

## Lesson 13 Article

*Draw the best tiger you can. It is the tiger's nature makes him dangerous. So we put bars around him to make a cage. "What will happen if the bars are removed? Under what condition(s) will it be safe to remove the bars?"*

*We are the tiger. The Law is the bars of the cage. If our tiger-nature is changed, there is no need for bars.<sup>1</sup>*

It's as if you stood at a fork in the road, with one path leading to the north and the other to the south. You must choose one path or the other. You cannot choose both, for they lead in opposite directions.

The Galatian Christians, like you and I, stand always at just such a fork. We must either take the path of relating to God through Law, or of relating to God through the faith. *We cannot have it both ways.* If we are trying to relate to God through the Law, we are not living by faith. And if we are living by faith, we turn our backs on all that Law implied. Being a Christian will make no practical difference in our lives ("Christ will be of no value to you"). We who are called to live in the sphere of God's grace will fall from that grace. Our hope for transformation now will be replaced by futile self-effort, for "the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (v. 6).<sup>2</sup>

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The fact that *peripateō* (**walk**) is used here in the present tense indicates that Paul is speaking of continuous, regular action, in other words, a habitual way of life. And the fact that the verb is also in the imperative mood indicates he is not giving believers an option but a command.

Among other things, walking implies progress, going from where one is to where he ought to be. As a believer submits to the Spirit's control, he moves forward in his spiritual life. Step by step the Spirit moves him from where he is toward where God wants him to be. So while it is the Spirit who is the source of all holy living, it is the believer who is commanded to walk. This is the apparent paradox of the divine and human that is seen in salvation (John 6:35–40), in Scripture inspiration (cf. 1 John 1:1–3 with 2 Pet. 1:19–21), in eternal security (cf. Rom. 8:31–39 with Col. 1:21–23), and even in ministry (Col. 1:28–29).<sup>3</sup>

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Note that Paul uses three pleas as he beseeches these Christians to live lives of holiness by the grace of God: God the Father has called them (v. 13); God the Son has died for them (v. 24); and God the Holy Spirit indwells them (vv. 16–23). Each Person of the Trinity is assisting us in our battle against the flesh.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher's commentary* (905, 907). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. (1996). *Galatians* (152–153). Chicago: Moody Press.

<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (530). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.