

THE INTEGRATIVE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE ETHICS OF GALATIANS

by
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“How is Paul’s ethic grounded in his theology?” queries Richard Hays. “This problem has long vexed interpreters.”² Brian Rosner underscores, “The challenge for every student of Paul is to discover in Paul’s thought not only theological coherence but ethical integration.”³ This quest for “integration” (including Paul’s view of “law and grace”) has led to historic divides between theological systems, such as Lutherans, the Reformed, and dispensationalists.⁴ Some scholars have recently claimed that theological-ethical integration can only be achieved through adaptations of the “New Perspective(s)” on Paul.⁵

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²Richard B. Hays, “Christology and Ethics in Galatians: The Law of Christ,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (April 1987): 268. Eckhard Schnabel warns that one cannot speak of Pauline “ethics” in the proper sense of the term “as rational conception, systematic explication and methodical verification of human behavior.” But, borrowing from Trutz Rendtorff, one can depict Pauline ethics in a more general sense as “evaluation, description and orientation of the human conduct of life” (see Eckhard J. Schnabel, “How Paul Developed His Ethics: Motivations, Norms and Criteria of Pauline Ethics,” in *Understanding Paul’s Ethics: Twentieth-Century Approaches*, ed. Brian S. Rosner [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], p. 267).

³Brian Rosner, “Paul’s Ethics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 212–13. See also John G. Lewis, *Looking for Life: The Role of “Theo-Ethical Reasoning” in Paul’s Religion*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 291 (London: T & T Clark, 2005); J. Paul Sampley, *Walking Between the Times: Paul’s Moral Reasoning* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). For a *Forschungsbericht*, see Nijay Gupta, “The Theo-Logic of Paul’s Ethics in Recent Research: Crosscurrents and Future Directions in Scholarship in the Last Forty Years,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (June 2009): 336–61.

⁴See Greg L. Bahnsen, et al. *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); Jack Hughes, “The New Perspective’s View of Paul and the Law,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 16 (Fall 2005): 261–76. For a classic dispensational discussion, see Alva J. McClain, *Law and Grace: A Study of New Testament Concepts as They Relate to the Christian Life* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1954). See also Myron Houghton, *Law and Grace* (Schaumburg: Regular Baptist Press, 2011).

⁵Contrast two recent theses: G. M. H. Loubser, “Ethics in the New Creation: A Celebration of Freedom! A Perspective from Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” D.D. thesis (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2004); and Steven Douglas Meigs, “The Ethics of the Spirit in Galatians: Considering Paul’s Paraneis in the Interpretation of His Theology,” M.A. thesis (Tampa: University of South Florida, 2006). While both

On a *prima facie* level, it might seem that the structure of Pauline theology would ultimately undermine ethics. “If God has already declared the believer to be righteous...then what motivation does the believer have for ethical behavior?”⁶ Commenting on Paul’s statement that God “justifies the ungodly” (Rom 4:5), Leander Keck exclaims that the notion “offends the most elemental moral perception and seems to annihilate ethics altogether.”⁷ C. K. Barrett declares, “Every moral philosophy, every ethical religion, has to answer the question, Why be good? Has not Paul made the question so difficult that it must remain virtually unanswered?”⁸

By narrowing the investigation to the epistle to the Galatians, this article will demonstrate that Paul’s ethics can indeed be integrated with Paul’s theology of grace.⁹ Barrett pronounces that “the very existence of Christian ethics is a paradox; the paradox is nowhere sharper than it is with Paul, and nowhere sharper in Paul than in Galatians.”¹⁰ Unfortunately, the ethics of Galatians has sometimes been slighted, causing Bernard Lategan to reference “the apparently underdeveloped nature of Paul’s ethical statements” in Galatians and the “ethical deficit” in the epistle.¹¹ Hays laments that “it has proven difficult to establish any direct *inner connection* between Paul’s message of justification by faith on the one hand and his ethical admonitions on the other.”¹² This

theses examine the ethics of Galatians, Meigs’ work adopts the “New Perspective(s)” while Loubser’s rejects the “New Perspective(s).”

⁶As posed by Frank Thielman, “Law and Liberty in the Ethics of Paul,” *Ex auditu* 11 (1995): 63.

⁷Leander E. Keck, “Justification of the Ungodly and Ethics,” in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann*, ed. Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pöhlmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1976), p. 199.

⁸C. K. Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation: A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1985), pp. 54–55.

⁹According to Brawley, the theology of grace that integrates the epistle forms a “meta-ethical” foundation for Christian ethics (Robert L. Brawley, “Identity and Meta-Ethics: Being Justified and Ethics in Galatians,” in *Character Ethics and the New Testament*, ed. Robert L. Brawley [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007], pp. 107–23). See also Robert L. Brawley, “Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works of Law in Galatians,” in *Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive: Beiträge zu einem Schlüsselproblem der gegenwärtigen exegetischen Diskussion*, ed. Michael Bachmann and Johannes Woyke, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.182* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), pp. 135–59.

¹⁰Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, p. 53.

¹¹Bernard C. Lategan, “Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethics in Galatians?” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 320–23. Lategan balances these comments with more positive materials in the surrounding context. For an overview of the ethics in Galatians, see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, *New Testament Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101–20.

¹²Hays, “Christology and Ethics in Galatians,” p. 269 (italics added).

present study will argue that the distinctive “*inner connection*” is the powerful, integrative role of the Holy Spirit.¹³

THE SPIRIT AND UNION WITH CHRIST

According to Richard Longenecker, “Much that has been written on Galatians has tended to ignore the central place of the Spirit in Paul’s argumentation throughout his Galatian letter.”¹⁴ All believers have received the promised Spirit through faith (Gal 3:2, 14).¹⁵ As Gordon Fee insists, “For Paul the reception of the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of Christian life.”¹⁶ Paul used this coming and presence of the Spirit in believers as a prodding reminder toward further sanctification: “Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the

¹³“Rather than slight ethics, Paul grounds it in the power of God” (Brawley, “Identity and Metaethics,” p. 116). Cf. David John Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul’s Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 49 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1980).

¹⁴Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word, 1990), p. 101.

¹⁵Lewis interprets τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος in Gal 3:14 as a subjective genitive but accepts the usual interpretation of 3:2 (Lewis, *Looking for Life*, pp. 165–68). Betz has argued that the entire letter to the Galatians should be read as an apology in defense of the Spirit’s empowering efficacy for Christian existence (Hans Dieter Betz, “In Defense of the Spirit: Paul’s Letter to the Galatians as a Document of Early Christian Apologetics,” in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1967], pp. 99–114). See also Lull, *Spirit in Galatia*, p. 53. Betz, however, also maintains that “Paul does not provide the Galatians with a specifically Christian ethic. The Christian is addressed as an educated and responsible person. He is expected to do no more than what would be expected of any other educated person in the Hellenistic culture of the time” (Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989], p. 292). Hays finds Betz’s reading of Paul to be “entirely incredible” (Richard B. Hays, “Jesus’ Faith and Ours: A Rereading of Galatians 3,” in *Conflict and Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas*, ed. Mark Lau Branson and C. René Padilla [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], p. 259). Hays marvels at the implication: “The eschatological Spirit of God is given as a gift of grace to the nations through the death of God’s Son on the cross in order to enable Christ’s people to live in accordance with the conventional standards of cultured persons!” (Hays, “Christology and Ethics in Galatians,” p. 270). Cf. Lategan, “Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethic?”; Troels Engberg-Pedersen, “The Logic of Action in Paul: How Does He Differ from the Moral Philosophers on Spiritual and Moral Progression and Regression?” in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 238–66; Peggy A. Vining, “Galatians and First-Century Ethical Theory,” Ph.D. diss. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2008); John Barclay, *Obedying the Truth: A Study of Paul’s Ethics in Galatians*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), pp. 170–77; D. Francois Tolmie, “Liberty—Love—the Spirit: Ethics and Ethos According to the Letter to the Galatians,” in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 41 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 250–54.

