

Galatians 5:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Analysis

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. The contrast between Spirit-leading and law-obligation. "But if ye be led of the Spirit" (ei de pneumatisthe, εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε)—if you're led/guided by the Spirit. Present passive: continually being led. Agō (ἄγω) means to lead, guide, bring. The Spirit actively directs believers' lives. This is relational guidance, not external compulsion—intimate leading by indwelling Person.

"Ye are not under the law" (ouk este hypo nomon, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον)—you're not under law's jurisdiction, authority, condemnation, or obligation as way of life. This doesn't mean lawlessness but freedom from law as operating principle. Spirit-led living fulfills law's moral intent (5:14) without being enslaved to law. The Spirit writes God's will on hearts (Jeremiah 31:33, 2 Corinthians 3:3), producing from within what law commanded from without. This is new covenant reality: internal divine enablement replacing external legal demand.

Historical Context

This verse encapsulates new covenant transformation. Old covenant: external law requiring obedience, producing guilt when failed. New covenant: internal Spirit producing obedience, creating desire for holiness. Believers aren't antinomian (lawless) but supernatural law-keepers through the Spirit. This challenges both legalists (who can't conceive of morality without legal coercion) and liberals (who reject moral absolutes). Paul presents third way: objective morality (God's

unchanging will) subjectively internalized and empowered by the Spirit. Freedom from law doesn't mean freedom to sin but freedom to obey joyfully.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you experience the Spirit's leading in daily decisions, relationships, and moral choices?
2. What's the practical difference between being 'under law' and being 'led by the Spirit'?
3. In what areas are you still relating to God primarily through law rather than through Spirit-leading?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	πνεύματι	ἄγεσθε	οὐκ	ἐστὲ	ὑπὸ	νόμον
if	But	of the Spirit	ye be led	not	ye are	under	the law
G1487	G1161	G4151	G71	G3756	G2075	G5259	G3551

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:14 (Spirit): For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Galatians 5:25 (Spirit): If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Proverbs 8:20 (Parallel theme): I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Ezekiel 36:27 (Spirit): And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Romans 7:4 (Word): Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

John 16:13 (Spirit): Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Galatians 5:16 (Spirit): This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org