

## A Practical Study of

### GALATIANS: You Were Running Well

#### "Freedom vs. Legalism: The Truth Shall Set You Free"

### Study #11 – Galatians 5:16-26

#### UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on Law

Key Verse: Galatians 5:17

For the flesh is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the Spirit. And the Spirit is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the flesh. For these are opposed to one another, in order that you may not do the things that you desire to do.

#### TEXT:

v. 16 But I am saying, walk by means of the Spirit and you will by no means fulfill the desire of the flesh.

v. 17 For the flesh is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the Spirit. And the Spirit is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the flesh. For these are opposed to one another, in order that you may not do the things that you desire to do.

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

v. 19 Now the works of the flesh are plain to see, which are:

v. 20 Fornication, uncleanness, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions,

v. 21 divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, carousing and such like (and the things like these); of which I am forewarning you even as I did forewarn you that those who are in the habit of practicing things such as this shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

v. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

v. 23 meekness, self-control. Against such things as these there is no law.

v. 24 Now those (who belong) of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its affections (passive emotions) and desires.

v. 25 If we are living by the Spirit let us also order our steps by the Spirit.

v. 26 Let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

(A Gathering by Hal Cannon) Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc. Copyright – Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1985.

### **COWBOY'S FAVORITE**

#### **BARNEY NELSON**

When a man spends his life on horseback,  
And the country's been his home,  
There are things he learns to love  
As across the range he roams.

There's the scent of burning cedar  
And the rhythmic windmill creak,  
The song of a friendly mockingbird,  
And sunshine on his cheek.

There's the smell of boiling coffee  
Or a lonely coyote call,  
The smell of sweaty horseflesh  
And a lost calf's mournful bawl.

The light from a kerosene lamp  
And the early flow'rs in spring,  
These are but a few of  
A cowboy' favorite things.

But there's one thing that the cowboy  
Loves more than all the rest,  
That makes him glad to be alive  
And puts strength in his breast.

It's not the song that a fiddle plays  
Or the money in his jeans.  
It's not a brand new pair o' boots  
Or a pot of pinto beans.

It's the promise from the Foreman,  
 Who rules the Range on High,  
 That the cows will once more fatten  
 And that the short grass will not die.

This smell that every cowboy loves,  
 No matter what the season,  
 And this sound that chases frowns away  
 Not matter what the reason,

Is a simple thing that fills his heart  
 With peace from crib to cane,  
 The gift that brings life to his home,  
 The sound and smell of rain.  
 pp. 172-73

**“Ain’t Love Grand?!?”**

When you find the one that’s Your True Love  
 And you know that she’s been sent by the God above  
 HE’s answered prayer to find this way of life  
 To give you a partner, this wonderful wife.  
 You’re like a kid with a new found toy  
 Everyday things become great joy  
 When you’re away from her, you miss her so  
 You cannot wait for the both of you to be on the go!  
 Not that troubles don’t come your way  
 But by working together, they do not stay.  
 Because you take your problems to the Lord each day.  
 And HE works them out in the Grandest Way,  
 Sure, there are times when you don’t agree;  
 But if you just step back, you will see  
 There are two sides and not just ME!  
 And, oh, those times when you get sick,  
 She loves and cares for you so quick;  
 And on top of this, all your dreams have come true.  
 You’re living in your log cabin and the building is almost through;  
 You’re next to the river and in the trees;  
 At the end of the road and you thank the Lord on your knees.  
 That HE made ALL THIS POSSIBLE ‘cause HE really cares  
 For this simple old cowboy and his wife who shares.  
 Now, my love for my wife, I feel is so strong  
 ‘Cause in my eyes she can do no wrong.  
 When she gets all “done-up” to go somewhere  
 With clothes just right and stunning hair.  
 She sure looks good, but does not compare  
 To when we first get up and I see her smile.  
 She’s the prettiest girl in many-a-mile.  
 So ain’t love grand? I would surely say;  
 Thank you Lord for another day!!!!

By Country Tom Bowser

(source unknown)

(The Red Sea Rules: Ten God-Given Strategies for Difficult Times by Robert J. Morgan) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– Robert J. Morgan, 2001.

## THE RED SEA RULES

### RULE 1

Realize that God means for you  
to be where you are.

### RULE 2

Be more concerned  
for God's glory than  
for your relief.

### RULE 3

Acknowledge your enemy, but  
keep your eyes on the Lord.

### RULE 4

Pray!

### RULE 5

Stay calm and confident, and  
give God time to work.

### RULE 6

When unsure, just take the next  
logical step by faith.

### RULE 7

Envision God's enveloping  
presence.

### RULE 8

Trust God to deliver in His own  
unique way.

### RULE 9

View your current crisis as a  
faith builder for the future.

### RULE 10

Don't forget to praise Him.

p. 113

(Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity by Drew Brees with Chris Fabry) Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright—Brees Company, Inc., 2010.

I really believe adversity is a path to opportunity. But sometimes it's difficult in the moment to see that God has a bigger vision for the future than you can grasp. It may be years before you can look back and truly appreciate the journey God has taken you on. And usually, it's one you wouldn't have chosen. I wouldn't have chosen an ACL injury or a dislocated throwing shoulder, but those were the cards that were dealt. The only choice I did have was what I would do with that adversity when it came my direction. I also learned that despite the circumstances you find yourself in, it's wise to worry only about the things you can control. You can't control if you get injured or if the team decides to draft someone else to take your job, but you can control your attitude and your preparation. Every day you can dedicate yourself to becoming the best you can be. Thinking about it now, I'm grateful for the way those difficult experiences transformed my personal life—and how the same thing can be true for other people.

p. 186

**(Seeking Him by Nancy Leigh DeMoss & Tim Grissom with Life Action Ministries) Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Life Action Ministries, 2004.**

Remember, what is good for your sins is good for your sorrows. The grace of God—seen in His provision for our sinful condition as well as His strength to escort us through hardship—is always available. The following personal story from co-author Tim Grissom illustrates the way God ministers grace to His hurting children.

*A few years ago, my personal study on the topic of grace coincided with an unusually painful journey for my family and me.*

*In January 1999, my wife, Janiece, was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease). Over a span of eleven months, she deteriorated physically to where she could do little for herself beyond breathing, speaking faintly, and swallowing. Finally we had to hospitalize her; she died ten days later at the age of forty-one. I was left with four children, and a broken heart.*

*That describes the earthly reality of our circumstances. Painful. Dreadful. Overwhelming.*

*But there is another side—a heavenly side—where I found hope. I discovered that it is entirely possible to “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” while “fearing no evil.” I learned that in the harshest of life's seasons we can actually grow in our awareness of God's presence. God can become so large in our understanding that other “realities” slip into the background. He offers Himself—His love, His companionship, His strength . . . His grace!*

*As I passed through the months of my wife's illness and death, people often asked, “How are you?” I could only reply that I felt as if we were being covered and carried by God—that He was escorting us through the grief and protecting us from being mortally wounded by it.*

*About six months after Janiece died, I was reading in 1 Peter 5 when God drew my attention to verses 6 and 7: “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”*

*When we are humble, do you see where God places His hands? Above us to cover us and beneath us to carry us. Sometimes our humility comes via repentance from sin, and sometimes it comes*



*through the pain of suffering. In either case, humility hails the presence of God, and He cups us in His hands. What better place to be?*  
pp 95-96

**(The Importance of Being Foolish by Brennan Manning) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 2005**

Why don't the gentleness, compassion, and trust that Much Afraid saw shining in the eyes of the Shepherd (in Hannah Hurnard's *Hinds' Feet on High Places*) shine from our eyes? Why don't our contagious joy, enthusiasm, and gratitude infect others with a love for Christ Jesus? Why doesn't the radiant loveliness of the Lord stream from our personalities? Why aren't we windows to God at work? Why aren't we transparent?

To have the mind of Christ Jesus, to think his thoughts, share his ideals, dream his dreams, throb with his desires, replace our natural responses to persons and situations with the concern of Jesus, and make the mind-set of Christ so completely our own that "the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20), is not the secret of or the shortcut to transparency. It *is* transparency.

p. 38

It is my practice to read *Our Daily Bread* booklet from Radio Bible Class on a daily basis. This particular reading was from Romans 7:18-25:

### **THE TROUBLE WITHIN**

**I see another law in my members, . . . bringing me into  
captivity to the law of sin. – Romans 7:23**

A monk who had a quick temper was known to “pass the buck” for his fits of anger – always blaming his fellow monastery residents. So he decided to move to a place of absolute solitude in a desert, thinking that if he got away from the others he could be victorious.

One morning he accidentally knocked over a pitcher of water. A few minutes later he bumped it again, and once more it fell on its side and spilled its contents. Losing his temper, the monk picked up the pitcher and hurled it to the ground. As it broke into smithereens, the truth hit him: he couldn’t blame others for his flareups. The real trouble was within him.

How true of all of us! The apostle Paul was keenly aware of the outworking of sin in his life. He cried, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24). But he was confident of final victory, for he answered his own question, saying, “I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (v. 25).

We can triumph over “the law of sin” right now, because Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) through His death on the cross. All who believe in Him are given new life. As we endeavor to do God’s will, with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, we increasingly overcome the trouble within. – R.W.D.

