

Lesson Four - Beware the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:11)

Lesson Outline

Title: Stand fast in the liberty of Christ

Text: Galatians 5:1

Introduction: It is not only evil things that bring bondage. The devil seeks to bind us by our desire to live right, our relationships with others and our concern for everyday provision.

Illustration: Backpack on an underground train.

1. Stand fast against the gravitational pull of the law
2. Stand fast against the pull of the carnal nature
3. Stand fast against the attraction of wrong relationships
4. Stand fast against the cares of the world

Introduction: The devil seeks to bring people into bondage.

It is often the things that are good that the devil uses to bind us.

See Luke 17:26-30.

Eating; drinking; getting married; buying; selling; planting and building.

None of the things mentioned in this passage are bad. But mankind has been created for more than mere existence.

We are created to glorify God with our lives, Isaiah 43:7.

All these things are good but if we live for these things we will lose the liberty that is in Christ.

It is not just bad things that bring us into bondage. Good things can also bind us.

For instance:

- the concern for everyday needs.
- concern for family
- concern for friends

Illustration: The devil seeks to find something to use to bind us and stop us from being effective for God

Travelling on the London Underground.

I had a rucksack and two other bags.

Three mischievous children came after me.



They saw my rucksack had loose straps and one of them came behind me and tied one to the pole.

I was bound and could only free myself by taking off the backpack.

The devil looks for loose straps in our Christian life to bind us. We must put on the whole armour of God

1. Stand fast against the gravitational pull to the Old Testament.

Christianity is new life in Christ - It is not a life of rules and regulations.

Stand fast in the new creation

Illustration:

When a plane flies to another continent the crew must obey the laws that enable the plane to fly safely.

It must fly at a certain height within a particular lane.

A Boeing 747 (Jumbo Jet) takes 174 tons of fuel to fill.

In contrast a bird flies without a control centre directing its path yet the bird has perfect navigation.

A bird is born with the strength and ability to fly.



The Book of Galatians.

This letter was written by Paul because the Galatians had been deceived into believing that they were under the law in the same way that Israel had been.

Paul calls this `a different gospel`, Galatians 1:6.

The concern to keep God's commandments is a good concern.

But trying to obey the Old Testament law brings bondage.

New Testament Christianity is far greater.

Paul describes it like this:

Galatians 4:7 `Wherefore you art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.`

It is new life in Christ.

The Gospel is described by Paul to the Colossians as `Christ in you, the hope of glory'. Colossians 1:27

Led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:18)

The freedom that Christ brings is the freedom to live a holy life without the law.

The law condemns.

But new life in Christ never condemns

What should we do?

New life in Christ gives us power to walk in the Spirit.

Put on Christ as our armour.

Let His life in us control every action; every thought; every plan.

2. Stand fast against the pull of the carnal nature.

We will lose our liberty if we walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit.

Cultivating the fruit of the Spirit in our lives by walking in the Spirit.

- Free to love.

Freedom to love others with love that has no self interest (agape).

- Free to forgive

Freedom to be tenderhearted towards those who have done us harm.

- Free to serve.

Freedom means being free to be a servant.

- Free to be holy

Freedom is not being free to sin that is bondage.

Freedom in Christ is not the freedom to sin.

This is not freedom.

This is bondage.

When we receive Christ we are set free from the bondage of a sinful life.

Why should we go back?

We have been set free from sinful practices.

Let's walk in this freedom and not become entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

3. Stand fast against the attraction of wrong relationships

Friendships without being yoked together

We must build up friendships with unbelievers to lead them to Christ.

We must not allow these friendships to make us accept the world's standards.

The downward path of wrong friendships.

Accepting lower standards

If we keep the wrong company then we can be pulled into wrong behaviour.

Things that shocked us become acceptable.

Then we can easily be led into doing the same things.

Sexual immorality

Occultism

Violence and Theft

Drugs and drunken rioting

Marriage

Blessing of being equally yoked together – same direction; no conflict of interests.



Right partner – freedom to serve the Lord

Wrong partner – bondage (pulled in the wrong direction)

Unequally yoked in marriage.

Can't serve God together

Conflict in the home.

Hinderance to bringing children up in the Lord.

4. Stand fast against the cares of the world.

Standing against covetousness; and concerns (fears).

Covetousness is a characteristic of the age in which we live in.

2 Peter 2:3 ¶ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:

When we are covetous then we are easily deceived.

Peter refers to false teachers who will use covetousness to gain material goods from the believers. It is the misuse of the 'seed faith' teaching.

Many people have been deceived by a prosperity gospel that is built upon covetousness.

Coveting goods

Gambling

Buying on Credit

We have been given the promises of God so we trust in His word and not be covetous like the world. (2 Peter 1:4)

Concerns

Fear will bring us into bondage

- FEAR OF LOSING SOMEONE'S AFFECTIONS
- FEAR OF LOSING OUR SECURITY
- FEAR OF LACK IN OUR PROVISION
- LOSE OF HEALTH OF FEAR OF DYING
- FEAR OF FACING HARDSHIPS
- FEAR OF FAILURE
- FEAR OF LOSING REPUTATION

Armour of God – Put on Christ

'Perfect love casts out all fear' 1 John 4:18

'Casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you' 1 Peter 5:7

Summary:

Satan seeks ways to make a Christian ineffective in his or her Christian life.

1. ... he seeks to bring the Christian into the bondage of living under the law instead of living in the freedom of new life in Christ. We are a new creation in Christ; brought into the family of God.
2. ... he seeks to bring the Christian into bondage of walking in the flesh instead of in the liberty of the Spirit. We are free to be holy.
3. ... he seeks to bring the Christian into bondage through wrong relationships. Being unequally yoked will bring us into bondage and may cause us to participate in wrongful activities.
4. ... he seeks to bring the Christian into bondage through covetousness and concerns of the world instead of enjoying the freedom of trusting in the promises of God.