

GRACE



LAW

A better understanding per the holy standard—the Word of God ...

Grace



Confusion

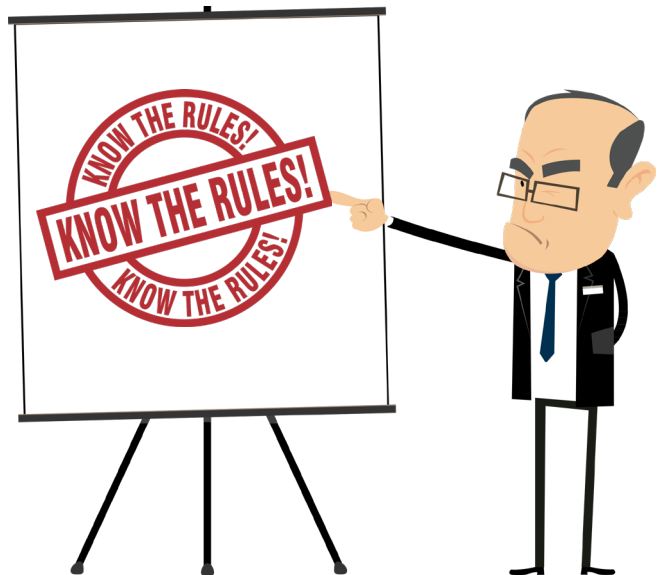


License

Indifference



Law



Intellect



Academics



Three Lines in the Sand ...

- **We need to commit ourselves to three clearly stated, biblical positions—three theological lines in the sand if you will.**



In this text the Apostle Paul establishes three things that are essential to understanding our freedom in Christ. To stay on a biblical path and to find our way through the confusing jungle of human reasoning and the earthly principles of lesser gods, we need to commit ourselves to these three clearly stated, biblical positions—three theological lines in the sand if you will.

- (Galatians 5:1 ESV) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

OUR **FIRST** NECESSARY LINE IN THE SAND ...

- **First—for freedom Christ has set us free:** Christ set us free from sin, and the clearly stated, intended purpose of his setting us free from sin was that we would live in freedom, 5:1a.

So our first line in the sand is a determination to live in freedom, to accept the clearly stated, intended purpose Christ has for us in freeing us from our sins. It is essential at this point that we see the importance of this and accept it as a first step in living in our freedom in Christ ... even if we do not yet completely understand what this freedom is. Whatever this freedom is we are to commit ourselves to it because this is very clearly God's word and God's work.

OUR **SECOND** NECESSARY LINE IN THE SAND ...

- **Second—Stand firm therefore:** We are commanded to stand firm in the intended purpose and the work of Jesus Christ in our lives.

The clearly stated, biblically derived, theologically sound, intended purpose of Christ setting us free from sin was that we would live in freedom.

Standing firm in our freedom is the express will of God for our lives. Standing firm in the freedom that Christ accomplished for us keeps us aligned with the intended purpose of God in the finished work of Christ. Backing off, or moving away from, our freedom in Christ not only runs contrary to God's purpose and intent, but it is also a shameful and dishonoring rejection of the gift of forgiveness and deliverance.

Falling prey to legalism—whether legalism under law or legalism under the guise of grace—is disobeying the will of God. Allowing someone to enslave you with human rules and principles of living is not only not more spiritual but it is sinful and disobedient and contrary to the intended purpose of God for your life.

OUR **THIRD** NECESSARY LINE IN THE SAND ...

- **Third—And do not submit again to a yoke of slavery:** We are commanded to refuse to submit to a life that contradicts the intended purpose of Christ for our lives and enslaves us to the principles of this world and to gods which are not gods, 5:1c, cf. 4:3, 8.

The ways of this world can be like comfort food. And we need to understand that while the many and varied ways and principles of humans in the natural realm aren't necessarily bad, and some even quite good, that they are not the ways of God. Our freedom in Christ is the way of God and not the way of humans, so then it is a new and unfamiliar way.

And because our freedom in Christ is new to us, we need to be taught this new way. And this is a dead give-away of the legalist. They think they already know. They think they already know the new way of God; that somehow in the darkness they figured things out. But they don't know. What they teach, and try to live, is the old way of this world gussied up as the new way of God.

A Better Understanding of Obedience and Living Under Grace

- (Romans 6:14–17 ESV) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

I plan to develop this more next week but I believe that I need to highlight some major points to help set the table for today's study. So here are some bullet points to outline what Paul teaches in this text.

1. **Grace means we win.** Sin will not rule in the life of the believer because we are not under law but under grace and grace rules.
2. **Grace means God's does it.** Does being under grace mean that we are free to sin? No, it actually means completely the opposite—that grace is the way of victory over sin. In his grace God has done for us what the law could not do (see Romans 8:3).
3. **Grace means righteousness.** “Under grace” never, never, ever means that we are “free” to do whatever we want. Under grace means that having been delivered from sin, we are free to be slaves of obedience to God, and this—not the law—is what leads to a life of righteousness before God.
4. **Grace means a redeemed heart.** Of course the person under grace obeys. Any other position stands in complete contradiction and opposition to the teaching of Scripture. The difference is that the person under grace obeys from the heart. With a redeemed heart the believer is now able to obey in the only way that pleases God.
5. **Grace means God's standard.** And the person under grace is obedient to God's standard, not their own, but God alone. Under grace we submit ourselves to God and the standard of Scripture.

Some advice for when the legalists start howling:
“You need to shut them there dogs up in the cowshed when they start raising a ruckus.”