

## Inverted Parallel Structure in Galatians 5:13—6:5

On careful examination, an inverted parallel structure can be seen in Galatians **γ• 11@y** This will be considered from the outside first, working towards the centre.

### Context

To the Judaisers it is inconceivable that anyone who is not under the law can avoid apostasy. Paul answers by showing them that the opposite is the case: the liberty of the Spirit can give the power to live to a higher standard than the law is able to do. The law of Christ has a continuity with the Torah, yet is superior. Paul also appears to be concerned by a lack of Christian love amongst the Galatians.

#### A. The Law of Love

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**.  
 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: **"You shall love your neighbour as yourself"**

#### B. The opposite to the law of love

15 but if you **bite and devour one another** beware lest you be **consumed by one another**

*vv. **B/C** Obedience to the law of love is achieved by walking in the Spirit*

#### B'. The opposite to the law of love

26 Let us not become conceited, **provoking one another** **envying one another**

#### A'. The Law of Love

6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted**.  
 6:2 **Bear one another's burdens** and so **fulfill the law of Christ**.  
 [6:3-5 continues the idea]

### A. The Law of Love

*Similarities:* The law of Christ, which is the same as the law of love, has to do with loving one another and bearing their burdens. They are to be loved "as yourself" v. **γ** and "considering yourself" v. **•**

*Differences:* The first is a basic statement of the law, aligning it with liberty and contrasting it with the flesh. Paul needs to show that the liberty that they have does not lead to lawlessness, but instead to a higher standard of law keeping. He explains this by going through a series of contrasts, until **Ⓢ**ff where he can round off the argument by giving a critical area of application that highlights the difference between the systems of flesh and Spirit.

Paul's overall purpose is stated in v. **•**, to show that the Gospel of Christ does not lead to sinful behaviour, but on the contrary to a higher standard of behaviour than the law was ever able to enforce. This is in continuity with the law, as shown by the quote from Lev **Ⓢ/sn**

### B. The opposite to the law of love

*Similarities:* These verses each have two statements of behaviour antithetical to the law of love.

They function as a contrast to (C): what it means to walk in the Spirit.

*A & B The Law of Love and its opposite*

*C. Walk in the Spirit*

16 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit** and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

*D. War with the lusts of the flesh*

17 For the **flesh lusts** against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;  
and these are **contrary to one another**  
so that you do not do the things that you wish

*v B & A Power over the works of the flesh is in the Spirit, not the Law*

*D'. War with the lusts of the flesh*

24 And those who are Christ's have **crucified the flesh**  
with its **lusts and desires**.

*C'. Walk in the Spirit*

25 If we **live in the Spirit**, let us also **walk in the Spirit**.

*A' & B' The Law of Love and its opposite*

**C. Walk in the Spirit**

*Similarities:* The exhortation to walk in the Spirit (note that a different verb is used in the Greek). A reason is given in each case.

*Differences:* v. 16 functions as an introduction to the contrasts made between the flesh and the Spirit. The reason is a negative one, tied into (D) v. 17. However, v. 25 is tying in to the positive description of life in the Spirit in (D') v. 24 and so the reason for walking in the Spirit is a positive one.

**D. War with the lusts of the flesh**

*Similarities:* Both are describing the battle between the flesh and the Spirit.

*Differences:* v. 17 describes a war being fought, but in v. 24 there is victory. The key to the victory is the historical event of the death of Christ in whom we have died to the power of the flesh. The purpose of v. 17 is to introduce the tension, whereas v. 24 resolves it.

C. Paul's purpose now is to explain how good behaviour can co-exist with liberty. In doing so he describes the power behind it and provides motivation. The power is the Spirit. It is by walking in the Spirit that we have victory over the flesh.

D. The two contesting forces have been introduced, and now need to be explained. They are utterly opposed to each other, and the flesh would try and bring us under its power.

*E & F. The law is unable to resolve the power struggle which was set up in (D).*

D' The answer is to be found in Christ and his death. The power of the flesh has been destroyed by Christ's death.

C' Paul can now return to the theme of walking in the Spirit, since ¶

he has described what it means: (F') as compared with (F),

he has provided the motivation: otherwise you fall prey to the flesh (D) and risk apostasy (end of F),

and he has explained the power: the law has no power (E & E') and Christ has crucified the flesh (D).

*A & B The Law of Love and its opposite*

*C & D. Achieved by Walk in the Spirit ^ but Conflict with the Flesh*

*E. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit*

18. But if you are led by the **Spirit**, you are **not under the law**.

*F. The works of the flesh and the Spirit*

19-21. Now **the works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

*F'. The works of the flesh and the Spirit*

22-23a. But **the fruit of the Spirit** is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

*E'. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit*

23b. Against **such** there is **no law**.