*When sin within us rears its head  
And seeks its former place,  
We must rely on Jesus’ strength  
And His unchanging grace. – Sper*

### **THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM OF MAN’S HEART.**

**(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, June 21, year unknown)**

It would probably be a good idea for us to make a couple of columns on a sheet of paper and put law on one side and grace on the other and summarize the things which we have learned:

<u>Law</u>	<u>Grace</u>
bondage	freedom
death	life
slaves	sons
curse	blessing
flesh	spirit
performance	transformation

We come now to a **KEY PASSAGE** in all of Scripture, and understanding our position when we are walking in fellowship with the Lord. When we are in tune with the Lord and controlled by the Spirit, there will be obvious results from this; and when we are living in the flesh and controlled by the flesh, there will be manifestations of this that will be very clear as well.

As soon as you introduce the law and the keeping of it to the Christian life and experience, you must also introduce the flesh.

It is the **FLESH** that is the **PERFORMER**.

It is the **SPIRIT** that is the **TRANSFORMER**.

**Anders says:**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *Release from the law and the power to love are results of God's working in us by his Holy Spirit.*

p. 64

**Barclay says:**

No man was ever more conscious of the tension in human nature than Paul.  
As the soldier in Studdert Kennedy's poem said;

I'm a man and a man's a mixture  
Right down from his very birth;  
For part of him comes from heaven,  
And part of him comes from earth.

For Paul it was essential that Christian freedom and liberty should mean not freedom to indulge this lower side of human nature, but freedom to walk in the life of the Spirit.  
p. 51

**Bartlett says:**

IN THESE VERSES we have clearly depicted the struggle between the old nature and the new nature which is the common experience of Christians everywhere. And this conflict is a war to the death. There can be no cessation of hostilities until we are called home to glory. A truce is out of the question. Appeasement policies are futile. We may as well recognize the situation at the outset.  
p. 104

**Baxter says:**

Second, this liberty of the Gospel is the liberty of "*the Spirit*" in the place of bondage to "the flesh." This is brought out in the passage v. 16-vi. 10.  
p. 148

**Bickel & Jantz say:**

As we approach this section, it's important to realize again that Paul is not addressing people whose eternal destiny hangs in the balance. As Scot McKnight points out, this is not about the Galatians being at a fork in the road, with one path leading to heaven and another one leading to hell. The way Paul will explain it, Spirit and flesh are "modes of existence." As a Christian, you have a choice every day—indeed, every moment of your day—between two ways of living: under the control of the Holy Spirit, or under the control of your own passions and desires.

p. 127

**De Haan says:**

THE believer is delivered from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13). He is placed in the freedom and liberty of grace, and now serves the Lord, not out of compulsion or threat of punishment, but out of a heart of love and gratitude for so great a salvation. It is therefore a contradiction for a person saved by grace to serve the Lord because the law demands it, rather than because love produces it. This liberty in grace also gives divine discernment as to what is required. There is, however, a danger, because the flesh is still with us, that we shall have a tendency to go back to the works of the flesh and the law. This was true in the case of the Galatians. Paul is surprised that they would be led astray by the legalistic teachers with the Old Testament ordinances, laws, Sabbath days and commandments. He exhorts them:

Stand fast, therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1).

p. 162

### Harrison says:

Now we have reached the climax of our prolonged antithesis, or, we may better say, we have this antithesis reduced to its final terms, summed up in two comprehensive words: flesh and Spirit. On Our Side it is flesh; on His Side it is Spirit.

These are the two antithetical elements of life, the two opposing resources upon which life must depend. If we are living *our* life, it's flesh; if we are living *His* life, it is Spirit.

p. 90

### Ironside says:

THE present section of this epistle brings before us the truth, in a very marked way, of the two natures in the believer. It is important to remember that when God saves us He does not destroy the carnal nature which we received at our natural birth. The new birth does not imply the elimination of that old carnal nature, neither does it imply a change in it, but rather the impartation of an absolutely new nature born of the Holy Spirit of God, and these two natures abide side by side in the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This explains the conflict that many of us have known since we have been converted. In fact, I need not have said, "many of us," for all converted people know at one time or another something of that conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"—that is, the old nature—"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—that is the new nature, and these two natures abide side by side until we receive the redemption of the body which will be at the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He will transform this body of our humiliation and make it like unto the body of His glory.

pp. 198-9

**Lovett says:**

16. Let me put it this way: if you will let the Spirit lead you in everything you do and think, you will not find yourselves obeying the impulses of your old nature. 17. What the old nature impels you to do, you see, is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants to do. These two forces operating inside you are hostile to each other, with each seeking to dominate your life. Consequently there is never a time when you are not resisted by one or the other, no matter what it is you want to do. If you want to do good, it will be opposed by your flesh. If you want to do evil, it will be opposed by the Spirit. pp. 66-67

**Lucado says:**

The Galatian letter argues that there are only two approaches to God. One is man-centered—calling on people to do certain things to merit God's approval. This way, Paul insists, is an exercise in futility. The other way is the good news that acceptance with God is possible because of what Jesus has already done for sinners. What's more, those who embrace this gospel receive God's Spirit to enable them to live a new kind of life. p. 102

**MacArthur says:**

Just as Jesus Christ is the primary Person behind justification, the Holy Spirit is the primary Person behind sanctification. A believer can no more sanctify himself than he could have saved himself in the first place. He cannot live the Christian life by his own resources any more than he could have saved himself by his own resources.

In its most profound yet simple definition, the faithful Christian life is a life lived under the direction and by the power of the Spirit. That is the theme of Galatians 5:16-26, in which Paul tells believers to "walk by the Spirit" (vv. 16, 25) and to be "led by the Spirit" (v. 18). The opening paragraph (vv. 16-18) of this section introduces the passage by setting forth the command and the conflict of the Spirit-led life. p. 151

**Machen says:**

In this third main division of the epistle Paul exhibits the practical working of faith. Paul's gospel is more powerful than the teaching of the Judaizers. Try to keep the law in your own strength and you will fail, for the flesh is too strong. But the Spirit is stronger than the flesh, and the Spirit is received by faith.

p. 205

**McGee says:**

Now Paul is going to contrast what it is to live in the desires of the flesh with the walk in the Spirit. This whole section gives the modus operandi.

p. 188

**Radmacher, Allen & House say:**

**5:16-18** These verses introduce the contrast between the work of the **Spirit** and the work of the flesh in the believer's life. Should "Spirit" be understood as a reference to the Holy *Spirit* or the human *spirit*? The flesh is the sinful propensity that dwells in us as a result of the fall. Satan works through the flesh to move us toward sin, whereas God works through our human *spirit* by His Holy *Spirit* to produce Christian virtues that please Him. However we understand *Spirit* or *spirit*, this does not change the truth of these verses.

p. 1527



### Wiersbe says:

At the close of an important speech to Congress on January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt shared his vision of the kind of world he wanted to see after the war was over. He envisioned four basic freedoms enjoyed by all people: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. To some degree, these freedoms have been achieved on a wider scale than in 1941, but our world still needs another freedom, a fifth freedom. Man needs to be free from himself and the tyranny of his sinful nature.

The legalists thought they had the answer to the problem in laws and threats, but Paul has explained that no amount of legislation can change man's basic sinful nature. It is not law on the *outside*, but love on the *inside* that makes the difference. We need another power within, and that power comes from the Holy Spirit of God.

p. 127

### Wiersbe says:

***Are you walking in the Spirit*** (16)? Life, not law, changes behavior; and as you yield to the Spirit, Christ's life is manifest in the fruit of the Spirit.

Law works by compulsion from without, but grace works by compassion from within.

*"Every time we say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit,' we mean that we believe there is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it."*

J. B. Phillips

p. 770

Let's now dig into the passage:

### Study #11: Galatians 5:16-26

### You Were Running Well UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on Law

v. 16 But I am saying, walk by means of the Spirit and you will by no means fulfill the desire of the flesh.

The NET Bible translates verse 16:

But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

Peterson paraphrases verse 16:

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles this passage and then says of verse 16:

*A life according to the Spirit (5:16-26).*

THE PROMISE TO VICTORY OVER SIN (5:16-18).

**5:16.** The answer to the abuses described in the previous verse is to **live by the Spirit**. The verb *peripateite* is a present imperative and is literally translated, "keep on walking." As a believer walks through life he should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and power. But the Spirit does not operate automatically in a believer's heart. He waits to be depended on. When a Christian does yield to the Spirit's control, the promise is that he will not in anywise (the double negative *ou mē* is emphatic) **gratify** (*telesēte*, "complete, fulfill" in outward action) **the desires of the sinful nature**. Thus, while no believer will ever be entirely free in this life from the evil desires that stem from his fallen human nature, he need not capitulate to them, but may experience victory by the Spirit's help.

This is a **COMMAND** here in verse 16:

**“WALK BY MEANS OF THE SPIRIT.”**

Here Paul states the **SECRET OF VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING**. The Christian must cease from his struggling and simply trust the Holy Spirit to live out the life of Christ through him, to do within him what he cannot do for himself.

The focus of the words **“BY MEANS OF”** is upon:

**DEPENDENCE** and

**SUBMISSION.**

We also need to include here that this is a **PRESENT IMPERATIVE** so therefore it is something that we are commanded to do on a daily basis:

**CONTINUALLY BE WALKING BY MEANS OF THE SPIRIT**

In like measure to the yieldedness of the individual to the Spirit, so in like measure will be the experience of victory over the law of sin and death.

We can say that it is **VICTORY THROUGH DEPENDENCE.**

Consider for a moment the **LIGHT BULB**. To it an unseen current flows which makes it light. It is not correct to say that the bulb is giving light, for it has no power to do so apart from the current it receives. So all we need is the divine power of the Spirit flowing through us to make us godly. It takes this and nothing else will do.