¹⁶Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 603.

Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (3:2–3).¹⁷

Paul's argument assumes that the Galatians understood the Spirit's reception as "the telltale sign of belonging," as confirmation of their relationship with God.¹⁸ God supplied the Spirit (and the working of *δυνάμεις*) among the Galatians by their hearing with faith, not by works of the Law (Gal 3:5).¹⁹ The *δύναμις* of the Spirit also empowered the prayerful cry of "Abba" (4:6) as well as the fruit of the Spirit (5:22–23).²⁰

Believers have been redeemed and have received adoption as sons. "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal 4:5–6).²¹ "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God" (4:7).²² The believer is no longer under the "guardian" (*παιδαγωγός*) of the Law (3:25).²³ Rather, the Christian is a full son of God, through faith (3:26). This dynamic relationship has ethical import, as the power of God (as the "divine parent") acts through the sons of God.²⁴ Commentators of Pauline ethics have accordingly summarized his ethical appeal as "Become what you are."²⁵

¹⁷All Scripture quotations are taken from the 2001 ESV. Cf. Paul's reference to the Holy Spirit within his summons to sanctification in 1 Thess 4:2–11. See Eduard Verhoef, "1 Thessalonians 4:1–8: The Thessalonians Should Live a Holy Life," *Hervormde theologiese studies* 63 (March 2007): 347–63.

¹⁸J. Paul Sampley, "Reasoning from the Horizons of Paul's Thought World: A Comparison of Galatians and Philippians," in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), p. 119; Brawley, "Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works," p. 135.

¹⁹Longenecker concedes that "just how the Spirit's presence was manifest in their lives is uncertain from our vantage point...but we may infer that there were outward signs of some sort" (Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 102). Cf. Hans Dieter Betz, "Spirit, Freedom, and Law: Paul's Message to the Galatian Churches," *Svensk exegetisk årsbok* 39 (1974): 153.

²⁰See Brawley, "Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works," pp. 150–51.

²¹On the role of "reversal" and "interchange" in Pauline ethics, see Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); Morna D. Hooker, "Interchange in Christ and Ethics," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (October 1985): 3–17.

²²The Greek word for "slave" (*δοῦλος*) in Gal 4:1 and 7 refers to a "bondservant."

²³The statement of Gal 3:25 is not simply an individual, existential description; it carries salvation-historical significance (see McClain, *Law and Grace*, pp. 28–29).

²⁴Brawley, "Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works," p. 151.

²⁵G. M. Styler, "The Basis of Obligation in Paul's Christology and Ethics," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 179, 182 n. 20. Cf. Rosner, "Paul's Ethics," 217; Hooker, "Interchange in Christ and Ethics," p. 5. But see the view of T. J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul*, *Analecta biblica* 89 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), pp. 83, 241: "Become what you are" is an inadequate explanation, since "it makes no mention of God's role in either the indicative or the imperative." See also the critiques of William Longworth, "Ethics in Paul: The Shape

The one who walks (περιπατέω) by (or in) the Spirit will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16).²⁶ One should note that Galatians 5:16 is not a negative imperative of prohibition, but a subjunctive of strong denial.²⁷ The one *walking* in the Spirit *will by no means fulfill* (οὐ μὴ τελέσητε) sinful desires. Believers are “empowered by a dynamic relationship with the Spirit,” in which “God acts in and through them.”²⁸ The flesh and the Spirit conflict with one another in such a manner that the moral agent does not do the things he or she “wishes” or “desires” (θέλω) (5:17).²⁹

There is also an eschatological facet to the Spirit’s work.³⁰ “For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness” (Gal 5:5). Romans 8:2–4 proclaims, “For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according

of Christian Life and a Method of Moral Reasoning,” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 1 (1981): 36.

²⁶See Walter Bo Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997). At times, σάρξ can simply refer to human finitude without moral approbation (Phil 1:19–26). In Gal 2:20, the believer still lives life “in the flesh” (human finitude), yet Christ lives in the believer. More often, “the flesh” describes a negative entity, such as “the perverted self” (Keck, “Justification of the Ungodly,” p. 201). R. J. Erickson describes six meanings of “flesh” in Paul’s writings: (1) physical matter, (2) human body, (3) human person, human race, (4) morally neutral sphere, (5) morally negative sphere, (6) rebellious human nature. The sixth meaning is “Paul’s most characteristic use of σάρξ, and his most frequent” (*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, “Flesh,” by R. J. Erickson, pp. 303–5). Barrett describes “flesh” as “man’s innate tendency to egocentricity” (in Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, pp. 71–77, 84–85); cf. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, pp. 178–215. In Galatians, “flesh” is clearly opposed to the Spirit (Gal 5:13–24). See Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), p. 171.

²⁷Brawley, “Identity and Metaethics,” p. 118; Brawley, “Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works,” p. 156. This shift from imperative to subjunctive in Gal 5:16 is emphasized by J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 492.

²⁸Brawley, “Identity and Meta-Ethics,” pp. 109, 117.

²⁹For interpretation of this verse, see note 31. “The daily, hourly putting to death of the schemings and enterprises of the sinful flesh by means of the Spirit is a matter of being led, directed, impelled, controlled by the Spirit” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975], 1:395). See also E. A. C. Pretorius, “The Opposition ΠΝΕΥΜΑ and ΣΑΡΞ as Persuasive Summons,” *Neotestamentica* 26 (1992): 441–60.

³⁰On the connection between eschatology and Paul’s ethics, see Longworth, “Ethics in Paul,” pp. 35–39; Samuel P. Chia, “The Role of Eschatology in Paul’s Ethics,” *Sino-Christian Studies* 3 (June 2007): 37–59; Keck, “Justification of the Ungodly,” p. 202; Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, p. 66. Cf. Heb 6:4–5.

to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” “Walking in the Spirit” precludes following fleshly desires, so that the Spirit-led individual does not do the things he wants to do in the “flesh” (Gal 5:17).³¹

Brawley explains, “Being led by the Spirit constitutes concrete living in the present that transcends law.”³² This is because the “fruit” of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22), and “against such things there is no law” (5:23).³³ The Spirit goes beyond the Law in supplying the power and even the motivating will to accomplish what is right.³⁴ The enumeration of “the fruit of the Spirit” functions as a form of “virtue ethics,” laying “a significant emphasis on the *character* of the moral actor—rather than, for instance, the enumeration of his *duties*.”³⁵ Through the Spirit, the believer is transformed into the image of the object of faith (Jesus Christ), leading to further Christlikeness.³⁶

The Spirit unites Christians with Christ. In characteristic Pauline terminology, believers are “in Christ” (Gal 5:6). As many as were “baptized into Christ” have put on Christ (3:27).³⁷ All believers are spiritually one in Christ Jesus, and share the same spiritual blessings (3:28). Those who belong to Christ Jesus “have crucified the flesh with its

³¹See Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, pp. 112–119, 215; G. M. H. Loubser, “The Ethic of the Free: A Walk according to the Spirit! A Perspective from Galatians,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 27 (2006): 624. Therefore, Gal 5:17 is not “an admission of defeat.” “For if you walk by the Spirit, you do not do what your self-indulgent desires want (5:16–17). Instead, you do what the Spirit leads you to do. And since you are under the control of the Spirit, it is unnecessary for you to be under the supervision of the law (5:18)” (G. Walter Hansen, “Paul’s Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom in Galatians,” in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul’s Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker, McMaster New Testament Studies [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], p. 226). For a differing view of not being “under the Law,” see Todd A. Wilson, *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia: Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.225 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

³²Brawley, “Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works,” p. 154.

