

Galatians 6:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Analysis

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. Paul exposes further hypocrisy. "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law" (οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν)—for not even those being circumcised themselves keep the law. Present participle: those currently being circumcised or who are circumcised. They're inconsistent: demanding circumcision while not keeping Torah themselves. This is devastating exposure of hypocrisy.

"But desire to have you circumcised" (αλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι)—but they want you to be circumcised. "That they may glory in your flesh" (ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχήσωνται)—so they may boast in your flesh. They want to boast about their circumcised converts as trophies, proof of their influence and success. It's not about truth or the Galatians' spiritual welfare but about the Judaizers' pride and credentials. They want to glory in external religious achievements (flesh), not in the cross (verse 14).

Historical Context

Jesus condemned Pharisaic hypocrisy: demanding legal burdens they themselves didn't keep (Matthew 23:1-4). The Judaizers followed this pattern: insisting on

circumcision while themselves failing to keep Torah's entirety (which circumcision obligated, 5:3). Their motive was collecting converts to boast about—treating people as notches on religious belts. This mercenary, self-serving ministry contrasted with Paul's cross-centered, Christ-exalting ministry. False teachers throughout history have sought personal glory through their followers; true ministers seek Christ's glory. Test teachers by their motives: do they boast in converts or in Christ?

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Paul exposes the Judaizers' hypocrisy: they don't keep the law themselves but want to 'glory in your flesh'—are you treating converts as trophies for your ministry?
2. Why is boasting in disciples' conformity to your standards ('your flesh') rather than their growth in Christ a form of gospel betrayal?
3. When ministry leaders count numbers, baptisms, or external compliance as success metrics, are they glorying in flesh or Spirit?

Interlinear Text

οὐδὲ	γὰρ	οἱ	περιτέμνεσθαι	αὐτοὶ	νόμον			
neither	For	G3588	circumcised	they themselves	the law			
G3761	G1063		G4059		G846			G3551
φυλάσσουσιν	ἀλλὰ	θέλουσιν	ὑμᾶς	περιτέμνεσθαι	ἵνα	ἐν		
keep	but	desire	you	circumcised	that	in		
G5442	G235	G2309	G5209	G4059	G2443	G1722		
τῇ	ὑμετέρᾳ	σαρκὶ	καυχήσωνται					
G3588	your	flesh	they may glory					
	G5212	G4561	G2744					

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:3 (Parallel theme): For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

1 Corinthians 5:6 (Glory): Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

2 Peter 2:19 (Parallel theme): While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Matthew 23:15 (Parallel theme): Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:3 (Parallel theme): All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

2 Corinthians 11:18 (Glory): Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.