It is the Spirit who energizes the new nature within us.

Satan convinced Adam that he could light the bulb by himself through his flesh. And when he rebelled, God threw the master switch and out went the light and also the life.

Now when the Holy Spirit comes in, He brings life and light. In like manner, as we allow the current to flow, so will our light shine. But we have the ability to quench the Spirit and to grieve the Spirit in our lives, and as we do, this divine current is not allowed to flow.

By our will we can flip the switch and quench and grieve the Holy Spirit.

1 John 1:7 (NASB)

but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Vos says:**

The apostle's goal in this passage is to describe liberty in daily life and how it is to be achieved. "Walk by the Spirit" (v. 16) is the preferred translation. The difference from the Authorized Version—"Walk in the Spirit"—is important. Walking *in* the Spirit implies more dependence on self; walking *by* the Spirit properly emphasizes the energizing power within. To walk by the Spirit is to allow the Spirit to be the governing principle in one's life. If the believer permits the Spirit to control, he shall not "fulfill (give effect to or allow to be accomplished) the lusts of the flesh (the natural man or old nature, distinct from physical body)." p. 100

**Pinnock points out:**

How are the Galatians to check their tendency to devour each other? How can they control their runaway self-centeredness and learn to give themselves freely in loving service to others? The answer is the Spirit controlled life (v. 16). If they would walk in the Spirit, they would not have to answer the call of the lower nature. Paul is not telling them to do something they have not done before. He is urging them to keep on walking in the Spirit day by day. This is the secret of Christian holiness.

Paul describes the Christian life as a conflict of opposing forces. What the Spirit yearns for in our lives is antithetical to what the lower nature desires (v. 17). A civil war rages within the believer. Peter wrote about it: "Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul" (I Peter 2:11). The Spirit and the flesh are implacable foes. Paul's teaching makes it impossible to accept "quietism," the theory that sanctification does not require effort or struggle on our part. All we have to do is surrender to God and let Him have the victory over sin. While it is true that God sanctifies us, it is not true that a person being renewed by the Spirit exists in a state of passive surrender. God has done everything to make our sanctification possible, but we must make our calling and election sure by putting to death the old life and walking in the Spirit.

pp. 75-76

**Gutzke points out:**

Consider this. If a person had a vacant lot, what could be expected to grow on that vacant lot naturally without any attention? There would be only weeds! It would be an unsightly affair. But if that person was to put in a garden there, cultivating and planting it, there would be vegetables. Or think of a person being responsible for the care of a group of boys. If that person was to turn that group of boys loose, and they were to spend two, three, or four hours together in some place, there could be trouble. On the other hand, those boys could have a wonderful time playing baseball, if someone was channeling their energies into a constructive program. This is what Paul means when he writes: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (5:16).

p. 128

**Channel all your efforts to be dependent upon the Spirit.**

### Anders says:

The law was powerless to help a Christian overcome these sins. We may want to please God, but our sin nature continually pulls us into disobedience (Rom. 7). The answer to this battle between the old and new nature is found in the inward ministry of the Holy Spirit. To experience victory we must **live** or walk (KJV) **by the Spirit**. As we live our lives in dependence on, and obedience to, the Holy Spirit, **we will gratify the desires of the sinful nature . . .**

p. 64

### Barker & Kohlenberger say:

**16** What is the solution to such biting, devouring, and destroying that is all too common among Christian assemblies? The answer, Paul says, is to “live by the Spirit.” Then, and only then, will one cease to gratify the desires of the flesh. It is the Spirit alone who can keep the believer truly free.

The contrast between *sarx* (“flesh”; NIV “sinful nature”; GK 4922), on the one hand, and *pneuma* (“spirit”; GK 4460), on the other, is one of the characteristic themes in NT, and particularly Pauline, theology. It is as important, for instance, as the contrast between the observance of the law and the hearing of faith that has thus far dominated the letter. Although *sarx* can mean the whole person as conditioned by a bodily existence and by natural desires, in Christian vocabulary (especially in Paul), it came to mean a human being as fallen, whose desires even at best originate from sin and are stained by it. Thus, *sarx* came to mean all the evil that one is capable of apart from the intervention of God’s grace in one’s life; i.e., it is synonymous with “the natural man,” “the old nature,” or “the sinful nature.” *Sarx* also contains thoughts of human limitation, both intellectually and morally (Ro 7:18). Thus, that which is flesh is incapable of knowing God apart from special revelation and the redemption that removes the barrier of sin . . .

p. 739

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

The Spirit is thus the presence of God in a person, through whom fellowship with God is made possible and power given for winning the warfare against sin in the soul.

The Spirit is not natural to a human being in one's fallen state. But this does not mean that by the gift of the Spirit a redeemed person escapes the need to struggle against sin. The Spirit simply makes victory possible—and that only to the degree that the believer “lives by the Spirit” or “walks” in him.

p. 739

**Bartlett says:**

Herein lies the key to conquest—not through the terrors of the law, but through the Spirit of the Lord will victory over the flesh be won. The spirit of the law and the law of the Spirit are poles apart. The injunction to walk in the Spirit implies power of choice on the part of the believer, whether to submit to the bondage of sin or to enter into that freedom in the Spirit which is rightfully his as a child of God.

p. 104

**Bickel & Jantz say:**

A life of freedom in Christ is living according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit (see 5:16). On a practical level, how does this happen? Well, it doesn't happen by our will or self-discipline. It happens by surrendering our will and letting the Holy Spirit have control of our lives, and it starts with the things we think about. In his letter to the Romans, Paul describes it this way:

*Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit (Romans 8:5).*

In fact, we are commanded to let the Holy Spirit fill us (Ephesians 5:18) because this is the key to living the Christian life. Not only is the Holy Spirit the source of our new life in Christ, but He is also the power to keep it going.

pp. 129-30



**Calvin says:**

Now follows the remedy. The ruin of the church is no light evil, and whatever threatens it must be opposed with the most determined resistance. But how is this to be accomplished? By not permitting the flesh to rule in us, and by yielding ourselves to the direction of the Spirit of God.  
p. 162

**De Haan says:**

Our hope of victory lies not in the law, or our good resolutions and intentions, but in complete submission and yielding to the Spirit's word of grace. How clearly it is stated in Titus 2:11, 12,

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11, 12).

And Paul states it again as follows:

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law (Gal. 5:18).

p. 166

**Dunnam says:**

Paul is urging the Galatians to remember that, as Christians, they have received the Spirit and they are to walk in the Spirit. The Spirit is the supreme energizing and regulative force in their lives. If they walk in the Spirit, there is no danger that their Christian liberty will become an *opportunity for the flesh*.

For Paul, the Spirit is more than the manifestation of a supernatural power, more than the giver of dramatic gifts, more than an explosive force erupting in the believer now and then. The Spirit is the daily sustaining, inspiring, and guiding power of the Christian's life. The Spirit is the domain of power, the sphere of influence which replaces *the flesh* as the energy force of our lives.

p. 107



**Eadie says:**

. . . “Now I say, According to the Spirit walk.” The first words are a formula introducing a further explanation, and refer back to the first part of ver. 13

. . .

p. 407

**Fergusson says:**

. . . “walking in the Spirit,” or following the motions and directions of the renewed part, or new man of grace in the heart, (for which the word Spirit, when it is opposed to flesh, is usually taken, see John iii. 6;) the fruit of their walking thus he sheweth should be their mortifying, and keeping at under the flesh, or their corrupt and unrenewed part, in so far, as though the lusts, or first inordinate motions of inbred corruption . . .

p. 93

**Gaebelein says:**

“This life, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost through the word, is led by the Spirit who is given to believers; its rule is also in the word. Its fruits are the fruits of the Spirit. The Christian walk is the manifestation of this new life, of Christ our life, in the midst of the world. If we follow this path—Christ Himself—if we walk in His steps, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

p. 226

**Gutzke says:**

Living in Christ is a great blessing. The believer is blessed in what he is saved from and blessed in what he is led into. Living in Christ leads to so many good and gracious things. One of the great blessings in Christ is that when a person is walking in the way of Christ, he is not walking in the way of evil. It is also true that what it leads into is good. But there is already a great benefit in what it leads away from. Living in Christ is not something that a person does because he is good or strong or wise. Living in Christ is something a person shares. Christ is real! He is a Person! And living in Him means the believer is not alone. Living in Christ is having a fellowship with Him in which the believer participates. Living in Christ, participating in personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, is not only a great blessing because of what the believer receives from Him, but it is a great blessing in what it saves the believer from.

pp. 127-8

**Gutzke says:**

Paul urges believers to “walk in the Spirit.” They should live their lives as guided and energized by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would take the things of the Lord Jesus Christ and show them unto the believers, in the last analysis, the real, dynamic factor would be “Christ in you,” the hope of glory. God gives the Holy Spirit to all believers. But the believers must receive Him. They must know, appreciate, esteem and honor the Holy Spirit. God sends Him and believers receive Him.

p. 129

**Harrison says:**

So our way out is, “Walk in the Spirit.” Give the Spirit a free hand, the full right of way. Let *your* life be the practical day by day expression of *His* life.

p. 91

**Harrison says:**

“Flesh” is the Bible’s word for human nature. Leaving off the “h” and spelling it in reverse, we have, “self.” Flesh is the self-life. It is what man is, left to himself. At times self behaves very commendably; again, it behaves very *self*ishly. When not well in hand it shows itself off.  
p. 91

