

Spirit-Filled Freedom

Galatians 5:13-18

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Let's read Galatians 5:13-18. Paul says, "For, brethren," clearly Paul believed that these Galatians had been born again, they were "brethren" even though they were in danger of being influenced by these false teachers, "ye have been called unto liberty." There's the call of the believer, the brethren, liberty. That's the theme of the book of Galatians. "...only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this," quoting from the book of Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Galatians 5 and 6, I know I've mentioned this for the last few weeks, but I want to keep driving the outline of the book home, is the practical section of Galatians. What do I mean by that? Well, the first is personal, Paul defended the gospel of God's grace in his own life and ministry. The second is doctrinal, Galatians 3 and 4, where Paul gave the doctrine of justification by faith. I've been thinking about that as I've been preaching through the book of Galatians again, and I've been preaching for a long time, but I feel that it's so urgent and so important that a Christian understand the doctrine of God's grace and the doctrine of salvation, that we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. When Jude says, "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once," and for all, "delivered unto the saints," that's certainly on the top of the list that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. You can't take anything away from that, you can't add anything to that. All of that is so important. That was really the battle cry of the Protestant Reformation. This doctrine had been lost, but it is actually essential Christianity. Basically, what it means is, you can't save yourself.

In the church of Galatia, false teachers, Judaizers, were telling these Gentile believers, "You're not saved unless you're circumcised. You can't be saved unless you become Jews. You can't be saved unless you keep the Mosaic law. You can't be saved unless you follow these rites and rituals and all of these holy days, new moons, and sabbaths." They were actually legalists who were teaching them that salvation was only through the works of the law, that faith in Jesus Christ was fine, but it wasn't sufficient, it wasn't enough. All through the book of Galatians, you find the reoccurring theme of the cross of Christ. It actually closes at the end of the sixth chapter with that famous reference where Paul says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Really, the cross is the answer to legalism and to license, that we should live holy lives, we should live godly lives, and that Jesus paid it all—all to Him we owe. It's a marvelous doctrine that you're never going to outgrow, you're never going to mature beyond it, you're never going to get into the deeper things of God than the idea of God, by His grace, reached down from heaven and saved me—unworthy, undeserving as I am. We should

live out the rest of our days like John Newton, Amazing grace, How sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see. What a beautiful stanza of that song, Amazing grace, How sweet the sound. Galatians is all about the grace of God—arguing that the grace of God is what saves us. We're not saved by our good works or our good deeds.

Here's the issue that Paul is dealing with in this section of Galatians, that is, they would say, "Well, you're saved by grace, so that's going to lead to license. That's going to lead to sinning and doing what you want, living however you want. It's going to lead to a sinful lifestyle. You say you're free in Christ," and Paul in Galatians 5:1 says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and then we come to verse 13 tonight where he actually says that we were "...called unto liberty," and that we should not use that "...liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." The opposition to Paul's preaching on grace was saying, "You know, you guys are just preaching God's grace, and it's going to lead to sinful behavior."

The legalists today do the same thing. Nothing has changed. Whenever you preach the book of Galatians, if you preach it accurately, there's going to be legalists that say, "Well, you know, that's not good enough. You have to have laws, rules, and standards. That's going to lead to license. That's going to lead to the Libertines and the sinful lifestyle. You have to have some rules to keep people holy and get a standard by which to judge righteousness." Really, it's just the same answer today—we're not saved by the law, we're not sanctified by the law, and it's not something that can produce righteousness. "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh," Paul said. He's coming back to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

We begin that tonight, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The title of my study tonight is: Spirit-filled Freedom. We're called to be free, we're called to liberty, but it must be Spirit-filled liberty. It must be the Holy Spirit that produces God's law in our hearts and helps us to fulfill. What the weakness of our flesh could not do, God, sending His Spirit, helps us to fulfill His law. Basically what Paul is going to do in our text tonight is answer what the nature or characteristics are of freedom. What does it mean to be free? For freedom you were set free, that's what Galatians 5:1 said. You were set free to live in freedom. The question is: What does freedom look like? What is it characterized by? To summarize Paul's answer, I would say it's Spirit-filled living for others.