³³See Tolmie, “Liberty,” p. 253. Styler prefers the translation, “there is no law dealing with such things as these,” since “the harvest of the Spirit in the Christian life goes far beyond the most comprehensive list of works and duties that any law could prescribe” (Styler, “Basis of Obligation,” p. 179). Cf. 1 Tim 1:9: “The law is not laid down for the just.”

³⁴F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989), p. 82. Cf. Rom 6:3–4.

³⁵Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 231; italics original. “Thereby the focus shifts from what is to be done (the *agendum*) to the doer, the agent” (Keck, “Justification of the Ungodly,” p. 203). With qualification, Loubser prefers the term “quality” rather than “virtue”: “A virtue gives the impression of something objective to be achieved. With quality I intend it as an expression of the gift of love” (Loubser, “Ethic of the Free,” p. 636).

³⁶See Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, p. 67.

³⁷Cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:1–11.

passions and desires [παθήμασιν and ἐπιθυμίαις]” (5:24).³⁸ The Christian through the Law has died to the Law so that he might live to God (2:19). In a moving passage, Paul proclaimed, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (2:20).³⁹ The believer is not to continue sinning as if Christ (with whom he or she is united) is the minister or promoter of sin (2:17).⁴⁰ Paul countered such a notion with his characteristic interjection: “Certainly not!” (Gal 2:17; cf. Rom 6:1–20).

THE SPIRIT AND LOVE

According to the Epistle to the Galatians, the Spirit not only indwells and empowers the individual believer, but he also transforms the believing community.⁴¹ The Galatians had been previously “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world” (Gal 4:3) and enslaved by “those that by nature are not gods” (4:8). Yet coercing Gentiles to live like Jews (under the Law) is “not in step with the truth of the gospel” (2:14).

The Christian stands in true freedom, and this freedom becomes a primary theme of the letter.⁴² “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Gal 5:1).⁴³ As G. M. H. Loubser paraphrases this text, “Christ set us free

³⁸On the “passions” in Pauline ethics, see David Charles Aune, “Passions in the Pauline Epistles: The Current State of Research,” in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 221–37.

³⁹See Lambrecht, “Transgressor by Nullifying God’s Grace,” pp. 217–36. According to Bryant, “The crucified Christ is a central and persistent theme throughout Galatians” (Robert A. Bryant, *The Risen Crucified Christ in Galatians*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 185 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), p. 192).

⁴⁰See J. Lambrecht, “Transgressor by Nullifying God’s Grace: A Study of Gal 2, 18–21,” *Biblica* 72 (1991): 217–36. “The sequence of thought from 2:16 to 2:19–20 shows that the juridical language of justification leads naturally to the participatory language of union with Christ” (Vincent M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia: Paul’s Response to Jewish-Christian Separatism and the Threat of Galatian Apostasy* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998], p. 217).

⁴¹Based upon his interpretation of Gal 4:19, Freed comments: “Christ is not to be formed just in individual lives, one at a time, but in the brotherhood as a whole” (Edwin D. Freed, *The Morality of Paul’s Converts* [London: Equinox, 2005], p. 241). See also Lewis, *Looking for Life*, p. 182, n. 219.

⁴²See Gordon D. Fee, “Freedom and the Life of Obedience (Galatians 5:1–6:18),” *Review and Expositor* 91 (Spring 1994): 201–17; G. M. H. Loubser, “The Contrast Slavery/Freedom as Persuasive Device in Galatians,” *Neotestamentica* 28 (1994): 163–76. Tolmie traces three central theological concepts that dominate Galatians: spiritual liberty, love, and the Spirit (“Liberty,” pp. 240–87).

⁴³Lategan highlights “the inclusive first person” which “sets the tone” for the paraenesis of Galatians (“Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethics,” p. 322). Barrett believes that sacral manumission may form the background to this Pauline

with the intention that we exercise our freedom.”⁴⁴ Based upon this truth, Paul exhorted his readers to “stand firm” and not to submit again to a yoke of slavery (5:1).⁴⁵ Christ has graciously freed us from the law through his work of the Gospel. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (3:13).⁴⁶

Believers have been called to freedom (“freedom is a vocation,” it is both “*Gabe und Aufgabe*” [gift and mission]).⁴⁷ Yet they are not to use this “freedom” as an opportunistic excuse for “the flesh” (Gal 5:13).⁴⁸ Instead, believers (who have been placed into new community by the Holy Spirit) are to serve one another in love (5:13).⁴⁹ “Freedom is oriented toward love,” writes Lionel Windsor. So that “what Christians are saved *to* is given priority in ethical decision-making over what they have been saved *from*.”⁵⁰ “Freedom” is the liberty to do as one

metaphor of freedom (*Freedom and Obligation*, p. 55). By contrast, Styler maintains that the apostle may perhaps draw upon “various aspects of sacral manumission,” but a background in the Hebrew Scriptures is sufficient to explain the metaphors: “God ‘redeems’ a people *for himself*” (“Basis of Obligation,” p. 180 [italics original]).

⁴⁴G. M. H. Loubser, “Paul’s Ethic of Freedom: No Flash in the Galatian Pan,” *Neotestamentica* 39 (2005): 323.

⁴⁵Lategan maintains that “two pivotal commands provide the framework for the series of loose ethical injunctions in the rest of the section. The first is the command to stand in the freedom that Christ has made possible (5:1); the second is the command to walk in the Spirit (5:25)” (“Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethics?” p. 321). The indicative/imperative sequence is clear in both verses.

⁴⁶Paul cites Deut 21:23 as evidence that everyone who is hanged on a tree is cursed.

⁴⁷Loubser, “Ethic of the Free,” pp. 618–19. Leon Morris quips that “freedom is of the essence of being Christian; it is the fundamental basis of all Christian living” (*Galatians: Paul’s Charter of Christian Freedom* [Leicester: InterVarsity, 1996], p. 164).

⁴⁸Furnish emphasizes that, for Paul, “redemption is not just deliverance from the hostile powers to which [the Christian] was formerly enslaved, but freedom *for* obedience to God” (Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], p. 226). Liberty may be lost to the chains of legalism, but it can also be lost by license, as one becomes the slave of his own lusts and passions (Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, p. 56). Wilson finds “an Exodus matrix of thought”, as the Galatians were “redeemed from Egyptian-like bondage” (*Curse of the Law*, p. 98; see also Todd A. Wilson, “Wilderness Apostasy and Paul’s Portrayal of the Crisis in Galatians,” *New Testament Studies* 50 [October 2004]: 550–71).

⁴⁹See Peter Mageto, “Toward an Ethic of Shared Responsibility in Galatians 5:13–15,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 30 (January 2006): 86–94; Tolmie, “Liberty,” pp. 241–55.