**Hendriksen says:**

**But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will definitely not fulfil the desire of the flesh.** Let your conduct be governed by the Spirit, that is, by God’s gift imparted to you (3:2, 5). If you follow his directions and promptings you will be dominated by your human nature regarded as the seat and vehicle of sinful desire (as in 5:13), but instead will conquer it. It takes the tender leaves of early springtime to rid the oak tree of the remnants of last autumn’s withered foliage. It is only the living that can expel the dead. It is only the good that can push out the bad.  
p. 214

**Henry says:**

The duty here recommended to us is that we set ourselves to act under the guidance and influence of the blessed Spirit. We may depend upon it that, though we may not be freed from the stirrings of our corrupt nature, though it remain in us, yet it shall not obtain a dominion over us. The best antidote against the poison of sin is to walk in the Spirit. So it would be a good evidence that they were Christians indeed . . .  
p. 1845

**Hogg & Vine say:**

In the preceding passage they were urged to use their freedom aright and to exercise their love in mutual service. Still the Christian life is to merely the response to law imposed from without, however excellent that law may be, it is the result of a new spirit quickened within. Nevertheless, just as law must be obeyed, so must the spirit of the believer yield to the guidance, and receive the power, communicated to it by the Holy Spirit of God.  
p. 276

**Ironside says:**

It is one thing to have the Spirit indwelling us, and quite another to walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit implies that the Holy Spirit is controlling us, and we can walk in the Spirit only as our lives are truly surrendered to Christ.  
p. 201

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:**

. . . “What I mean is this.” **Walk in the Spirit**—*Greek*; “By (the rule of) the (Holy) Spirit.”  
p. 1274

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:**

**the flesh**—the natural man, out of which flow the evils specified (vss. 19-21). The spirit and the flesh mutually exclude one another.  
p. 1274

**Lange says:**

In “walk by the Spirit” he indicates the means of victory over “the lust of the flesh.”  
p. 137

**Lenski says:**

Not to yield to the flesh means ever to follow the spirit. This is what Paul now presents. **Now I say** (my meaning is): **Keep walking with what is spirit, and you will not carry out any craving of what is flesh.** This is what Paul intends to convey to the Galatians as regards their daily life and conversation: that in thought, word, and deed they ever use what regeneration has brought to birth in them; then any stirring of what is still left in them of sinful flesh, their old depraved nature, will not be carried out into action but will be crushed in its incipency (v. 24).  
pp. 280-81

**Lightfoot says:**

'This is my command. Walk by the rule of the Spirit. If you do so, you will not, you cannot, gratify the lusts of the flesh. Between the *Spirit* and the *flesh* there is not only no alliance; there is an interminable, deadly feud. (You feel these antagonistic forces working in you: you would fain follow the guidance of your conscience, and you are dragged back by an opposing power.) And if you adopt the rule of the *Spirit*, you thereby renounce your allegiance to the *law*.'  
p. 209

**Lightfoot says:**

In this passage the Spirit is doubly contrasted, first, with the *flesh*, and secondly, with the *law*. The flesh and the law are closely allied: they both move in the same element, in the sphere of outward and material things. The law is not only no safeguard against the flesh, but rather provokes it; and he who would renounce the flesh, must renounce the law also. We have here germs of the ideas more fully developed in the Epistle to the Romans.  
p. 209

**Lovett says:**

**SPIRIT-FLESH.** These verses present the truth of the Christian's two natures and the struggle between them. It is a supreme truth of the N.T., picturing the warfare which does not end until the believer sheds his body at death. The source of all desire to do evil resides in the flesh. It is animated of course, by Satan, the unholy spirit. The yearning to do the will of God resides in the new nature (the new creation—2 Cor. 5:17) as animated by the Holy Spirit. These two gods (Holy Spirit and Satan) compete for our wills. Because of the mutual conflict between them, no matter what we would do, the other god opposes it. A decision to obey the new nature (the Spirit's leading) is resisted by the old nature and vice versa.

p. 67

**Luther says:**

"I have not forgotten what I told you about faith in the first part of my letter. Because I exhort you to mutual love you are not to think that I have gone back on my teaching of justification by faith alone. I am still of the same opinion. To remove every possibility for misunderstanding I have added this explanatory note: 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'"

With this verse Paul explains how he wants this sentence to be understood: "By love serve on another. When I bid you to love one another, this is what I mean and require, 'Walk in the Spirit.' I know very well you will not fulfil the Law, because you are sinners as long as you live. Nevertheless, you should endeavor to walk in the spirit, i. e., fight against the flesh and follow the leads of the Holy Ghost."

p. 220

**MacArthur says:**

The fact that *peripateō* (**walk**) is used here in the present tense indicates that Paul is speaking of continuous, regular action, in other words, a habitual way of life. And the fact that the verb is also in the imperative mood indicates he is not giving believers an option but a command.

p. 152

**MacArthur says:**

Among other things, walking implies progress, going from where one is to where he ought to be. As a believer submits to the Spirit's control, he moves forward in his spiritual life. Step by step the Spirit moves him from where he is toward where God wants him to be. So while it is the Spirit who is the source of all holy living, it is the believer who is commanded to walk. This is the apparent paradox of the divine and human that is seen in salvation . . .  
pp. 152-53

**MacArthur says:**

**5:16 Walk in the Spirit.** All believers have the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20) as the personal power for living to please God. The form of the Greek verb translated "walk" indicates continuous action, or a habitual lifestyle. Walking also implies progress; as a believer submits to the Spirit's control—that is, responds in obedience to the simple commands of Scripture—he grows in his spiritual life . . .  
p. 1675

**MacArthur says:**

**the flesh.** This is not simply the physical body, but includes the mind, will, and emotions which are all subject to sin. It refers in general to our unredeemed humanness.  
p. 1675

**Patrick & Lowth say:**

Ver. 16. "But this I say (*to take you off from this bondage to the law*), Walk in the Spirit (*in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*, Rom. vii. 6) and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; (*i.e. the motions of the flesh shall not have dominion over you, and bring you captive to the law of sin, as it doth in them; because ye are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14.)  
p. 741

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

The only consistent way to overcome the sinful desires of our human nature (the **flesh**) is to live step-by-step in the power of the Holy **Spirit** as He works through our spirit (v. 25).

p. 1527

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

**Shall not** is a striking promise. Walking each moment by faith in God's word under the Spirit's control assures absolute victory over the desires of our sinful nature.

p. 1527

Ridderbos says:

He must *walk* by the Spirit, that is, he must in fellowship with Christ let himself be ruled by the Spirit. The principle of the Spirit does not make human effort unnecessary, but arouses it and equips it to put all its forces into the service of the Spirit. The tense of *walk* points to a continuing condition. The life through the Spirit does not consist of a separable series of deeds, but assumes an inner conversion which is sustained by God . . .

p. 203



**Vos says:**

The apostle's goal in this passage is to describe liberty in daily life and how it is to be achieved. "Walk by the Spirit" (v. 16) is the preferred translation. The difference from the Authorized Version—"Walk in the Spirit"—is important. Walking *in* the Spirit implies more dependence on self; walking *by* the Spirit properly emphasizes the energizing power within. To walk by the Spirit is to allow the Spirit to be the governing principle in one's life. If the believer permits the Spirit to control, he shall not "fulfill (give effect to or allow to be accomplished) the lusts of the flesh (the natural man or old nature, distinct from physical body)." Flesh is looked upon as evil in Scripture but body is not. We shall never obtain new flesh but we shall gain a new, incorruptible body at the resurrection. The believer has no promise to be free from the lusts of the old nature in this life, but he need not capitulate to temptations (1 Co 10:13). The works of the flesh are enumerated in verses 19-21.

p. 100

**Wuest says:**

But I say, Through the instrumentality of the Spirit habitually order your manner of life, and you will in no wise execute the passionate desire of the evil nature, for the evil nature constantly has a strong desire to suppress the Spirit, and the Spirit constantly has a strong desire to suppress the evil nature. And these are entrenched in an attitude of mutual opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you desire to do. But if you are being led by the Spirit you are not under law.

pp. 208-9

**Wuest says:**

The words "I say then," throw emphasis upon the statement which they introduce. Paul now introduces a statement intended to counteract the erroneous impression held by the Galatians, possibly at the suggestion of the Judaizers, that without the restraining influence of the law, they would fall into sin. Instead of an attempted law obedience in their own strength motivated by the terrors of the law, Paul admonishes them to continue to govern their lives by the inward impulses of the Holy Spirit.

p. 152

### Wuest says:

The word *walk* is from *peripateo* which means literally “to walk about,” but when used in a connection like this, refers to the act of conducting one’s self, or ordering one’s manner of life or behavior.

p. 153

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Walking implies *continuance*. There must be a perpetual abiding in Christ. How many Christians think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Jesus, and may then give their hearts to the world all the day: but this is poor living; we should always be with Him, treading in His steps and doing His will.

p. 628

Walking also implies *habit*. When we speak of a man’s walk and conversation, we mean his habits, the constant tenour of his life. Now, if we sometimes enjoy Christ, and then forget Him; sometimes call Him ours, and anon lose our hold, that is not a habit; we do not *walk* in Him. We must keep to Him, cling to Him, never let Him go, but live and have our being in Him. “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him;” persevere in the same way in which ye have begun, and, as at the first Christ Jesus was the trust of your faith, the source of your life, the principle of your action, and the joy of your spirit, so let him be the same till life’s end; the same when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and enter into the joy and the rest which remain for the people of God.

p. 628

(Christ/Life by Ruth Myers) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ruth Myers, 2005.