There are kind of two categories here. What we are freed from, and that's usually what we focus on as believers, "Well, we're freed from the law, freed from condemnation, freed from sin, freed from guilt and shame," and that kind of a thing. We very rarely go to the other side and talk about what are we freed for? What are we freed from? (This is not exhaustive) God's wrath and condemnation, mastery by temptation and sin, power of Satan and demons, (the text are up there for you), curse of the law, Galatians 3:13 (we started with that tonight), terror and dread before God, tyranny of others' legalistic demands. Those are just a few things that we're freed from under God's grace and in our liberty and freedom. Notice the right-hand side: What are we freed for? Righteousness and hope, rich generosity and concern for others (which is a

theme in our text tonight), following God's will (we're free to follow God's will and plan for our lives found in His Word), reconciliation with God and with others, life in authentic community in the body of Christ, and transformation into the image of Christ. As I said, the list could go on and on, but I wanted you to see that contrast there.

Look at verse 13 in our text, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty," there's the theme. Go back, as I said, in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty," notice it's "the liberty," so this isn't just any kind of liberty, this is the Christian liberty that Christ in His grace has called us to. "...wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," that is legalism. Go back with me to verse 13. He says, "...ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," that is license. That is the license to sin and to do whatever you want. Sometimes these people are known as the Libertines. There's also another title for this group. They are quite often those that are the antinomians, which means they are against the law.

Before we continue to break down the text, last Wednesday night I was talking about the spectrum of on one side there is legalism and to the other side there is license. The Christian life is found in a balance in the middle—liberty. It's found in liberty. Legalism, of course, you're saved by the law, sanctified by the law, keep the rules, do this and you shall live. License, as we read in Galatians 5:13, is that you're using your liberty for an occasion to serve the flesh, "I'm free in Christ. It doesn't matter what I do or how I live, God's grace covers me and I can just live however I want." Next Wednesday night Paul is going to talk about the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit, but in the middle we have liberty. This is what is the Christian's life description.

I didn't get it in the chart, but under "Liberty" I would also put Spirit-filled love and the grace of God. This is how the Christian is supposed to live, not in legalism, not in license, but he is to live a Spirit-filled life, which is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit producing God's love, showing love to others. We're called to freedom, but that freedom is not to take us back into bondage of the law nor is it to take us into license, but we are to walk in the liberty where Christ has made us free and not be entangled in that yoke of bondage.

Let's go back to the text. Paul starts off by saying, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty," not legalism, not license, but are called to walk in liberty. Now he gives them the negative, "only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," and then the positive, "but by love serve one another." In Galatians 6, he talks about that we should serve one another, that we should forgive, bear one another's burdens, and show the love of Christ to one another. The theme that runs through the rest of the book of Galatians is that if you're free, you're free to live selfishly, to live self-centeredly? No. To die to yourself, crucify yourself, and to be filled with the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit, we're going to see, is love; so that love manifests itself in humble, sacrificial service for others. That's how we should be living. That's what it means to be free. It means to be a slave, out of love, in service to Christ and to others, "...ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."

We need to understand what Paul means by “flesh” in verse 13, and he uses it again in verse 14 and down through this passage. Paul is not talking about our physical bodies. Let me make something very perfectly clear—your physical body is not sinful. It’s not going to do any good to flag it, beat it, punish it, starve it. It’s not going to do much. It’s just silliness because God gave you a body. It’s going to be redeemed, actually. The whole concept of salvation involves your body, your actual physical body. You say, “I don’t want my body.” Well, when it’s fully redeemed, it will be a new and glorified immortal body, and you won’t mind looking in the mirror, okay? Maybe you don’t look in mirrors when you walk by today, but then you’re going to be going, “I’m glorified! Alright!”

