

“Against Such There Is No Law”

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In Galatians 5:22-23 and Ephesians 5:9, there are eleven characteristics of "the fruit of the Spirit." Each individual attribute is important, and the singular fruit will only be perfect when all eleven qualities have part in the produce of the Spirit. An apple is red, sweet, and juicy, but an apple that is not juicy is lacking. So it is with the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, and truth, but if any of these qualities are lacking, then the fruit is not perfect. Therefore, as Christians, we must strive to have each of these attributes for even if only one is lacking, then we cannot be as the Lord desires us to be.

As Paul brings his thoughts concerning "the fruit of the Spirit" to a conclusion, by inspiration of God, he gives one last vital piece of information — "against such there is no law." Like so many things, commentators are divided as to what the "such" is. Some believe Paul is saying there is no law to condemn such persons. Others believe he is saying there is no law to condemn such things as the previous characteristics. Either way, the point is clear. Whether Paul is speaking of the persons who practice such or the various characteristics themselves, there is no law against such actions.

There are laws against almost everything imaginable. Laws regulate business and games, morals and ethics, civil governments and citizens of civil governments. Laws exist in nearly every realm of the activities of men — commercial, occupational, relationships, family, and religion. And man has lived under law since the beginning of creation. Adam and Eve and their descendants up until the giving of the law of Moses lived under patriarchal law. The nation of Israel lived under Mosaic law. And since the time of the cross of Christ, all men live under New Testament law.

Though laws are given to regulate, there are no laws to regulate "the fruit of the Spirit," and there are no laws to regulate the individual characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, and truth. There is no situation, and there are no circumstances in which the individual qualities of fruit of the Spirit cannot be practiced. These are universal qualities because they ought to be practiced by all men of every age and in every nation and place on earth. The practice of each of these qualities is acceptable with God and with men. This is unlike the works of the flesh in that laws are given to regulate every single one of them. What is the

difference? "The fruit of the Spirit" is beneficial, while "the works of the flesh" are detrimental. Beneficial attributes need no legislation. Who would want a law against love, joy, and peace? Rather than regulating such, there are untold numbers of organizations to encourage such activities.

Because there are no laws against the fruit of the Spirit, some have erroneously concluded that Christians do not live under law. Such is not the case. Clearly Christians live under the law of Christ. Consider these examples:

In Romans 8:2, Paul wrote, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Contextually, Paul wrote of three laws: (1) "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," (2) "the law of sin and death," and (3) "the law" (verse 3). "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is the New Testament. "The law of sin and death" was enacted when Adam and Eve sinned and were driven out of the garden of Eden. It is the principle which states that if a person sins, he or she will die (see also Romans 6:23 and Ezekiel 18:20). "The law" of verse 3 is the Mosaic law. "The law" could not remove sin. It was impotent in dealing with sin. It could not free man from "the law of sin and death." However, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" could and has made us "free from the law of sin and death." When a person obeys the gospel of Christ, he or she is set free from sin and death (see also 1 Peter 1:22-23).

In Galatians 6:2, Paul wrote, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). In order to fulfill the law of Christ, we must love God and love one another. The command to "love thy neighbour as thyself" is also called the "Royal law" (James 2:8). One way that we can fulfil the law of Christ and the royal law is by bearing one another's burdens. To bear another's burden is to help and aid our fellow man through the burdens and difficulties of life. If Christians are not under law, then how can we fulfil the law of Christ and the royal law? Notice this follows the context of "the fruit of the Spirit." When a person applies the principles of "the fruit of the Spirit," there will be a mutual bearing of burdens.

In James 1:25, James wrote, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Contextually, "the perfect law of liberty" is "the word of truth" (1:18), "the engrafted word" (1:21), and "the word" (1:22). Each of these have reference to New Testament law — the teaching of the gospel of Christ. It is the perfect law because it fulfills Old Testament law, and it is the final and complete revelation of God (Jude 3). It is "the law of liberty" because it liberates

man from sin and the penalty of sin — death (Romans 8:2; 1 Peter 1:22-23). The term "law of liberty" is paradoxical. By its very nature law regulates and restrains, but liberty is freedom. This paradoxical attribute is woven throughout the New Testament. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). However, we are "unprofitable servants" and call Jesus "Lord, Lord" (Luke 17:10; 6:46).

Another way that we can know we are under law is by the fact that all men have sinned (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10). One definition of sin is found in 1 John 3:4 which says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Without law, there is no sin. Paul wrote, "sin is not imputed when there is no law." The works of the flesh are violations of Divine law. With this in mind, think of the consequences of stating we are not under law. If we are not under law, then men have not sinned. If men have not sinned, then we need no Savior. And, if we need no Savior, then Jesus Christ died in vain. Clearly, the opposite is true. "All have sinned." Therefore, all need a Savior.

If we are under law, then why is there no law against such qualities as the fruit of the Spirit? Paul answers this question in 1 Timothy 1:9-11;

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

The law was not laid down, set, or appointed for the morally upright. It was made for those who would transgress it. One note of interest is the fact that the list Paul gives in this text is comparable to the ten commandments.

"The fruit of the Spirit" is made up of qualities to which all men should aspire. They are qualities that need no law, need no regulation, and need no restraint. They are godly qualities that issue from the foundational principle of love for God and for His creation. If these qualities are applied properly to our lives, they will build a good relationship with God, with family, and with friends. Every godly person of the past were characterized by them, and every godly person of future will be characterized by them. Let us, therefore, strive in earnestness to possess "the fruit of the Spirit" which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, and truth.