“God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus” (1 Corinthians 1:30, NLT), and in doing this for you He has also made Jesus to be your wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30, ESV). Therefore you can say, “Christ is *my* wisdom, *my* righteousness, *my* sanctification, *my* redemption. I’m wise with His wisdom and righteous with His righteousness. By Him—by all that He is—I am sanctified and redeemed.”

Christ and all that He is represents the only reason for the radical change in your identity. Therefore God gives you this thrilling invitation: “From now on you must grow stronger through union with the Lord and through His mighty power” (Ephesians 6:10, Williams). As you deepen and develop in this union, Jesus promises that your life will bear spiritual fruit: “It is the man who shares my life and whose life I share who proves fruitful” (John 15:5, Phillips).  
p. 98

(Into the Depths of God: Where Eyes See the Invisible, Ears Hear the Inaudible, and Minds Conceive the Inconceivable by Calvin Miller) Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House. Copyright – Calvin Miller, 2000.

I wouldn’t have brought the whole thing up except that he was a clear example of a man who was a Christian before he became an alcoholic. His emptiness preceded his addictions. In him, once again I could see the truth in Jung’s proverb: “The absence of Inwardness is the central neurosis of our time.” The absence of inwardness is the lost freedom we trade for addictions. Pascal was right. There is a God-shaped vacuum in our lives that only God can fill. Here I must ask the question: Are you already a Christian in whose life there is a vacuum yet unfilled? Even Christians can have such vacuums. How did they come to own such emptiness? Through the simple neglect of their God relationship.

When God fills our inner vacuum with his Holy Spirit, life works. When God does not fill the vacuum, a host of consuming appetites swarm through our better intentions. Brilliant people who should be masters of their appetites are at last managed by some dread fiend that was at first unwelcome in their lives. Then the fiend was made welcome. Then his presence was customary. Then he became habitual. At last, the addiction and not the Christian was master.  
p. 29

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

“Do not quench the Spirit,” Paul says. Any time I have a desire, the Spirit will prompt me to set it before God and ask the question, “Lord, what do you want me to do with this?” Or I can simply ask regarding any course of behavior, *“If I walk down this road, where will it lead in the long run—toward or away from the me I want to be?”*

God will never lead us to manage a desire in a sinful way. If I want to walk down the wrong road, I must begin by silencing God's divine voice within me. I must be careful not to pray about this desire with a submitted spirit. I must make sure I don't talk about this desire with wise friends who will hold me accountable. I must make sure I don't look carefully at passages of Scripture on the subject and reflect on them. I must do all these things without recognizing I am doing them. I must keep myself in a state of spiritual and mental vagueness where God is concerned.

p. 139

v. 17 For the flesh is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the Spirit. And the Spirit is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the flesh. For these are opposed to one another, in order that you may not do the things that you desire to do.

The NET Bible translates verse 17:

For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

Peterson paraphrases verse 17:

For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**5:17.** Paul next explained the need for a life that is controlled and energized by **the Spirit**. The explanation is found in the fact that each Christian has two natures, a **sinful nature** received at birth, inherited from fallen Adam, and a new nature received at regeneration when said Christian became a participant in the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4). Both natures have desires, the one for evil and the other for holiness. Thus **they are in conflict with each other**, and the result can be that they keep a believer from doing what he otherwise would. In other words the Holy Spirit blocks, when He is allowed to do so, the evil cravings of the flesh. (Some hold the view that each believer *is* a new person, still possessing the fallen human nature, but not having a new nature. Others prefer to define “nature” as capacity, the old nature being that capacity to serve sin and self and the new nature the capacity to serve God and righteousness.)

I have chosen this as our **KEY VERSE** in:

**You Were Running Well UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on Law.**

Within the child of God there is this **TUG-OF-WAR** going on between:

**OUR FLESH,**

**OUR OLD NATURE,** and

**THE SPIRIT** who energizes the new nature.

Paul describes this in:

Romans 7:15-25 (NASB)

For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

The law stirs up the flesh, and grace is operative through the Spirit.

To live for yourself is to walk after the flesh. To live for God is to walk after the Spirit.

To be dominated by the flesh is to be dominated by the devil. To be dominated by the devil. To be dominated by the Spirit is to be controlled by God.

It is in the areas of our lives where we feel fully capable to move out on our own that the flesh gets a stronghold. It is those areas where we feel that we can make it on our own that we feel to lose Christ in that area would not affect us.

It is in those areas where we are not dependent that we are vulnerable.

All that the flesh needs to move into action is to be placed before God on a basis of performance or the fulfillment of certain legal requirements. This is where so few Christians seem to understand that our Christian life is not by our flesh doing anything, but Christ living through us. Paul did not say, “for me to live is the Holy Spirit,” but “for me to live is Christ.” Christ lives in me.

The Holy Spirit in all of His power is forming the life of Christ within each of us. We notice this back in:

Galatians 4:19 (DAV)

My little children of whom again I am experiencing the pains of birth until which time Christ should be formed in you.

In like manner, as our lives are yielded to the Holy Spirit, so He has free sway to do what He wants to do, but through the flesh this operation is hindered. Our whole problem is we think that we can do it in the flesh when God has totally condemned the flesh and its work.

We presume with **SAUL** in 1 Samuel 1:15 to preserve that which God has totally condemned. Our attitude is like a ball player in a hitting slump who blames the bat for his misfortune.

**Ian Thomas illustrates this by pointing out:**

Our human heart is the royal residence of the Holy Spirit. In this royal residence is the grand piano of personality. Man has the key. One day Satan convinced Adam that he could play the piano just as good as the Holy Spirit. While Satan and Adam were talking, not known to Adam, the devil's sidekick, the flesh, slipped into the music room and began making a terrible racket by pounding away in discord at the grand piano that was meant to bring forth beautiful music. Sure Adam, now you can pick your own tune, play whatever you want. Well at that moment, Adam began to quarrel with Eve, Cain murdered Abel, and the whole vile thing has been going on ever since.

(source unknown)

When the children of Israel came up to Kadesh-Barnea they sent the **TWELVE SPIES** in to see the promised land. When they returned there were 10 of the spies who, speaking from the flesh point of view, felt that it was impossible for them to go in. And there were two, recognizing that in the power of the Spirit, if God be for them, no one could be against them, and that they would ultimately triumph in receiving that which the Lord had promised to them, spoke to the multitude and said, "Let us go in."

We, through the flesh, try to do what only the Spirit of God can do and that is why we are so frustrated. We set up certain standards of legalism and then try in the flesh to perform properly and, failing to do so, become depressed, guilty and defeated. This is certainly the desire of Satan for each of us as God's children, that we endeavor to please God by our personal performance. This was the danger that was facing these Galatian Christians.



We want so badly to overcome the law of gravity. And we can stand there and jump and jump and we will never do it. For as we jump, we find that the law of gravity takes over and brings us back to earth. Now there is a greater law, the law of aerodynamics that will do that which we cannot do for ourselves. As we step into the plane and sit in the seat, we find that before long, we are skyward, overcoming the law of gravity, not in our ability; for if we decided to step outside the plane and see how personally we could overcome the law of gravity, we would find that the law of gravity would immediately take over.

If our Christian life can be explained in terms of our own effort, then it can be safely said that we are living in the flesh.

We are so prone to be like **PHILIP** when the Lord asked him to test him:

John 6:5 (NASB)

. . . “Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?”

John 6:7 (NASB)

Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.”

Here he stands before a difficult situation and looks at it only in terms of what he is able humanly to do. Jesus Christ is completely irrelevant to the situation.

We limit our lives so oftentimes only in terms of ourselves and our abilities while Christ is present to do through us that which we cannot do for ourselves. So Paul tells us that the flesh and the Spirit war within us for the right of domination and our only participation is to whom we yield.

Austria and Prussia, in the time of Frederick, warred for Cilicia. Cilicia felt the shock of the conflict for it was fought upon her soil, but mightier contestants were deciding the issue. And so it is in the life of the Christian.

**Anders says:**

Now Paul demonstrates the need for the Holy Spirit's enablement. The Christian will, this side of heaven, always experience conflict between the Holy Spirit and the flesh. Here flesh is not limited to the physical dimension of man but denotes anything less than and other than God in which man places trust that belongs to God alone. Paul gives a more complete description of this conflict in Romans 7.  
p. 64

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

A characteristic of the contrast between *sarx* and *pneuma* is that the two principles are in deep and irreconcilable conflict. In the sense in which Paul uses the words, the sinful nature does no good and does not desire good, whereas the spirit does no evil and, indeed, opposes anything that does not please God . . .  
p. 739

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

The last clause of this verse probably means that the sinful nature keeps a person from doing the good he or she desires (see Ro 7:15-16). Some have maintained that there is no conflict within the Christian because the old nature governed by the "flesh" has supposedly been eradicated. But this is not true. Naturally, the sinful nature is to become increasingly subdued as the Christian learns by grace to walk in the Spirit, but it is never eliminated in this life. So the Christian is never released from the necessity of consciously choosing to go in God's way and to depend on his grace.  
p. 739

**Bartlett says:**

It is imperative for our spiritual growth that we grasp the fact that the old nature is not removed or reformed at regeneration. Failure to understand this elementary fact frequently plunges the new convert into needless bewilderment and even despair of his standing before God when, after a peaceful period of triumph and fellowship with Jesus, he stumbles into the old sins and faults he fancied had been vanquished forever.  
p. 106

**Calvin says:**

The spiritual life will not be maintained without a struggle. We are here informed of the nature of the difficulty, which arises from our natural inclinations being opposed to the Spirit.  
pp. 162-3