⁵⁰Lionel Windsor, “Indicative and Imperative in the Letters of Paul,” http://www.lionelwindsor.net/bibleresources/bible/new/Paul_indicative_imperative.htm (accessed June 12, 2011), p. 4. “This self-giving is paradoxical because it consists in the community’s exercise of freedom (5:13a) in the interests of others in such a way that ‘slavery’ is the result” (Hays, “Christology and Ethics in Galatians,” p. 283). Citing Peter Carman, Hays contrasts the Pauline and Stoic/Cynic understandings of freedom. The philosophers chose to relinquish privileges or possession “as a means to the *end* of gaining freedom through self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια).” “Paul, on the other hand, presupposes freedom as a gift already given through Christ, not as an end to be sought, and urges that freedom be employed as a *means* to serve others” (Hays, “Christology

ought, flowing from the freeing joy of loving internal motivation.⁵¹ In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but only “faith working through love” (5:6).

Thomas Schreiner quips, “love is the heart of Paul’s ethic.”⁵² Paul believed that the entire law was “fulfilled” in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal 5:14).⁵³ The verb πληρώω may mean (1) is fulfilled, (2) is summarized, (3) is brought to completion, or (4) is made perfect.⁵⁴ J. Louis Martyn concludes that due to “Christ’s powerful effect on the law,” it has “been brought to perfected completion by Christ,” and “love is the completion of the law.”⁵⁵ This ethic of

and Ethics in Galatians,” p. 286, n. 45).

⁵¹See Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, pp. 62, 67. Galatians thus describes “a theology of freedom, expressed in recognized and enacted obligation” (p. 32).

⁵²Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), p. 146; cf. p. 159.

⁵³The source of the citation is Lev 19:18, a verse that seems to have been rarely quoted in contemporary Judaism (see Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], p. 383). Graham Shaw calls Gal 5:14 “the most unexpected development of Paul’s thought in this letter” (*The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], p. 50). But similar Pauline sentiments occur elsewhere: “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8). “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10). See Thomas R. Schreiner, “Sermon: Loving One Another Fulfills the Law, Romans 13:8–10,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11 (Fall 2007): pp. 104–9. The New Testament emphasis on the “love command” cuts across the various corpora: Matt 22:37–39; John 13:34–35; Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8; 1 John 2:7–11. Dunn surmises that Paul probably knew and alluded to Jesus tradition in this matter (James D. G. Dunn, “The Law of Faith, ‘the Law of the Spirit’ and ‘the Law of Christ,’” in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., and Jerry L. Sumney [Nashville: Abingdon, 1996], p. 79). See also Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), pp. 59–65; Westerholm, “On Fulfilling the Whole Law (Gal 5.14),” *Svensk exegetisk årsbok* 51–52 (1986–1987): 229–37; D. Moody Smith, “The Love Command: John and Paul?” in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), pp. 207–17.

⁵⁴J. Louis Martyn, “The Crucial Event in the History of the Law (Gal 5:14),” in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr., and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), pp. 55–57.

⁵⁵Martyn, “Crucial Event,” pp. 59–61. See also 2 Cor 3:7–14; Eph 2:15; Col 2:14. Graham Stanton highlights the different verbs in “keeping the whole law” in 5:3 and “fulfilling the whole law” in 5:24 (Graham Stanton, “What Is the Law of Christ?” *Ex Auditu* 17 [2001]: 55). Westerholm similarly contrasts “observing” the requirements of the law and “fulfilling” the “righteousness which the law is all about” (Stephen Westerholm, “Letter’ and ‘Spirit’: The Foundation of Pauline Ethics,” *New Testament Studies* 30 [April 1984]: 244). “Paul never speaks of the law’s fulfillment in prescribing Christian conduct, but only while describing its results” (Westerholm, “On Fulfilling the Whole Law,” p. 237). The same verb (πληρώω) is used in Rom 8:4, and a cognate is used in Gal 6:2. The concept of “fulfilling the law” is connected with walking according to the Spirit in Rom 8:4: “In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according

love allowed Paul to make a consequentialist appeal within a communal context: “But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another” (5:15).⁵⁶

For Paul, progressive sanctification was personal, but it was never purely individualistic.⁵⁷ Sanctification takes place within the context of the believing community, and congregations “are places where moral reflection, formulation, and action occur.”⁵⁸ In one sense, each individual believer is called upon to bear his own load (Gal 6:5). But in another sense, the Galatians were to bear one another’s burdens (6:2). Commentators note the difference in vocabulary: Each believer bears his own individual φορτίον or “load” (6:5); but each is also to bear the βάρη or “burdens” of others (6:2).⁵⁹ Jan Lambrecht comments, “Mutual help evidently does not dispense one from personal responsibility; even with the help of others, every one still has to carry his own load.”⁶⁰ As believers share in this mutual burden-bearing, they fulfill

to the Spirit.” Therefore, living by the norm of self-giving love is tied to “walking by the Spirit” (see Gal 5:14, 16, 25). Wilson highlights an “eschatological nuance” in πληρώω (Wilson, *Curse of the Law*, pp. 107–12). Hans Hübner has differentiated between ὁλος ὁ νόμος in Gal 5:3 and ὁ πᾶς νόμος in 5:14 (Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought*, trans. J. C. G. Greig, ed. J. Riches [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984], pp. 38–40; Hans Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 2: *Die Theologie des Paulus* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993], pp. 103–5). But see James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Black, 1993), p. 290.

⁵⁶For an interesting discussion of Paul’s illustrative use of “the atrocious aggressiveness of predeceous animals,” see Schnabel, “How Paul Developed His Ethics,” p. 271.

⁵⁷Hays notes that Galatians was not written to “the Christian” (singular) but to the community (Hays, “Jesus’ Faith and Ours,” p. 259). See also Paul Hartog, “Work Out Your Salvation’: Conduct ‘Worthy of the Gospel’ in a Communal Context,” *Themelios* 33 (September 2008): 19–33.

⁵⁸David Frederickson, “Pauline Ethics: Congregations as Communities of Moral Deliberation,” in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998], p. 115. As Bovon, Rordorf, and de Pury explain, “Paul ne se contente donc pas d’affirmer la réalité, il veut aussi aider les croyants auxquels il s’adresse à vivre communautairement de cette liberté” (François Bovon, Bernard Rordorf, and Cécile de Pury, “Loi et Liberté: Ga 5, 1–6, 10,” in *Chrétiens en Conflit: L’Épître de Paul aux Galates*, Essais Bibliques 13 [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1987], p. 129). On the community’s role in Paul’s theology of sanctification, see James M. Howard, *Paul, the Community, and Progressive Sanctification: An Exploration into Community-Based Transformation within Pauline Theology*, Studies in Biblical Literature 90 (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁵⁹Lambrecht, for example, maintains that βάρος in the context refers to “the heavy cost” of restoring a transgressor, but it may refer to other difficult struggles and pressures as well. On the other hand, φορτίον refers to “everyday worries” (Jan Lambrecht, “Paul’s Coherent Admonition in Galatians 6,1–6: Mutual Help and Individual Attentiveness,” *Biblica* 78 [1997]: 52, 56). Lambrecht’s distinction is not always clear on pages 52–56.

⁶⁰Lambrecht, “Paul’s Coherent Admonition,” p. 54.

