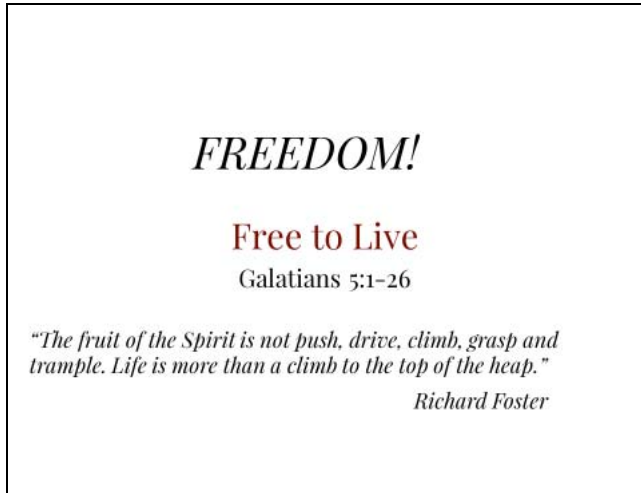


FREE TO LIVE
Galatians 5:1, 13-18

“The fruit of the Spirit is not push, drive, climb, grasp and trample. Life is more than a climb to the top of the heap.”

Richard Foster



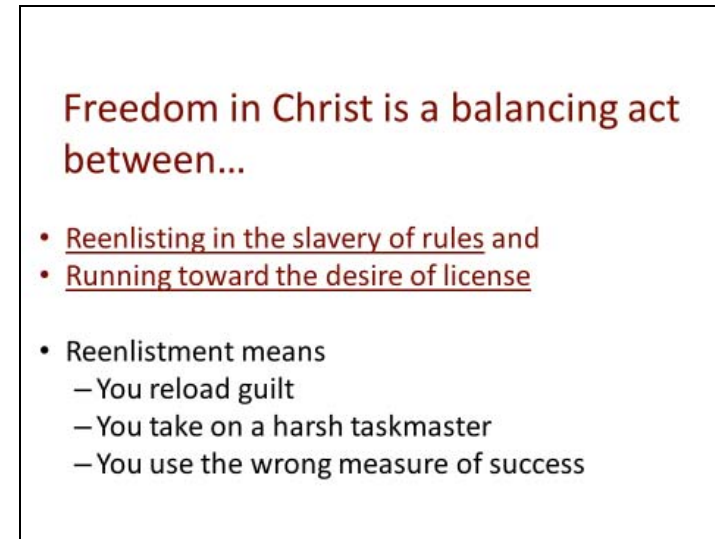
In 1968 in a dentist’s office, Philippe Petit, a self-taught French high-wire walker feigned a sneeze as he ripped out an artist’s rendering of the unfinished world trade center, tucked it in his jacket, and left the office. That began a seven-year quest to fix a 450 pound wire between the two towers and wire-walk the span 1365 feet above the streets below on August 7th, 1974.

He made eight passes along the wire even laying down on the wire during the escapade. His feats were celebrated in the 2015 movie *The Walk*.

Understanding the life that Jesus intended us to live is a little like life on a tightrope. If you don’t understand the principles that God has established, the risk of falling to one side or the other are great and the

consequences are severe; but when you understand and live the principles, walking the wire leads to an exhilarating life. Over our next three times together, we’re going to look at freedom in Christ and how the classic reality of the fruit of the Spirit applies.

I. Don’t reenlist (5:1-12)



A. Christ set us free to be free

1. If you reenlist to the old way, the benefit of freedom is gone!
2. The tendency to reenlist
 - a) For the Galatians it was with physical marking to please God
 - b) It was ceremonial eating to be made holy

B. Faith expressing itself through love that counts

What really counts in living...

- Is faith expressed through love

1. Not the phony expression of works in order to get into the family
2. It is faith at work in the heart of the believer.
3. This is that side of the balance bar that keeps us from lapsing back into a legal mode believing the works are what establish our relationship with God

C. The effects of reenlistment

1. It is a yoke – a heavy burden to bear
2. It is a harsh taskmaster – loading guilt where no guilt exists.
3. It is the wrong measure of success – it's like using a metric measurement for a standard measure
4. NASA lost a \$125 million Mars orbiter because a Lockheed Martin engineering team used English units of measurement while the agency's team used the more conventional metric system for a key spacecraft operation. (9/1999)

5. One reason that so many struggle with false guilt and discouragement is that they are using the wrong measurement instead of what is truly important!

II. Don't confuse liberty with license (5:13-26)

A. License – the other great downfall

The other great downfall

- Using freedom as an excuse for bad living
- Misused freedom comes from misunderstood grace
–In misusing freedom we lose it

1. Living for the desires of the flesh
2. Living life solely as it affects you instead how it affects God's plan or his people
3. Living life solely to gratify personal desires

B. Paul's vocabulary is the path toward freedom

1. Four synonyms that make the point

- a) To walk by the Spirit
- b) To be led by the Spirit

- c) To live by the Spirit
- d) To keep in step with the Spirit

2. All involve proximity, attention, and submission
3. To walk or be led by the spirit means you go where the Spirit is going, to listen to his leading, to understand his will, and to follow his guidance
4. There's a new desire to do the right thing but our own personal agenda keeps getting in the way so "it keeps us from doing what we want to do"
5. In another passage Paul says it like this

Romans 7:18-20 (NIV)

¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

- C. The works of the flesh – living solely for personal interest, or life solely as it affects or satisfies me
 1. Immoral living, God replacement, relational issues, materialism, and self-destructive vices

We lose our freedom when ...

- Our passions get out of control
- God gets replaced with other things
- We violate principles of brotherly love
- We are plagued by intemperate vices
- The works of the flesh

- D. The fruit of the Spirit

We lose our freedom when ...

- Our passions get out of control
- God gets replaced with other things
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- We are plagued by intemperate vices

- The works of the flesh

1. The outworking of the walking by, being let by, living by, and keeping in step with the Spirit
2. All of these things speak to the overall orientation of our lives
3. How many fruits of the Spirit are there? Not nine, but one
4. Here is the focus of this passage. There are nine qualities that come into play that blossom when we are keeping in step with the Spirit
 - a) In relation to our inner person – love, joy, peace
 - b) In relation to others – patience, kindness, goodness
 - c) In relation to God – faithfulness, gentleness (a humble heart in the presence of strength), self-control – a strengthened position in relation to the deeds of the flesh)

The fruit of the Spirit wasn't intended to be a list of goals for us to produce - it is the Holy Spirit through us who produces fruit.

Dan Kimball

5. We do that not by forced training exercises rather by a new perspective – crucifying the flesh – rejecting that as a primary focus of life

III. The new freedom

- A. Since we live by the Spirit – keep in step
 1. Don't stop – realize that it's an ongoing struggle
 2. Don't back away and become

Three common traits of self-centered living

- Conceit leads us to elevation of personal well-being above all else.
- Provocation comes from trying to gain the advantage over others.
- Envy comes from unhealthy comparison of others' position or goods.

- a) Conceited – motivated by personal concerns over the concerns of God and others
- b) Provoking one another – using our position as to get the advantage over one another
- c) Envyng one another – Looking at another as the source of competition and desire as opposed as someone to serve

God develops the fruit of the Spirit in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you're tempted to express the exact opposite quality. Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity. **Rick Warren**