

Killed and Eaten

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. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!
(Galatians 5:13–15)

In this passage, we are encouraged to use the freedom that is found in Christ, for good rather than bad. This is the same liberty that has freed us from the old law of sin and death, the Old Testament (*Romans 8:2*). We are to "serve one another" with love and when we do, we fulfill the law of Christ (*Gal. 6:2; James 2:8*). However, following these encouraging and uplifting words comes a strong warning. So what does it mean not to "bite and devour", otherwise we'll be "consumed" by each other?

Imagine for a moment, a predator who has captured its prey. Fangs and claws, biting, tearing the victims flesh bringing death and dismemberment. The prey is slowly eaten, consumed until only a few bones and skin remain. It's a bloody scene, one that would make most folks a bit uncomfortable. Now think of the destructive results that hate, fighting, jealousy, harsh criticism, arguments, or nasty gossip can have on a collective group of people. The devastating effects of such behavior will certainly destroy a congregation of God's people, leaving only skin and bones.

Of all the places in the world, the church should be the place one can come to be loved, cared for and comforted. Let us love each other, just as God has loved us (*1 John 4:11*).

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