“the law of Christ” (6:2).⁶¹ Light is shed upon Galatians 6:2 by comparing it with 5:14. “To fulfill the law of Christ is to bear one another’s burdens, which is a particular example of loving the neighbor, which fulfills the law.”⁶²

In this text, Paul appears to allude to the norm of Spirit-produced, self-giving love found in the love command (cf. Gal 5:6, 14, 22). This norm of self-giving love is ultimately exemplified in the Son of God, “who loved me and gave himself for me” (2:20).⁶³ “Therefore,” according to G. Walter Hansen, “it must be insisted that for Paul, Christ

⁶¹The “law of Christ” is an “extremely baffling” and “much puzzled over” term (In-Gyu Hong, *The Law in Galatians*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 81 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], p. 173; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], p. 123). The “law of Christ” has been interpreted as (1) Christ’s ethical teachings, (2) the love commandment, (3) Christ’s example of burden-bearing and/or self-sacrificial surrender, (4) the Law as determined or transformed and then fulfilled by Christ, (5) Christ’s power within believers enabling them to fulfill the Law’s intent, and (6) some combination of the above (see Charles H. Talbert, “Freedom and Law in Galatians,” *Ex auditu* 11 [1995]: 24). Talbert himself concludes that “some combination of these suggestions is the most probable explanation” for Paul’s use of “the law of Christ” and “the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus” (Talbert, “Freedom and Law in Galatians,” 24; cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], p. 261). The secondary literature on “the law of Christ” is immense. For example, see E. E. Bammel, “Νόμος Χριστοῦ,” in *Studia Evangelica*, vol. 3, ed. F. L. Cross, Texte und Untersuchungen 88 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), pp. 120–28; C. H. Dodd, “Ἐννομος Χριστοῦ,” in *More New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), pp. 134–48; Donald Allen Stoike, “The Law of Christ: A Study of Paul’s Use of the Expression in Galatians 6:2,” Th.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1971); Heinz Schürmann, “Das Gesetz des Christus’ (Gal 6,2): Jesu Verhalten und Wort als letztgültige sittliche Norm nach Paulus,” in *Neues Testament Und Kirche*, ed. Joachim Gnilka (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), pp. 282–300; John G. Strelan, “Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ: A Re-examination of Galatians 6:2,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (June 1975): 266–76; E. M. Young, “Fulfill the Law of Christ’: An Examination of Galatians 6:2,” *Studia biblica et theologica* 7 (October 1977): 31–42; Stanton, “What Is the Law?” pp. 47–59; Dunn, “The Law of Faith,” pp. 62–82; Leander Keck, “The Law and ‘The Law of Sin and Death’ (Rom. 8:1–4): Reflections on the Spirit and Ethics in Paul,” in *The Divine Helmsman*, ed. J. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel (New York: Ktav, 1980), pp. 41–57; Michael Winger, “The Law of Christ,” *New Testament Studies* 46 (October 2000): 537–46; Todd A. Wilson, “The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on a Recent Trend in Interpretation,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 5 (October 2006): 123–44; Femi Adeyemi, “The New Covenant and the Law of Christ,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (October–December 2006): 438–52. The necessary space is not available here to argue for a personal view of “the law of Christ.” Suffice it to say that “the law of Christ” could be understood as “Christ’s cruciform pattern of self-giving love for others” (Lewis, *Looking for Life*, p. 188), as summated in Jesus’ explanation of the “dual command of love” (and “new commandment”), as exemplified in Jesus’ own self-sacrifice in the Gospel, and now as lived out through believers who are united with the risen Christ by the Holy Spirit of the new creation.

⁶²Dunn, “The Law of Faith,” p. 76.

⁶³See Gerhard Sauter, “‘Leiden’ und ‘Handeln,’” *Evangelische Theologie* 45 (September–October 1985): 435–58.

crucified is the law of Christ. It is his cross that sets the standard for self-giving, self-sacrificing love. It is his cross that is the supreme measure of love. Any definition of the law of Christ that loses sight of the cross loses the center of Paul's ethics."⁶⁴ Thus, Pauline ethics may truly be described as "Gospel-centered" ethics. "The loving community, which is the focus of Paul's concern, finds its moral imperative in the story of the cross," writes Hays. "The community as a whole is given a task of burden-bearing which corresponds to and at the same time fulfills the life-pattern of Jesus Christ as portrayed in Paul's kerygmatic formulations."⁶⁵

"Christology and ethics are inseparable," insists Graham Stanton.⁶⁶ And Victor Furnish explains, "Christ's love is both a gift and a claim, a benefit to receive and a power to display."⁶⁷ This norm of love does not negate the necessity for more specific moral imperatives, as Galatians 5:13–6:10 demonstrates (cf. also the "love command" [Rom 13:10] within the wider context of Rom 12:1–13:14).⁶⁸ There is "no fundamental dichotomy in Paul's mind between the 'internal' impulse of the Spirit and 'external' moral instruction," comments John Barclay. And "when Paul talks of freedom from the slavery of the law, he obviously does not mean freedom from 'external' commands altogether."⁶⁹

⁶⁴Hansen, "Paul's Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom," p. 232.

⁶⁵Hays, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians," p. 290. Hays concludes that "the law of Christ" is "a formulation coined (or employed) by Paul to refer to this paradigmatic self-giving of Jesus Christ," "the structure of existence embodied paradigmatically in Jesus Christ" ("Christology and Ethics in Galatians," p. 275). Thus, the cross as the "sacrificial self-surrender of the Son of God defines the ethical norm for those who live 'in' him" (Hays, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians," p. 288). Horrell concurs with this conclusion (David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* [London: T & T Clark, 2005], pp. 222–31). A concern for others is also tied to "the law of Christ" in the larger context surrounding 1 Cor 9:21 (and clearly differentiated from the Mosaic Law in 1 Cor 9:20–21). In this Corinthian text, Paul refers to being *ἐννομος Χριστοῦ* rather than *ὑπὸ νόμον Χριστοῦ* (see McClain, *Law and Grace*, pp. 79–80). Hays further points to "the law of faith" in Rom 3:27 and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" in Rom 8:2. It seems, however, that Hays has divorced Christ's precept of self-giving love for neighbor from the example of the self-giving Christ (contrast Lambrecht, "Paul's Coherent Admonition," p. 55). Furthermore, Hays's article seems to gloss over the possible relationship between Gal 5:14 and 6:2 on pp. 274–75.

⁶⁶Stanton, "What Is the Law?" p. 52.

⁶⁷Victor P. Furnish, "Belonging to Christ: A Paradigm for Ethics in First Corinthians," *Interpretation* 44 (April 1990): 153.

⁶⁸Deidun states, "But if love goes *beyond* calculable obligation, it does not go *around*" (*New Covenant*, p. 171). See Wolfgang Schrage, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments*, Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 180–85; Schreiner, *Law and Its Fulfillment*, pp. 147–49. Wilson summarizes the recent, widespread consensus concerning Gal 5:13–6:10: "Most scholars now agree that 5.13–6.10 is both *integral* to the letter and, at least to some extent, *relevant* to the situation" (*Curse of the Law*, p. 2; cf. 9). The passage is by no means a *Fremdkörper* within the letter.