The flesh is talking about your sinful nature. I pause for a minute because there’s a lot of different terms that could be used for that. Some don’t like to use the word “nature.” I don’t think it’s a bad thing to use. I think that as long as you understand what we mean. When we say, “sinful nature,” it’s what theologians call the Adamic nature—that which we inherited by birth from Adam. It’s the sin capacity. It’s the sin drive inside of you. Have you ever noticed that little children, as they’re born and start to grow, they know how to do naughty things naturally? It just flows. You don’t have to sit them down and say, “Now, look, when you’re in trouble and you want to get out of it, this is called lying. I’m going to teach you how to lie.” No. It just comes naturally. Temper tantrums, “Mine!” What’s one of the first words little kids say? “Mine!” I mean, I’ve not had a toddler walk up to me and say, “I’d like to share this with you.” No, it’s, “Mine!” even if it’s not theirs. That’s the Adamic nature. Every human being is born with a sin capability, a sin capacity, a sin nature.

I believe, and I’ll have to cut to the chase, but when you are born again, the Bible says you’re regenerated by the Holy Spirit. You’re given new life. That involves a new nature. Here’s the thing that theologians debate, as to whether or not when you’re born again does it mean the eradication of the old nature? If it did, then you would not sin after you’d been born again. I won’t ask for a show of hands, I could ask, “How many of you sin today?” I won’t do that. We all know from experience that even though I’m a Christian, that I do sin. I’ve had from time to time members of the congregation, not in this church but my former church, say, “I don’t sin. I’m perfect. I’ve arrived.” They argue with me until blood vessels pop out on their necks, “I don’t sin!” even though they’re losing their cool right then and there. I believe that once you’re born again, you get a new capacity, a new nature, and it gives you that ability to live a life now that pleases God; but you still have, and we’re going to see it in our text tonight, an Adamic nature.

You say, “Well, what good is salvation?” In salvation, the sinful nature, as Paul describes it in Romans, is put out of business. It’s not annihilated, it’s not eliminated, it’s just rendered...the word that would be used is the Greek word *katargeo*, and it actually means to render inoperative. It would be like having a vacuum plugged into the wall. While vacuuming in your living room, someone pulls the cord out of the wall. The vacuum is still there, everything is still intact, but it’s been rendered inoperative. The power source has been taken out. You are now plugged into the new power source, which is the Holy Spirit, which you didn’t have prior to conversion, right? Now you have a new capacity to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

You also have a struggle that you didn't have before. Before you were converted, what did you do? Just sinned. It just flowed. Maybe your conscience bothered you, but it was just natural to follow your sinful bent and lifestyle. Now that you're a Christian, as Paul describes here, the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. There's a battle going on. There's a war going on. Someone described it like a black dog and a white dog—the black dog being the old sinful nature and the white dog being the new nature—and whichever dog you feed the most is the one that wins the battle. It's a concept of who do I yield to. When it talks about the "flesh," it's not your physical body. It's talking about your sinful nature. As I said, the theological concept is your Adamic nature that you inherit from Adam.

What gives you the ability to live victoriously over your sinful nature is the fact that you've been regenerated and that you have a new nature. You have the Holy Spirit and God's Word dwelling in you richly, and you're able to actually live a life then that pleases God. When you do sin, that breaks fellowship, but it doesn't make you lose your sonship or your relationship. All you have to do is confess your sin, 1 John 1:9, "...he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That's the famous verse which I call the Christian's bar of soap as you wash your heart in that confession, agreeing with God, and He forgives you by His grace.

Back to Galatians 5:13, "...only use not liberty for an occasion," that word "occasion" is an actual military concept of where they would use a plot of ground for a base of operation to attack the enemy. It's basically saying, "Don't use it for an opportunity to serve the flesh," to go to license and serve your flesh. Here's the contrast, verse 13, "but by love serve one another." There's one of the great "one another's" in the Bible, by the way. Make a note of that. If you ever want to be really encouraged, take your Concordance and run through the Bible all the times the Bible says, the New Testament specifically, "one another"—love one another, serve one another, forgive one another, wash one another's feet, encourage one another—all the "one another's" in the Bible which indicates we're part of a family and that we're part of one another. Paul says, "...but by love serve one another."