**Eadie says:**

The flesh and spirit are powers in one and the same person. The same verb . . . as a *vox media*, is used of both, to mark the reflex antagonism.  
p. 409

**Eadie says:**

The flesh longs and wrestles for its former predominance; it is ever in the position of lusting against the spirit, and the spirit is always and unweariedly beating back and resisting the impulses and yearnings of the flesh.  
p. 409

**Gaebelein says:**

And only the power of the Spirit of God can deliver from the outworking of this fallen nature, the flesh, which is still in the believer. The Holy Spirit is in the child of God to manifest this power, but it means subjection to Himself.  
p. 227

**Gutzke says:**

To be a Christian involves unending conflict within one's soul. No matter how strong a man's faith may be, there is always the dead weight of his own human nature. Every Christian has two natures in him. Paul calls one of these the old man, and the other he speaks of as the new man. Paul refers to the first as the flesh, and to the second as the Spirit. When Paul uses the word "flesh" he means all that a person has in himself from his parents, his community, his country. All that a man has from his human birth and from his natural life is included in flesh.  
p. 130

**Hogg & Vine say:**

**For**—introducing the ground on which the assurance (a) or prohibition (b) of v. 16 is based.  
p. 277

**Hogg & Vine say:**

In the first case the thought is that the object of the striving of the Spirit in the believer is that he may be saved from yielding to the evil tendencies of his own nature . . .  
pp. 278-9

**Hogg & Vine say:**

**ye may not do the things that ye would.**—more literally and expressively ‘in order that the things you desire these you may not do’, *i.e.*, the things toward which fallen man naturally turns, and which are enumerated in v. 19 as “the works of the flesh”. This is the characteristic of Christian liberty as an experience; since the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit it is no longer inevitable that he must yield to the evil motions of the flesh, he shall, if the condition of vv. 16 and 18 is fulfilled, enjoy happy liberty from all such bondage.

p. 279

**Ironside says:**

The conflict is shown in verse 17: “For the flesh lusteth (or desireth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against (or contrary to) the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” It is not exactly, “So that ye *cannot* do the things that ye would,” for God has made provision that we might do the things that we would, but it should be rendered, “So that ye *may not* do the things that ye would.” Here is conflict in the believer’s breast. The flesh desires one thing, the Spirit another, and as long as there is not a full surrender to the will of God these two are in constant warfare, and therefore the believer may not do the things that he would.

pp. 203-4

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:**

. . . The Spirit strives against the flesh and its evil influence; the flesh against the Spirit and His good influence, *so that neither the one nor the other can be fully carried out into action.*

p. 1275

Lange says:

**For.**—This introduces, in the first place, simply the proof of a “lust of the flesh” (ver. 16) == of such an one I speak, for **the flesh lusteth**. Paul does not stop, however, but is led further to the antagonistic idea . . . **Against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.**—Each principle combats the other, and seeks to wrest the dominion from it, and on the other hand to place itself in the possession of this.  
p. 137

Lange says:

STARKE:—The contest of the flesh and the Spirit exists alone in the regenerate. The conflict which exists in an unregenerate man, so that he does not fulfil all evil lusts that stir in him, is only a conflict of the reason with its natural impulses and gross sensual desires. This is to be carefully distinguished from the former, that one may not, because he feels within himself a struggle against sin, immediately reckon himself regenerate.—The strife of the Spirit against the flesh is an infallible token of regeneration and a state of grace, and is distinguished from the strife which is waged by the mere powers of reason in this, that the former always wins the victory.  
p. 144

Lovett says:

**DOMINATE.** Note how we are told to let the Spirit lead us, which implies we have the power to refuse. We thus discover the real meaning of Christian freedom—the privilege of choosing which nature (and the god behind it) will be our master in any given situation. Before salvation we didn’t have such a choice. We could only choose between varying degrees of the old nature. The new nature supplied by the new birth makes possible another choice. Christian freedom then, is more precisely defined as the liberty to choose which nature will dominate our lives. Christians, entertaining the delusion that their old natures are dead, become easy victims for Satan. Such a notion can bring despair to a convert who finds himself sinning. Older Christians embracing this error often imagine they cannot sin and give ridiculous names to those practices which the Word of God clearly calls sin.  
p. 68

**Luther says:**

When Paul declares that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,” he means to say that we are not to think, speak or do the things to which the flesh incites us. “I know,” he says, “that the flesh courts sin. The thing for you to do is to resist the flesh by the Spirit. But if you abandon the leadership of the Spirit for that of the flesh, you are going to fulfil the lust of the flesh and die in your sins.”

p. 222

**Luther says:**

These two leaders, the flesh and the Spirit, are bitter opponents. Of this opposition the Apostle writes in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into the captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

p. 222

**MacArthur says:**

The flesh opposes the work of the Spirit and leads the believer toward sinful behavior he would not otherwise be compelled to do . . .

p. 1675

**McGee says:**

A transliteration of this verse will help convey the meaning: “For the flesh *warreth* against the Spirit, and the Spirit *warreth* against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” that is, the things that the old nature wanted to do. This is very important to see—the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit wars against the flesh.

p. 188

### Patrick & Lowth say:

Ver. 17. “For (*in them*) the flesh lusteth against the Spirit (*or inward man not renewed*, ver. 23. 25), and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh (ver. 19-22), and these two are contrary; so that ye (*who are under the law, and walk not in newness of the Spirit*) cannot do the things that ye would (*for the good that ye would, ye do not*, ver. 19).”  
p. 741

### Radmacher, Allen & House say:

The potential of **the flesh** energized by Satan in the life of the Christian should not be underestimated. Given free rein, the flesh will direct our choices, making us do what we know we should not do. This inner conflict between the flesh and the **Spirit** is very real, but there is considerable disagreement as to its precise meaning. Some believe that *flesh* here refers to a “sinful nature” continuing after salvation, while others view it as simply the physical flesh and its natural tendencies. Still others focus on the “fleshly” or “worldly” habits and patterns that continue after justification. Although the precise meaning of *flesh* [is] unclear, Paul’s intent is plain. The desires of our flesh are at odds with what the Holy Spirit desires for us: to be free from sin.  
p. 1527

### Ridderbos says:

The desperate necessity to choose one or the other, the Spirit or the flesh, becomes apparent from the irreconcilable conflict between them, and from the strength which the flesh too continues to exercise. The desire of the flesh takes offence at the Spirit which wants to put it in bondage. Hence, too, the Spirit is also the great enemy of the flesh, and its desires are diametrically opposed to those of the flesh. This antithesis is once more expressly postulated in explanation of the opposed desires.  
p. 203



### Spurgeon says:

THE worst enemy we have is the flesh. Augustine used frequently to pray, "Lord, deliver me from that evil man, myself." All the fire which the devil can bring from hell could do us little harm if we had no so much fuel in our nature. It is the powder in the magazine of the old man which is our perpetual danger. When we are guarding against foes without, we must not forget to be continually on our watch-tower against the foe of foes within. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." On the other hand, our best friend, who loves us better than we love ourselves, is the Holy Spirit. We are shockingly forgetful of the Holy Ghost, and therein it is to be feared that we greatly grieve Him; yet we are immeasurably indebted to Him: in fact, we owe our spiritual existence to His divine power. It would not be proper to compare the love of the Spirit with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as even by implication to set up a scale of degrees in love; for the love of the regenerating Spirit is infinite, even as is the love of the redeeming Son. But yet for a moment we will set these two displays of love side by side.  
p. 322

### Vos says:

Verse 17 describes essentially the same struggle within the believer as appears in Romans 6 and 7. Briefly the idea is this. Within the believer are two natures, an old nature and a new nature, a fleshly nature and a spiritual nature. The first he receives at birth and the second by regeneration. The term *flesh* encompasses all the desires of the natural man and *spirit* the desires of the spiritual man or regenerate or new nature. The old nature is still under the influence of the Prince of this world who energizes the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2). The new nature is enabled by the Holy Spirit to overcome the downward pull of the old nature. *Lusteth* is not a very meaningful translation today, for now it has an evil connotation; the term in the Greek is neutral. "Contentends again" would not be a bad rendering, though it is not completely exact. The last part of the verse is commonly taken to mean that the old nature is so active that we find it almost impossible to accomplish the good things our new nature wants to achieve. But several of the commentators point out that the whole context is so gloriously positive and victorious that emphasis must be put on defeat of the flesh. Thus Harrison says: "Behind the Spirit's resistance to the flesh is the divine purpose that believers should be kept from doing things they (otherwise) would do."  
pp. 100-101

**Wiersbe says:**

Just as Isaac and Ishmael were unable to get along, so the Spirit and the flesh (the old nature) are at war with each other. By “the flesh,” of course, Paul did not mean “the body.” The human body is not sinful; it is neutral. If the Holy Spirit controls the body, then we walk in the Spirit; but if the flesh controls the body, then we walk in the lusts (desires) of the flesh. The Spirit and the flesh have different appetites, and this is what creates the conflict.  
p. 130

**Wuest says:**

When the flesh presses hard upon the believer with its evil behests, the Holy Spirit is there to oppose the flesh and give the believer victory over it, in order that the believer will not obey the flesh, and thus sin. When the Holy Spirit places a course of conduct upon the heart of the believer, the flesh opposes the Spirit in an effort to prevent the believer from obeying the Spirit. The purpose of each is to prevent the believer from doing what the other moves him to do. The choice lies with the saint. He must develop the habit of keeping his eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus and his trust in the Holy Spirit. The more he says NO to sin, the easier it is to say NO, until it becomes a habit. The more he says YES to the Lord Jesus, the easier it is to say YES, until that becomes a habit.  
pp. 154-55

**(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God’s Best Version of You by John Ortberg)**  
**Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– John Ortberg, 2010.**

Temptation promises that we can be free to gratify our appetites as much as we want. See a fly, want a fly, eat a fly. Temptation promises freedom, but it makes us a slave. There is always a hook. Real freedom is not the external freedom to gratify every appetite; it is the internal freedom not to be enslaved by our appetites, to have a place to stand so that we are not mastered by them. For we are something more than a stomach, a mouth, and a pair of eyes.  
p. 140

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

All good things are found in the divine Comforter. Matchless consolation, infallible instruction, immortal quickening, spiritual energy, and divine sanctification all lie compounded with other excellencies in that sacred eye-salve, the heavenly anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. It imparts a delightful fragrance to the character and person of the man upon whom it is poured. Nothing like it can be found in all the treasures of the rich, or the secrets of the wise. It is not to be imitated. It comes alone from God, and it is freely given, through Jesus Christ, to every waiting soul. Let us seek it, for we may have it, may have it this very evening. O Lord, anoint Thy servants.  
p. 669

(When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back In The Box by John Ortberg)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– John Ortberg, 2007.