⁶⁹Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 229; Deidun differentiates between external

Paul freely used such obligatory vocabulary as ἀνάγκη, ὀφείλει, δεῖ, and κανὼν (Gal 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 11:10; Romans 13:5–8).⁷⁰ Second Thessalonians 3:6 warns against everyone who walks “not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.” Frank Thielman believes such texts refer to “a defined body of moral teaching which Paul took from church to church” and which he expected the believers to “know well.” Thus, “the traditional moral teaching of the church” which Paul handed down “remained necessary.”⁷¹

THE SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVING COMMUNITY

Paul’s communitarian ethic engendered a concern for lapsed brothers and sisters. Spiritual members were to restore those caught in transgression, in a spirit of gentleness. Mature believers were to guard themselves throughout the restoration process, lest they too were tempted (Gal 6:1).⁷² “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (6:3). Lambrecht writes, “If one thinks himself somebody without recognizing that all he is and possesses comes from God, i.e., if one thinks of himself as if he were not created and not a forgiven sinner, if one considers something as if it were not a gift (cf. 1 Cor 3,18–21 and 4,7), then he really deceives himself.”⁷³

Moreover, Paul’s communitarian ethic was also expressed in economic terms. The one who is taught in the word must “share all good things with the one who teaches” (Gal 6:6).⁷⁴ Paul continued by stating a general precept in Galatians 6:10: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”⁷⁵ The context strongly implies that “doing good”

obligation (still present) and external constraint (no longer necessary) in life in the Spirit. “External compulsion has been replaced by a *motus ab intrinseco*” (Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, p. 189; cf. 188–217, 251–58). “Freedom is real freedom, and any attempt to restrict it must be firmly refuted. But obligation is real obligation too, and there must be no attempt to evade it” (Barrett, *Freedom and Obligation*, p. 70).

⁷⁰See C. F. D. Moule, “Obligation in the Ethic of Paul,” in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 389–406; Schnabel, “How Paul Developed His Ethics,” p. 294; Thielman, “Law and Liberty,” p. 67. Cf. the far-reaching paraenesis in Col 3:1–4:6; 1 Thess 4:1–5:22.

⁷¹Thielman, “Law and Liberty,” pp. 68, 72.

⁷²See Lambrecht, “Paul’s Coherent Admonition,” pp. 33–56.

⁷³Ibid., p. 46.

⁷⁴Most commentators agree that the verb κοινωνέω carries monetary overtones in this verse. See the long discussion in J. Hainz, *Koinonia. “Kirche” als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus*, Biblische Untersuchungen 16 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982), pp. 62–89.

⁷⁵Although many religious ethicists today speak of a general “preferential option for the poor,” Paul would seemingly emphasize a “preferential option for poor believers.”

includes financial assistance.⁷⁶

Sandwiched in between these two verses (Gal 6:6 and 6:10) is a passage concerning reaping and sowing (6:7–9). Paul began with a principle: “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (6:7).⁷⁷ One may either sow to “the flesh” or sow to “the Spirit.”⁷⁸ The former leads to “corruption,” but the latter leads to “eternal life” from the Spirit (6:8).⁷⁹

Lambrecht proclaims, “God is the master of the eschatological harvest.”⁸⁰ But “eternal life” is more than eschatological. “The gift of ‘eternal life,’” asserts Windsor, “is not just a promise of immortality but the creation of a new person with re-oriented purposes.”⁸¹ Paul concluded with an encouragement: “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (6:9).

Some have based a “non-meritorious” interpretation of Galatians 6:7–9 upon the immediate context alone: Paul stressed sharing materially with the congregation’s faithful teachers in Galatians 6:6, and he summoned help for the less fortunate, especially those who were believers, in 6:10.⁸² Since Galatians 6:7–9 appears between these two

⁷⁶See Mark 14:7; 1 Tim 6:18–19; Heb 13:16; Pol. *Phil.* 10.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Rich Man* 33; *Paed.* 3.7. See also Herm. *Vis.* 17.2–6; Herm. *Mand.* 27.4.

⁷⁷The concept of not allowing oneself to be deceived is a fairly common Pauline injunction (see Gal 6:3, 7; 1 Cor 3:18; 6:9; 15:33). For examples of the agricultural motif of sowing and reaping in Greek and Latin literature, see Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 164, n. 63.

⁷⁸Since the original Greek did not differentiate proper pronouns by means of capitalization, some have maintained that Gal 6:8 refers to sowing to “the spirit” rather than “the [Holy] Spirit” (J. C. O’Neill, “The Holy Spirit and the Human Spirit in Galatians [Gal 5, 17],” *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses* 71 [1995]: 107–20). The discussion of “the Spirit” in Gal 5:17, however, leads into the “fruit of the Spirit” (clearly a reference to the Holy Spirit) in 5:19–23.

⁷⁹One should not assume that the believer stands neutrally between flesh and Spirit and merely chooses between two equally valid options. “Paul’s central theology of participation requires that human agency is reconceived without being abandoned, the self not merely relocated but reconstituted by its absorption within the *non-coercive power of grace*” (John M. G. Barclay, “By the Grace of God I Am what I Am’: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul,” p. 18 (italics original), <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/divinity/Gathercole/paper-barclay.htm> [accessed June 12, 2011]). For a lengthier discussion, see John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, Library of New Testament Studies 335 (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

⁸⁰Lambrecht, “Paul’s Coherent Admonition,” p. 56.

⁸¹Windsor, “Indicative and Imperative,” p. 4.

⁸²Donald K. Campbell, “Galatians,” in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), p. 610. See also the contextual emphasis in James Montgomery Boice, “Galatians,” in vol. 10 of the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 504; Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (1953 reprint ed.; Westwood: Revell), pp. 550–54. “The words ‘share in all good things’ (Gal. 6.6) indicate that persons being instructed were expected to give their instructions some form of pay. Whether ‘all good things were in

verses, Paul simply meant that those who “sow” (spending material wealth) to the flesh (for selfish desires) will only reap corruption, because one is sowing toward temporary and transitory causes. But as one “sows” (spending material wealth) in the Spirit, she or he will reap “life everlasting” (a lasting spiritual harvest).⁸³ In another context of Christian giving (concerning the collection for Jerusalem saints), Paul similarly employed the metaphor of sowing and reaping: “The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Cor 9:6; cf. 9:10).

A fuller approach, however, would emphasize the wider context of the Galatian epistle as a whole, as well as other Pauline texts. Those who have *already* received the empowering Spirit (Gal 3:2–5) have *already* received the guarantee of the inheritance as sons (4:6–7).⁸⁴ An indicative-imperative hinge occurs at Galatians 5:25: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”⁸⁵ Such individuals sow to the Spirit (6:8) and, in turn, reap “eternal life” (6:8–9). Romans 6:20–23 provides an important parallel: “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁸⁶

Both Galatians 6 and Romans 6 contrast a life of the flesh with a life of the Spirit. “The choice of sowing to Spirit or to flesh is the choice of a person’s basic direction in life.”⁸⁷ The former leads to death, and the latter leads to eternal life. Nevertheless, Paul deliberately

the form of physical goods or monetary assistance, we do not know” (Freed, *Morality*, p. 248).

⁸³Cf. the teachings of Jesus in Matt 6:19–24. The development of the argument from verse 7 through verse 9 implies that the reaping of “life everlasting” pertains to the sower himself (not to spiritual benefits in others, as some have argued).

⁸⁴“In all cases, the logical sequence (whatever its grammatical expression) places divine grace anterior to human action, and affirms the continuation of that grace in human activity. But in no case does the human actor becomes [*sic*] passive or inactive in the face of divine grace, but is rather energized by that grace to action” (Barclay, “By the Grace of God,” p. 15).