The word "love," that's used in this entire section here, is the Greek word agape. You're to, agape, love one another. 1 Corinthians 13 describes that love for us. When we get to verse 22, the fruit of the Spirit is agape love which produces His joy, His peace, His longsuffering, His gentleness, His goodness, His faithfulness, meekness, temperance or self-control, and against that there is no law. The filling of the Spirit helps you to live a life that pleases God and is fulfilling God's law.

Paul says, "Don't use your liberty for license," in verse 13. If you're taking notes, you can write this down: Your freedom is not in order to indulge your flesh. Never are we to think that, I'm free in Christ and I can just disregard God's standards and live however I want. No. He wants to sanctify us by His Holy Spirit.

Notice in verse 14, Paul also says that our freedom is not so that we can just disregard the law of God, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love," agape, "thy

neighbour as thyself.” He’s quoting Leviticus 19:18. Remember Jesus was asked, “What’s the great commandment?” He said, “Love God with all your heart, your soul, your strength, and your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself.” This is that half of it where we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. He doesn’t say that we need to love ourselves first in order to love our neighbors. He says, “You do love yourself; love your neighbors as you already do love yourself.” Nowhere in the Bible does it say, “Love yourself.” That’s just a given, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”

Have you ever been in a big group picture and someone shows you the picture? Who’s the first person you look for? “Ohhhhh! That’s not a good picture of me.” You say that because you want people to say, “No, that’s a good picture.” “Oh, really?” It’s that propensity of the sin nature. We love ourselves, now love your neighbor as you do love yourself.

In verse 14, Paul is basically saying that your freedom is not just so that you can disregard God’s law, but the law is fulfilled in loving your neighbor as yourself. Even in the Ten Commandments, the first half deals with your relationship to God, so loving God takes care of that. The second half, “Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness; if you’re loving your neighbor as yourself, you’re not going to commit those second five commandments of the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments. It’s not for us to disregard the law. Then notice he says, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Verse 15, “But if ye bite and devour one another,” Paul uses imagery here of animals attacking each other, and he’s no doubt thinking of the legalist. The legalist does not have love and does not serve others. They’re self-centered and self-focused, so it leads to biting and devouring one another, “take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” It’s important to realize that legalism doesn’t lead to love.

Hold your place here real quickly and flip backwards into the book of Romans 13. I want to give you just a great cross-reference for what we just read in Galatians. In Romans 13:8 Paul says, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another,” there’s another agape “one another,” “for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law,” there it is. “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Paul makes it very, very clear there in Romans. Let’s go back now to Galatians. Don’t be biting and devouring one another, but love serves others.

Notice in verse 16, “This I say then,” this is kind of in a way a summary, and I think this is one of the greatest verses in the New Testament, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Think about how amazing that statement is. Paul is telling us that if we can walk in the Spirit, that we can actually have victory over the sinful nature, over the Adamic sinful nature.

Notice in Galatians 5:1, we’re to “stand...in the liberty;” now in verse 16, we’re to, “Walk in the

Spirit,” we’re to be walking in the Spirit. Jump down to verse 24. He says, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit,” so we stand in liberty, we walk in the Spirit, we live in the Spirit. I think walking and living in the Spirit are synonymous. He says, verse 25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Go back with me to verse 16. If we “Walk in the Spirit, we will not “fulfil the lust of the flesh.” This is the key to victory in the Christian life. This is the key to holiness and godly living. This is the key to sanctification. It’s not legalism, it’s not license, it’s Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled liberty as we walk in the liberty where Christ hath set us free. What a blessing that is!