The ancient prophecy said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. But Joseph and Mary didn't live in Bethlehem. They never would have gone there. Except—"it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus . . . ."

Why did it come to pass?

Caesar would have told you that it was because of him. Caesar made a call. Caesar was in control. But Luke raises a question: What king is at work here? Whose will is actually being done? Who is the real Master of the Board?

This account is really the tale of two cities. Rome is the site of one kind of kingdom, peace, and glory. Bethlehem is a kingdom of another kind. Money, soldiers, palaces, titles, Boardwalk, and Park Place are all in Rome. Bethlehem was all stables and mangers and donkeys and shepherds.

But the angels weren't singing in Rome. They were singing in Bethlehem.

Caesar thought his throne in Rome was as secure as a throne could be. But the kingdom was lying in a manger in Bethlehem.

Caesar has one palace left in the world. It's not in Rome but in Vegas, its glory is its glitter, and it's funded by control-deluded suckers who have yet to learn the one rule that odds makers got from John Calvin: in the long run, you can't beat the house. The baby in the manger is enthroned in hearts and lives and houses of worship on every continent in the world. How did that come to pass?

60: "And it came to pass": Luke 2:1 KJV.  
pp. 60–61

## Sin in the Heart of Every Man

Michael Shermer, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine and author of *The Science of Good and Evil*, writes:

I once had the opportunity to ask Thomas Keneally, author of *Schindler's List*, what he thought was the difference between Oskar Schindler, rescuer of Jews and hero of his story, and Amon Goeth, the Nazi commandant of the Plaszow concentration camp. His answer was revealing. Not much, he said. Had there been no war, Mr. Schindler and Mr. Goeth might have been drinking buddies and business partners, morally obtuse, perhaps, but relatively harmless. What a difference a war makes, especially to the moral choices that lead to good and evil.

Shermer goes on to quote Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

*Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec, Canada; source: Michael Shermer, "Something Evil Comes This Way," [www.skeptic.com](http://www.skeptic.com) (3-18-04)*

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### Sin Looks Pleasant at First

We are too apt to forget that temptation to sin will rarely present itself to us in its true colors, saying, “I am your deadly enemy, and I want to ruin you forever in hell.” Oh no! Sin comes to us like Judas, with a kiss; like Joab, with outstretched hand and flattering words. The forbidden fruit seemed good and desirable to Eve; yet it cast her out of Eden. Walking idly on his palace roof seemed harmless enough to David; yet it ended in adultery and murder.

Sin rarely seems [like] sin at first beginnings. Let us then watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation.

—J. C. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool, England (1800s)

*J. C. Ryle, Holiness; source: Tony Lane, Timeless Witness (Hendrickson, 2004), p. 392*

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(Choosing to See: A Journey of Struggle and Hope by Mary Beth Chapman with Ellen Vaughn) Grand Rapids, MI: Revell. Copyright— Mary Beth Chapman, 2010.

Depression became my friend, in a strange and painful way, a pushy friend I really did not want. But this strange friend made it so clear to me that I couldn't just buck up and *feel* better, or try harder and *do* better. I was helpless.

My husband could not fix me. My closest friends, who somehow loved me too, could not fix me. And Lord knows I could not fix myself. If I wanted to live in a different place than this dark cloud of fear, anger, and sadness, I had to realize that this burden was way too heavy to carry alone. God and God alone was the One who could take the depression and turn it into something teachable. All I had to do was the hardest thing possible for a person like me: I just had to be willing to give up control and give in to Him, and let Him use this cross in my life.

p. 69

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

Great achievement is more likely to occur in the context of great friendship rather than through the drive of self-assertion.

### **Thought**

*Individual responsibility and corporate encouragement belong together.*

(July 29)

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

**The NET Bible translates verse 18:**

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

**Peterson paraphrases verse 18:**

Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

**5:18.** In summary, Paul emphasized that a godly life is not lived **under** the rules of the **Law** but is a life **led by the Spirit**. It was important for the Galatians to know that just as justification is not possible by works so sanctification cannot be achieved by human effort. This of course does not mean that a Christian is totally passive in either case for the response of faith is necessary—faith in Christ to save and in the Holy Spirit to sanctify.

Paul starts out in verse 16 with a **COMMAND**:

**“walk by means of the Spirit.”**

And then he gives us **TWO REASONS** in verse 17:

1. **“For the flesh is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the Spirit. And the Spirit is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the flesh” and**
2. **“For these are opposed to one another, in order that you may not do the things that you desire to do.”**

**“BUT”** in **CONTRAST**:

**“IF YOU ARE BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT, YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW.”**

If the Spirit is leading, then it does not depend upon your performance and you are not under law. It is the law which brings the flesh into action, and we are living on the basis of performance, endeavoring to produce within the flesh that which was intended to be produced in the power of the Spirit.

Romans 8:2 (NASB)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

**Luther used to say:**

. . . “My flesh seems to be on a warpath against the Spirit again. Go to it flesh, and rage all you want to. But you are not going to have your way. I follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit.”  
p. 225



The outworking of the life of grace in Christ Jesus is by the Spirit, and the product of the law is the fruitage of the flesh.

**Anders says:**

In summary, Paul tells us that victory over sin is not the result of living under the law. Instead, it is the result of actively yielding to the Spirit. Therefore, both the first step of salvation and its ongoing steps (sanctification, growth in holiness) are brought about within us by God's Spirit working through faith. To be saved, we must have faith in Christ. To walk in God's way, we must have faith in the Holy Spirit, for he empowers us to walk in obedience.  
p. 64

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

The final verse of this section is best taken as a summary in which Paul reminds the Galatians that, though he is now talking of the need to live a godly life, he is not thereby reverting to legalism. Life by the spirit is neither legalism nor license—nor a middle way between them. It is a life of faith and love that allows a person to be led by the Spirit.  
p. 739

**Bartlett says:**

Turning to the brighter side of the picture, it holds gloriously true that the more we say yes to Jesus the easier will it be, until finally it becomes a fixed habit. Precious and weighty, then, is our responsibility for cultivating response-ability to Jesus.  
p. 107

**Bickel & Jantz say:**

Even though the Holy Spirit is in us, it is our responsibility to surrender our will to Him so He can direct our desires, enabling us to produce the thoughts and actions that please and glorify God. Without God's strength and enablement to help us in our weakness and frailty, we are at the mercy of the desires that come from the flesh.

Another way to say it is this: If we don't follow the leading of the Spirit, we *will* follow the leading of the flesh, with the result that we will gratify the desires of the flesh.

p. 130

**Calvin says:**

In the way of the Lord believers are apt to stumble. But let them not be discouraged, because they are unable to satisfy the demands of the law. Let them listen to the consolatory declaration of the apostle, which is also found in other parts of his writings, (Rom. vi. 14,) *ye are not under the law*.

pp. 163-4

**Fergusson says:**

He proveth the same conclusion, secondly, showing that they who are led and guided by the regenerate part, or an inward principle of grace within (which is all one with "walking in the Spirit," spoken of, ver. 16,) are "not under the law," whereby is not meant, that they are not under the law as a rule and guide of new obedience; for both the word and the Spirit do guide, as shall appear from the first doctrine; but they are not under the condemning . . .

p. 95

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:**

18. "If ye *are* led (give yourselves up to be led) *by (Greek)* the Spirit, ye are not under the law." For ye are not working the works of the flesh (vss. 16, 19-21) which bring one "under the law" (Rom. 8:2, 14). The "Spirit makes free from the law of sin and death" (vs. 23). The law is made for a fleshly man, and for the works of the flesh (I Tim. 1:9), "not for a righteous man" . . .

p. 1275

**Luther says:**

When the flesh begins to cut up the only remedy is to take the sword of the Spirit, the word of salvation, and fight against the flesh. If you set the Word out of sight, you are helpless against the flesh. I know this to be a fact. I have been assailed by many violent passions, but as soon as I took hold of some Scripture passage, my temptations left me. Without the Word I could not have helped myself against the flesh.  
p. 225

**MacArthur says:**

These are mutually exclusive. Either you live by the power of the Holy Spirit which results in righteous behavior and spiritual attitudes (vv. 22-29) or by the law which can only produce unrighteous behavior and attitudes . . .  
p. 1675

**Pinnock says:**

Paul understands the Christian life to be a life of being led along by the Spirit (v. 18). Only He can give the strength to subdue our sinful passions and cause the fruit of righteousness to grow in our lives. The Spirit is the divine guide to whom we are to submit ourselves. This chapter is crammed with references to His working. We are under Him, not under law.  
p. 76

**Radmacher, Allen & House say:**

Those who **are led by the Holy Spirit** exhibit a quality of behavior (5:22, 23) which is above and beyond the requirements of the Mosaic code.  
p. 1527

**Vos says:**

Verses 16 through 18 spotlight the importance, yes, the necessity, of the Holy Spirit's ministry if the old nature or flesh is to be kept under control.  
p. 102

**Wiersbe says:**

The solution is not to pit our will against the flesh, but to surrender our will to the Holy Spirit. This verse literally means "But if you are *willingly led* by the Spirit, then you are not under the law." The Holy Spirit writes God's law on our hearts (Heb. 10:14-17; see 2 Cor. 3) so that we *desire* to obey Him in love. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8). Being "led of the Spirit" and "walking in the Spirit" are the opposites of yielding to the desires of the flesh.  
p. 131

**v. 19 Now the works of the flesh are plain to see, which are:**

**The NET Bible translates verse 19:**

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,

**Peterson paraphrases verse 19:**

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time:

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles this section and then says:**

THE PERIL OF VICTORY OVER SIN (5:19-21).