⁸⁵Furnish declared that “no interpretation of the Pauline ethic can be judged successful which does not grapple with the problem of indicative and imperative in Paul’s thought” (Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, p. 4). Cf. the earlier indicative-imperative hinge in Gal 5:1. Another important example occurs in Rom 6:2, 12; cf. Col 3:3–5. A communal use of the indicative-imperative relationship can be found in 1 Cor 5:7–8. *Ὁτι πνεύματι στοιχῶμεν* and *πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε*, see Loubser, “Paul’s Ethic of Freedom,” p. 326; Loubser, “Ethic of the Free,” pp. 625, 627; Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 155.

⁸⁶Cf. also Rom 8:13: “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

⁸⁷Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 165.

and carefully reserved the terminology of “wages” for death and uses “gift” for eternal life (cf. Rom 4:4–5).⁸⁸ Furthermore, the Galatians 6 passage comes upon the heels of a contrast between the “works of the flesh” (5:19–21) and the “fruit of the Spirit” (5:22–23).⁸⁹ The “works of the flesh” do not flow from the empowerment of the Spirit. The “fruit of the Spirit,” however, is the “the natural organic product of the Spirit.”⁹⁰ Paul returns to a notion of “fruit” in Romans 6:22: “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.” Romans describes not only the “fruit” of sanctification upon being “set free from sin” but also the “fruit” of a life still in bondage under sin (Rom 6:21). The “fruit” (natural out-flowing) of such a sin-enslaved life is “death” (7:5).

SUMMARY: THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL TRAITS OF GALATIANS’S ETHICS

Paul adamantly insisted that his teachings did not at all nullify the grace of God, but rather magnified God’s grace (Gal 2:21). Both the chronological and the logical foundation of Christian ethics is grace. God has taken the initiative of grace in his unmerited favor centered in Jesus Christ, whose person and work is proclaimed in the Gospel. “Ethical behaviour, then, is a consequence, not the cause, of the newness of the believer’s being,” declares Michael Parsons, since “it is an appropriation of what has already been assigned in the work of the Lord and of the Spirit.”⁹¹

The gracious initiative of grace is elegantly described in a turn of phrase in Galatians 4:8. The Galatians had “come to know God,” but behind this human response was God’s own gracious initiative: they had actually come “to be known by God.” Paul uses this truth, which he accepts as an ontological given, as the basis of paraenetic instruction expressed through inquiry: “How can you turn back again to the weak

⁸⁸“Of merit there is no talk at all: the statement is set in the context of the whole argument of the letter. The life of well-doing is a receiving from grace of that which God wills to give” (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], p. 220).

⁸⁹“Il est significatif que pour décrire cette impulsion, Paul ne parle pas des <<œuvres>> mais du <<fruit>> (au singulier) de l’Esprit” (Bovon, Rordorf, and de Pury, “Loi et Liberté,” 137). “The ‘fruit’ is not the product of the Christian’s labouring, but the effect of *another’s* activity. The Christian receives it as *gift*” (Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul*, p. 81; italics original). But see Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, pp. 119–20.

⁹⁰Theodor Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1907), p. 266; as translated and quoted in Brawley, “Meta-Ethics and the Role of Works,” p. 157.

⁹¹Michael Parsons, “Being Precedes Act: Indicative and Imperative in Paul’s Writing,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (April 1988): 110.

and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?" (Gal 4:9). "The starting point for Paul's ethics then is not a human work," insists William Longworth. "It begins with God's initiative, the gift of the terms for a new relationship with God."⁹²

What is the "inner connection" between the indicatives of grace and the imperatives of responsibility in Galatians, between theology and ethics, between kerygma and didache, between justification by faith and the admonitions of morality?⁹³ Albert Schweitzer, for example, claimed that "there is no logical route from the righteousness by faith to a theory of ethics."⁹⁴ Nevertheless, there is a direct and dynamic connection available within the Galatian letter. Being justified is "the presupposition, source, basis of conviction, and power for action."⁹⁵ And the Spirit is the living link between justification and Christian ethics, as is evidenced through theological corollaries, enabling power, internal motivation, and communal context.⁹⁶ The Spirit is the continuation of God's work in the believer (indicative) as well as the empowerment to fulfill divine injunctions (imperative).⁹⁷ The Spirit is both God's guaranteed presence and God's enabling power in the believer. Hans Dieter Betz disparaged Paul's "almost naïve confidence in the 'Spirit.'"⁹⁸ Perhaps, however, much of one's perspective relates to one's assessment of the reality, personality, and efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

First, God not only justifies and forgives, but he also, through his Spirit, regenerates and unites the believer to the crucified and risen Savior (Gal 2:19–21). Justification, although absolutely essential and

⁹²Longworth, "Ethics in Paul," p. 40.

⁹³See the discussion in Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in the Writings of Paul," in *The Old and New Man*, trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), pp. 7–32; Hays, "Christology and Ethics in Galatians," p. 269; Windsor, "Indicative and Imperative," pp. 2–3. For specific discussions of the indicative-imperative dialectic, see also William D. Dennison, "Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics," *Calvin Theological Journal* 14 (April 1979): 55–78; H. Windisch, "Das Problem des paulinischen Imperativs," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 23 (1924): 265–81; Parsons, "Being Precedes Act," pp. 99–127; Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, pp. 239–43.

⁹⁴Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. W. Montgomery, 2nd ed. (London: Black, 1953), p. 225. See also John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950), pp. 142–58; Keck, "Justification of the Ungodly," pp. 199–206.

⁹⁵Brawley, "Identity and Metaethics," p. 108. "Paul's ethics is solidly founded on his theology, and, in Galatians, specifically on his soteriology" (Loubser, "Ethic of the Free," p. 617).

⁹⁶Deidun maintains that the ultimate ground of the imperative in the Pauline epistles is the indwelling Spirit (Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, p. 55).

⁹⁷Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 227.

⁹⁸Betz, "Spirit, Freedom and Law," p. 159.

foundational, is not the entirety of soteriology. That is, salvation is not only forensic or juridical, but also relational and participatory.⁹⁹ Salvation is a word of acquittal (justification) but also a word of adoption and new creation (Gal 3:26; 4:6–7; 6:15).¹⁰⁰

Because Christ himself renovated, enriched, and transformed the content of ethical obligation, and because the believer is “in Christ,” then “in our incorporation into Christ we are brought close to the very basis on which obligation rests.”¹⁰¹ G. M. Styler explains, “[Jesus Christ] confronts us with human obligation in its ultimate form; and does so not just by the legacy or teaching or insights that he has bequeathed, not just because of the life that he lived and its consequences; but because of the life that he lives, which is ours to live also.”¹⁰² Thus, affirms Windsor, “believers are governed by their new order of *being in* Christ and *belonging to* him, which leads to a life of service to others.”¹⁰³

Second, the Spirit internally empowers the believer to do what is right, something the Law could not do (Gal 5:22–23).¹⁰⁴ Christians are not only forgiven sinners, but also enabled sons.¹⁰⁵ They have received the Spirit of adoption, and they should walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and be guided by the Spirit. Moreover, they should manifest the fruit of the Spirit. Loubser proclaims, “Everything changed radically in the advent of Christ and his Spirit,” so that “ethics could never again be viewed other than as a life in the paradigm of Christ made possible in individual believers through his Spirit.”¹⁰⁶ In Christ and through his

⁹⁹Cf. the transition from righteousness/faith to participationist language in Phil 3:9–12. Cf. Otto Merk, *Handeln aus Glauben: Die Motivierungen der paulinischen Ethik* (Marburg: Elwert, 1968); Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, pp. 112–206; Barclay, *Obedying the Truth*, p. 224.

