

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 10 - Galatians 5:16-26
Gospel Living
Living by the Spirit

Paul's first admonition was "Stand fast!" Now he says, "Walk in the Spirit!" Our standing in Christ determines our walk in Christ. The words "flesh" and "Spirit" are each found ten times in chapters 5–6. Those who live according to law depend on the energy of the flesh; those who live by grace depend on the power of the Spirit. To "walk in the Spirit" means to have our daily lives under His control, and this means under the direction of the Word of God. To be "led of the Spirit" means to be delivered from a life of bondage to legalism.

"The flesh" refers to the fallen nature still with the believer. The body itself is not sinful; appetites are not necessarily sinful, but the tendencies of the old nature are downward. In Romans 6, Paul tells us that the old man has been crucified and that we can overcome the flesh by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and by yielding ourselves to God. Here in Galatians, Paul spells out the conflict between the believer's two natures. What a contrast between works and fruit! Fruit is the result of a living union; a machine may produce works, but it can never produce fruit. Even the Law produces works, but God calls them dead works. The Law could never produce the gracious fruit described here.

Christian character comes from within, by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit seeks to transform us into Christ's likeness.

"If we live in the Spirit," "let us also walk in the Spirit." "Walking in the Spirit" is not some emotional experience, detached from everyday life. It is the daily experience of the believer who feeds on the Word, prays, and obeys what the Bible says.

In closing, note that Paul uses three pleas as he encourages these Christians to live lives of holiness by the grace of God: God the Father has called them, God the Son has died for them, and God the Holy Spirit indwells them. Each Person of the Trinity is assisting us in our battle against the flesh.

Read Galatians 5:16-18 and answer the following questions

1. What two forces are constantly fighting in your life?
2. From your own experience, describe what it means to live by the desires of the flesh?
3. Now explain what you think it means to live and walk in the Spirit?
4. Paul keep saying that if you follow the Holy Spirit you are no longer under the law. Why is a person not “under the law” if he or she is “led by the Spirit”?

Read Galatians 5:19-21 and answer the following questions

5. Which sins from 5:19-21 do you think are most frequently tolerated among Christians today?
6. How are our sinful desires contrary to those of the Holy Spirit?

7. What is the ultimate result of following your own desires? (Vs. 5:21)

Read Galatians 5:22-26 and answer the following questions

8. What are the inner fruits of the Holy Spirit? (Vs. 5:22-23)

9. What are the external fruits of the Holy Spirit?

10. What does it mean to live a life that is led by the Holy Spirit?

11. What is Paul's warning to those who feel they are living in the Spirit? (Vs. 5:26)

12. How can we be more Spirit filled and therefore have the self-control we need to avoid sins?

New Creatures with New Character

If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old habits and character traits that marked your life before Christ are passing away. He is making you entirely new.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” 2 Cor. 5:17. Paul paints several pictures of new creatures with new character:

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 1 Cor. 13:3-8

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22-23

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy meditate on these things. Phil. 4:8

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Col. 3:12-16