engage in spiteful partisan strife

2. Then: Watch out that you aren't consumed by one another (15c)

If you serve one another, everyone gets served, everyone gets what they want

If you are selfish and bite one another, everyone gets bitten, no one gets what they want

Our society has a warped view of freedom, be careful you don't accept it

Focus on the purpose and limits of freedom, or your freedom will become bondage