¹⁰⁰Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, pp. 151–53; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 87 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), p. 236. For a description of re-creation as a telic re-ordering of fallen creation guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ leading to a re-orientation of ethics in the present, see Oliver O’Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Leicester: Apollos, 1994).

¹⁰¹Styler, “Basis of Obligation,” p. 184. “The life we are to live is not just the life to which Christ points; it is the life of Christ himself” (*ibid.*, p. 186).

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁰³Windsor, “Indicative and Imperative,” p. 5; italics original.

¹⁰⁴According to Peter Denton, divine enablement acts as “an *implicit* motive for the ethical agent” (Peter Tedford Denton, “No Longer a Slave but a Son’: A Model for Pauline Ethics.” Ph.D. dissertation [Durham, NC: Duke University, 1991], p. 267; italics original). See also Lategan, “Is Paul Developing a Specifically Christian Ethics?” p. 326.

¹⁰⁵This is the theme of Denton, “No Longer a Slave.”

¹⁰⁶Loubser, “Ethics in the New Creation,” p. 349; see also Loubser, “Paul’s Ethic of Freedom,” p. 315; Loubser, “Ethic of the Free,” p. 16. For Paul, “Christ living in me” and “the Spirit indwelling the believer” are “two ways of talking about the same

Spirit, “The believer has been set free from the entire present evil age dominated by flesh and all the elements it employs to enslave man.”¹⁰⁷ While the Law “could only present objective moral standards,” the Spirit produces “subjective moral transformation.”¹⁰⁸

Third, the Spirit produces love in the believer’s heart as an internal motivation (Gal 5:13–14, 22–23).¹⁰⁹ The ethics of Galatians emphasizes not only *what* one should do but also *how* one is empowered and motivated to act.¹¹⁰ The Spirit dynamically enables those who are justified by faith in Christ and engenders the motivation of gratitude and love within them.¹¹¹ James Dunn notes that “the source of motivation” (the Spirit of Christ in Galatians 4:6; 5:25) and “the norm of behavior” (“the law of Christ” in 6:2) are both “distinctively Christian.”¹¹² In Romans 5, God demonstrated his love in the gift of Christ (5:8) who died for the ungodly (5:6). Now, in turn, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (5:5).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God’s Son (Gal 4:6) and was given not merely to empower but “for participation in the life of Christ.”¹¹³ “Christian ethics is not characteristically Christian because of its ethical rulings,” argues Loubser, “but because of its pneumatological-soteriological foundation and way of operating.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, the ethics of Galatians is a “christological-pneumatological ethic of freedom.”¹¹⁵

One might presume that a strong doctrine of the justification of the ungodly by faith would destroy ethical living.¹¹⁶ Evidently, some of

experiential reality,” as demonstrated by Rom 8:9–10 (Talbert, “Freedom and Law in Galatians,” p. 24).

¹⁰⁷Loubser, “Ethics in the New Creation,” p. 348.

¹⁰⁸Hansen, “Paul’s Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom,” p. 225.

¹⁰⁹According to Denton, Pauline obedience from the heart is inward, genuine, willing, and comprehending (Denton, “No Longer a Slave,” p. 273). For Paul, this internal compulsion does not negate other motivations, such as an eschatological motivation (Gal 6:8–10).

¹¹⁰Cf. 1 Thess 4:7–9. See also Herman Ridderbos, “Life Through the Spirit,” in *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 214–23.

¹¹¹Cf. Phil 2:13.

¹¹²Dunn, *Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 316.

¹¹³Hansen, “Paul’s Conversion and His Ethic of Freedom,” p. 225.

¹¹⁴Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” *Neotestamentica* 43 (2009): 354 (abstract).

¹¹⁵Loubser, “Ethic of the Free,” p. 638; cf. Talbert, “Freedom and Law in Galatians,” p. 26.

¹¹⁶See Keck, “Justification of the Ungodly and Ethics,” p. 199.

Paul's opponents argued this very point (see Rom 3:8; 4:5; 6:1, 15).¹¹⁷ Yet the one rightly related to God (justified by faith) is united to Christ and dynamically empowered by the Spirit, resulting in an increasing practical holiness as the believer walks in the Spirit and is led by the Spirit. In Paul's own life, his transformed relationship with God through Christ led to radical changes in his own personal behavior. In sum, "He stopped destroying the church and began to proclaim the good news of God's Son."¹¹⁸

Fourth, the Spirit places the believer into the body of Christ (Gal 3:27–28), which becomes the context of communal ethics.¹¹⁹ Therefore, as Loubser declares, "Paul places profound emphasis on the community of faith corporately and harmoniously acting in accordance with the Spirit (Gal 5:26–6:10)."¹²⁰ Paul was concerned with the possible destruction of community life (5:15).¹²¹ He condemned harmful habits that subvert community life, such as enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, and envy (5:19–21). "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other" (5:26).¹²² Instead, the Galatians were to serve one another in love, based upon the injunction, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (5:13–14). Such love was not only commanded, it was also Spirit-produced, along with kindness, goodness, and gentleness (5:22–23). Community-building responsibilities include restoration, burden-bearing, and mutual assistance (6:1–10). "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (6:2). "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (6:10).

¹¹⁷Some have argued that Romans may be, in part, a response to misrepresentations that arose from Paul's strong language in Galatians concerning law and grace (see Ulrich Wilckens, "Über Abfassungszweck, und Aufbau des Römerbriefs" in *Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien* [Neukirchen: Neukirchen Verlag, 1974], pp. 142–43).

¹¹⁸Brawley, "Identity and Metaethics," p. 118; see Gal 2:13–24. "But his encounter with the grace of God was emphatically not...a further refinement to the righteousness he found in the law, but a total re-evaluation of all his norms, an act of God which undercut what he had previously held to be the definition of piety" (Barclay, "By the Grace of God," p. 11).

¹¹⁹Just how easily this communal context can be omitted is evidenced by Styler, "Basis of Obligation," p. 183, n. 22.

¹²⁰Loubser, "Paul's Ethic of Freedom," p. 326.

¹²¹This communal concern was also connected to the Gospel itself. "The vital question is thus whether an action builds up the community or destroys it, shows love toward the brother for whom Christ died or does him harm (Rom 14.13–23; 1 Cor 8.7–13; 9.19–23)" (Hooker, "Interchange in Christ and Ethics," p. 13); cf. Hartog, "Work Out Your Salvation," pp. 19–33.

¹²²Hays notes that the vice and virtue lists of Gal 5:16–24 "are bracketed by clear admonitions against division within the church in 5:13–15 and 5:25–6:5." This is one of the ways in which Paul's paraenesis "differs most significantly" from the Hellenistic parallels gathered by Betz (see Hays, "Jesus' Faith and Ours," pp. 259–60).

How, then, is the ethics of Galatians grounded in Paul's theology? The work of the Holy Spirit unites justification and sanctification. Faith in Christ brings not only "freedom" but also the dynamic ministry of the Spirit, who internally motivates and radically empowers a grace-initiated and community-oriented ethic of loving service.¹²³

¹²³A version of this material was first prepared for a Th.M. in Ethics thesis from St. Andrew's Theological College (2008). I wish to thank Professors Doug Brown and Rodney Decker for their critical suggestions.