*C' & D'. Achieved by Walk in the Spirit ^ Conflict with the Flesh Resolved*

*A' & B' The Law of Love and its opposite*

### **E. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit.**

*Similarities:* Both contain a negative statement about where the law operates.

*Differences:* The first describes the people who are not under the law, and the second describes the kinds of behaviour that does not fall under the jurisdiction of the law.

### **F. The works of the flesh and the Spirit**

*Similarities:* Both are lists of ways of behaving, introduced by a formula.

*Differences:* There is obviously a strong contrast between the two lists. The first is much longer, and concludes with a warning.

E. Paul has set up a tension which he must eventually resolve. The expected resolution is that the *law* is the answer, but Paul says that the law no-longer has authority for those under the Spirit.

F. This point must now be proved. Paul lists precisely what he means by the works of the flesh, and affirms that no-one who lives in them will be saved. This connects with v. 21 the things that they do even though they do not wish to. These are the weapons of the flesh, and the law has no power to give freedom from them.

F'. The works of the Spirit are called 'fruit' to convey the idea that they come forth inevitably from the new existence.

E' Paul is ready to prove (E): there is absolutely no way the law could have produced such fruits, since it is not possible to legislate for them.

### **Conclusion**

The problem with the law was not that it was wrong, but that it was powerless against the flesh. By means of the Spirit, the believer is able to live in the way that the law intended us to live, but was not able to achieve. The victory was through Jesus' death (v.24) which broke the power of the flesh, and his sending the life-giving Spirit who by working on the inside enables us to do what the law is powerless to achieve from the outside. So the Spirit leads us to live by the law of love, announced in (A) (5:13-14) and causes us to raise up the fallen brother or sister (A') (6:1-2) rather than beat them down (B, B') (5:15,26).

## Complete Structure of Galatians 5:13—6:5

### A. The Law of Love

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "**You shall love your neighbour as yourself**"

### B. The opposite to the law of love

15 but if you **bite and devour one another** beware lest you be **consumed by one another**

### C. Walk in the Spirit

16 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit** and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

### D. War with the lusts of the flesh

17 For the **flesh lusts** against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are **contrary to one another** so that you do not do the things that you wish

### E. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit

18. But if you are led by the **Spirit**, you are **not under the law**.

### F. The works of the flesh and the Spirit

19-21. Now **the works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### F'. The works of the flesh and the Spirit

22-23a. But **the fruit of the Spirit** is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

### E'. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit

23b. Against **such** there is **no law**.

### D'. War with the lusts of the flesh

24 And those who are Christ's have **crucified the flesh** with its **lusts and desires**.

### C'. Walk in the Spirit

25 If we **live in the Spirit**, let us also **walk in the Spirit**.

### B'. The opposite to the law of love

26 Let us not become conceited, **provoking one another** **envying one another**

### A'. The Law of Love

6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted**.

6:2 **Bear one another's burdens** and so **fulfill the law of Christ**.

[6:3-5 continues the idea]

## Complete Structure in Greek

### A. The Law of Love

13 Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί·  
μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί,  
ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις.  
14 ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ  
Ἄγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

### B. The opposite to the law of love

15 εἰ δὲ  
ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε.  
βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.

### C. Walk in the Spirit

16 Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.

### D. War with the lusts of the flesh

17 ἢ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκὸς·  
ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται.  
ἵνα μὴ ἂν ἐάν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.

### E. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit

18. εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἐστὲ ὑπὸ νόμον.

### F. The works of the flesh and the Spirit

19-21. φανερά δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκὸς.  
ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθρα, ἔρις, ζῆλος,  
θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχوستασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι, μέθαι, κόμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω  
ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.

### F'. The works of the flesh and the Spirit

22-23a. Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν  
ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραῦτης, ἐγκράτεια·

### E'. The law does not operate in the realm of the Spirit

23b. κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἐστὶν νόμος.

### D'. War with the lusts of the flesh

24 οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ] τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν  
σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

### C'. Walk in the Spirit

25 εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.

### B'. The opposite to the law of love

26 μὴ γινόμεθα κενόδοξοι,  
ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι,  
ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.

### A'. The Law of Love

6:1 Ἀδελφοί, ἐάν καὶ προληφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ  
καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος,  
σκοπῶν σεαυτόν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.  
6:2 Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.  
[6:3-5 continues the idea]