I’m going to come back to verse 14 as we wrap up our time together tonight. Notice verse 17. This is where Paul describes the war that goes on in the Christian’s life. He says, “For the flesh,” the old sinful nature, “lusteth against the Spirit,” wars against the Spirit, “and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” A lot of Christians feel condemned because they feel sinful desires. They don’t realize that that’s an indication that after regeneration you become aware of the battle and aware of the war. Prior to being saved, there was no conscious awareness of the war, you just lived sinful lives. Now there’s a war going on, and Paul describes it pretty well in Romans 7. As a matter of fact, in Romans 6, Paul is telling us how to live the sanctified life by yielding to God’s Spirit. In Romans 7, he’s telling us how not to live the sanctified life, by law.

In Romans 7, remember when Paul says, “The things I want to do, I don’t do; and the things that I don’t want to do, I do.” Have you ever had that experience? You get up in the morning, look into the mirror, “I’m not going to sin! I’m not going to sin! I’m not going to sin! I’m not going to sin! I’m not going to sin! I’m going to do it!” You psyche yourself up and what happens? The minute you pull out of the driveway, you sin! You’re like, “Oh! I’m a lousy Christian! I’m such a bad Christian! I can’t even get out of the driveway of my house without yelling at the neighbors,” or something, and you just feel so guilty. The fact that there’s a war going on is an indication that you’ve been regenerated. In a way I’m not saying be thankful that you have sinful desires, but be thankful that you are struggling with them, that you’re battling with them. Let me encourage you even further, the war will never cease. If you’re young thinking, Man, when I’m over sixty, there’ll be no more temptations, forget it! You’re never going to reach an age where, ““Whoooo! The minute I turn 65, no more sin. Old people don’t sin.” Yes they do! They can be big sinners.

Our thoughts, our words, our attitudes and our actions, you’re going to struggle with that until the day that you die. You say, “Is there no hope?” No, there’s hope. It’s called be filled with the Holy Spirit. It’s called the filling of the Holy Spirit. It’s called let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. You can walk in victory, but you’re never going to be sinless. The Bible does not teach sinless perfection. It teaches positionally, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and we stand in Him complete; but practically, that’s our sanctification, it will never be complete until I leave this earth, have a new body, and I’m at home with Jesus in heaven. The flesh is lusting against the Spirit, and this, I believe, also indicates that the believer does have two natures. If you don’t like that term, say sin capacities or the ability to sin and struggle with sin.

In verse 18, Paul says, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law," that is, certainly we're not under law for salvation, again, or sanctification. In verse 18, Paul comes back to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, so I want you to turn with me in your Bible to Ephesians 5, and we'll wrap this up. Now, I know that those of you that have been coming to Revival for some time have heard me expound on this verse many many times. You say, "John, do you know any other verses in the Bible?" You can't really outgrow what's commanded us here in Ephesians 5:18. It's interesting. I'm teaching on this tonight. I'm praying about actually trying to incorporate this same theme and focus in my session for the Revive Your Marriage Conference in relating all these verses to the marriage relationship.

Notice Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," that's license. I haven't mentioned it because I don't want to get into the issue of drinking and not drinking or smoking or dancing and all the different rules that people establish, but alcohol is a dangerous thing to be involved with. There's plenty of beverages out there other than alcohol. You may say, "Well, I have the liberty to drink alcohol." Be very, very careful. Paul said, "I will not be brought under the power of anything," maybe not even alcohol but something that keeps you enslaved, so you're going back into bondage. Either way you go, when you go from liberty to legalism, you go into bondage; when you go from liberty to license, you go into bondage. Christ made you free, stay free by fulfilling the purpose for which He set you free.

Notice, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," this is the contrast, and the word "excess" means there is debauchery. The Bible definitely condemns any idea of alcohol that would bring us to a place of being inebriated or intoxicated, "but," here's the command, "be filled with the Spirit." He doesn't use the word Holy Spirit, but I believe that's what he's referring to there. It should be "Spirit." "...be filled with the Spirit," this is a command. What that means is that it's an imperative. It's not an option. The Bible actually commands the Christian to be filled with the Spirit. It's interesting, and I won't get into it, but the Bible never commands us to be baptized in the Holy Spirit but tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which would indicate what I believe is true that the moment you are born again, you are placed by the Holy Spirit into Christ, which is the work of the baptism of the Holy Spirit identifying you in Christ and with Christ positionally. The reason it's commanded here is because not all Christians are Spirit-filled. Now, listen to this. All Christians have the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit doesn't have all Christians. He can be all boxed up and in your heart in a nice little compartment, but you haven't yielded your thoughts to Him, you haven't yielded your will to Him, you're not surrendered and filled with Him.

The simplest way to understand this "being filled," is to understand that the word "filled" means controlled by. I'm absolutely convinced that that will completely revolutionize your concept of being filled. It's not more of the Spirit, it's the Spirit getting more of you. You're not getting more of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't come in pieces, He comes in completely. Like, "This is a Christians that has three-thirds of the Spirit; this one's got eight percent of the Spirit." He comes in completely, but He wants you to yield to Him. You're not getting more of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is getting more of you.

We used to sing a song years ago, I want more of Jesus, more and more and more, I want more of Jesus than I've ever had before, I want more of His great love, so rich and full and free, I want more of Jesus so I'll give Him more of me. I love that. Do you want more of Jesus? Well, then, give yourself completely, fully to Him.

I want you to note that it is an imperative or a command. Let me break it down even further. In the Greek, it's in the plural form which means every Christian—no one is excluded in this command to be filled. It's in what's called the passive voice which means let the Spirit fill you, surrender and let Him fill you, and He acts upon you. Thirdly, it's also in the present tense, which we hear most commonly. That means that it's a continual, ongoing, appropriation of the Spirit's filling by surrendering and yielding to Him. You need to understand that to be filled with the Holy Spirit means that you're under His control. You're not yielding to the flesh, you're yielding to the Spirit's control. You let Him control your heart, your mind, and your life.

Let me give you just quickly, not from the text, some conditions for being filled are walking in the Spirit, as we read in Galatians 5, or being led of the Spirit or living in the Spirit. The first is to denounce sin in your life, 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You can't be Spirit-filled when you are harboring sin in your life. You will grieve the Holy Spirit, you will quench the Holy Spirit, so you must confess sin and let Him cleanse your heart.

The second condition for being filled is Colossians 3:16, where Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." I don't believe—listen to me carefully—that you can be Spirit-filled and neglect your Bible. I don't believe you can neglect the Bible, the Word of God, and expect to be filled with the Spirit of God. "I'm a Spirit-filled Christian, but I don't read the Bible. I'm filled with the Holy Ghost and I'm a Spirit-filled Christian, but I'm not into reading the Bible." You're not a Spirit-filled Christian. A Spirit-filled Christian is going to desire and hunger for God's Word. I love what J.Vernon McGee said. He said, "The Spirit of God has a track that He runs on, and the track that He runs on is the Word of God; and the Word of God is like fuel in our hearts and minds for Him to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ." I would say, and I have kind of limited my points here, that in order to be filled with the Spirit, you must dedicate or surrender your life completely to God, Romans 12:1; yield your life unto God, Romans 6, as those that are alive from the dead. Paul tells us that we're not to be legalists, we're not to be walking in license, we're to walk in love.

Let me wrap this up with a quote from Charles Swindoll from this passage. He said, "Serving others out of love frees us from our own self-centeredness. It humbles our pride. It has the power to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ. Love brings us into the fullness of God's purpose for our lives. In fact, love itself transcends the dos and don'ts of law, rendering them irrelevant. Love also limits our natural tendencies to sin, rendering them impotent. By living a life of service through love, we avoid legalism and license." To that I say, "Amen, amen, amen!" Amen? Let's pray.