Since a Christian has the same sinful nature he possessed before salvation, he may fall prey to the sins that nature produces if he does not live by means of the Spirit.

**5:19.** The apostle declared that the sins of the flesh **are obvious**, meaning either, as some suggest, that they are public and cannot be hidden, or better, since some are private sins, that they originate with **the sinful nature** and not with the new nature indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The listed sins are commonly seen to fall into four categories.

Jesus says in:

**Mark 7:20-23** (NASB)

And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Have you noticed that the terminology has changed here from the **WORKS OF THE LAW** to the **“WORKS OF THE FLESH”**?

As soon as there is an introduction of law in my relationship to the Lord, immediately the flesh gets into the act. If we think we are going to be made righteous by the works of the law, it would be well for us to take a look at a few of its products as we by the flesh try to perform it.

Back in verse 16 Paul **COMMANDS** us to **“walk by means of the Spirit.”** We do that by:

**DEPENDENCE,**

**SUBMISSION,** and

**OBEDIENCE.**

Whereas, when we get down to verse 19, the terminology has changed and it is:

**“THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.”**

The **FOCUS** is:

off of **DEPENDENCE** and

on **DOING.**

It is:

**PERFORMING,**

**CARRYING OUT THE CURRICULUM,** and

**DOING THE DEMANDS OF THE LAW.**

Paul is now going to make a list of these “WORKS OF THE FLESH” in the next couple of verses.

We will find there are FIFTEEN “WORKS OF THE FLESH” that are listed.

Anders says:

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *The acts of the flesh symbolize spiritual death, but the fruit of the Spirit is evidence of spiritual life.*  
p. 64

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

That *pneuma* and *sarx* (see common on v. 16) are in conflict is now illustrated by contrasting lists of the works of the sinful nature and of the fruit of the Spirit. At the same time, the lists are more than a mere proof of what he has written earlier. For by raising these particulars of conduct, he also provides a checklist for measuring the conduct of those who consider themselves spiritual. If one's conduct is characterized by the traits in the first list, then he or she is either not a believer or else a believer is not being led by God's Spirit.  
pp. 739-40

Bartlett says:

“Now, the works of the flesh are manifest . . .” Let us pause right here. “The works of the flesh are manifest”—that is to say, they are going to be shown for what they really are, in all their naked hideousness. The Word strips of glamour the sins that the world clothes with glamour. We do well from time to time to gaze upon the loathsome picture of sin which Scripture paints.  
p. 107

**Bickel & Jantz say:**

The list Paul gives in 5:19-21 isn't meant to be comprehensive (so if you don't find a particular sin in these verses, it doesn't mean it's got the Holy Spirit Seal of Approval). But the list isn't abstract either. It's more of a sampler of the kinds of sins everyone knows.  
p. 130

**De Haan says:**

Notice just two words, WORKS and FRUIT. Works of the flesh—Fruit of the Spirit. Works speak of effort, mechanics, toil and labor. Works result in weariness, faintness, and often frustration. It is accompanied by much fleshly effort, and much display and noise of hammer and saw. But FRUIT! How different! It does not involve work, but is the result of just RECEIVING, YIELDING, ACCEPTING. It means having no confidence in the flesh, but an honest confession of our weakness, an earnest plea for forgiveness, and a surrender to the will of God.  
p. 166

**Harrison says:**

A more comprehensive arraignment of fallen human nature is found in Romans 1:26-32. Another is in II Timothy 3:1-7. These should be read and pondered. They are a valuable part of the "all scripture" that is inspired of God and "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).  
p. 92



**Henry says:**

He begins with *the works of the flesh*, which, as they are many, so they are manifest. Some are sins against the seventh commandment, such as *adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness*. Some are sins against the first and second commandments, as *idolatry* and *witchcraft*. Others are sins against our neighbour, such as *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings*, and sometimes break out into *murders*, not only of the names and reputation, but even of the very lives of our fellow-creatures. Others are sins against ourselves, such as *drunkenness and revellings*.

p. 1845

**Lange says:**

“Works of the flesh”==“that which is brought to pass when the flesh, *i.e.*, the sinful human nature, and not the Holy Ghost, is the actuating principle.”

MEYER. Therefore naturally many sins are here enumerated, which are by no means carnal sins in the common acceptation, but rather in a very special sense sins against love, agreeably to the context.

p. 138

**MacArthur says:**

These sins characterize all unredeemed mankind living under the impotent commands of the law which produces only iniquity, though not every person manifests all these sins or exhibits them to the same degree. Paul’s list, which is not exhaustive, encompasses three areas of human life: sex, religion, and human relationships.

p. 1675

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

**The works of the flesh** include, but go well beyond, the destructive **contentions** and **jealousies** portrayed in v. 15. Where there is such behavior, it is positive proof that the person is not living in the power of the Holy Spirit (vv. 16, 18, 22, 23) but is being energized by Satan and his hosts . . .  
p. 1527

Wuest says:

. . . I told you in advance, that those who are in the habit of practicing things of that nature shall not inherit the kingdom of God.  
p. 209

Wuest says:

The word *works* is from *ergon*. It is probably to be understood as active rather than passive, as referring to the deeds rather than to the products of the evil nature.  
p. 157

(The Faith: What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters by Charles Colson and Harold Fickett) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Charles W. Colson, 2008.

Self-justifying thieves, the Moussaoui trial, and our reticence to speak of “sin” in regard to crime are only glints off the shield with which we hide our own behavior. We flinch at the judgment even of a mass murderer because we don’t want our materialism, our craving of status, our lust for power, our shady business ethics, our neglect of our children, our abortions, and our drug and alcohol addictions held up for scrutiny. We live in the land of no fault divorce, as if there could ever be such a thing.  
p. 79

v. 20 Fornication, uncleanness, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions.

The NET Bible translates in verse 19 three of the “works of the flesh”:

sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,

The NET Bible translates verse 20:

sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions,

Peterson paraphrases verse 20:

repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved;

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

First, three sexual sins are mentioned. **Sexual immorality** (*porneia*) is often translated “fornication.” From this word comes the term “pornography.” *Porneia* refers to any and all forms of illicit sexual relationships. **Impurity** (*akatharsia*) is a broad term referring to moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed (cf. Eph. 5:3-4). **Debauchery** (*aselgeia*) connotes an open, shameless, brazen display of these evils (cf. 2 Cor. 12:21 where the same words occur; *aselgeia* is included in Rom. 13:13).

**5:20.** Following the sexual sins, Paul cited two religious sins. **Idolatry** involved the worship of pagan gods by bowing to idols, and because of its mention just after the listing of sexual sins it probably includes the male and female prostitution so often a part of heathen religion. **Witchcraft** is the translation of the Greek word *pharmakeia* from which the term “pharmacy” comes. In ancient times the worship of evil powers was accompanied by the use of drugs to create trances. This vice will also be prominent in the Tribulation period (cf. Rev. 9:21; 18:23).

Eight societal evils are then listed (the last one in Gal. 5:21). **Hatred** (*echthrai*) is in the plural form, denoting primarily a feeling of enmity between groups. **Discord** (*eris*) is the natural result of “hatred” and no doubt a problem in the Galatian church. **Jealousy** (*zēlos*) refers not to the godly form but to the sinful and self-centered type. (These two words, *eris* and *zelos*, are also listed in Rom. 13:13.) **Fits of rage** (*thymoi*) or outbursts of temper, often come as a final eruption of smoldering jealousy. **Selfish ambition** (*eritheiai*) is a self-aggrandizing attitude which shows itself in working to get ahead at other’s expense (cf. Phil. 2:3). **Dissensions** (*dichostasiai*) and **factions** (*haireseis*) describe what happens when people quarrel over issues or personalities, causing hurtful divisions.

There are **TEN** of them—“works of the flesh”—that are listed here in verse 20.

You will note that the **FIRST THREE** are **SEXUAL SINS**:

1. **“FORNICATION”**—this refers to unlawful and immoral sexual relationships. It refers to any sexual relationship outside the bounds of marriage. We are living in a day when purity is a sign of ugliness. It is a love that is bought and sold. True love is the total union of two personalities.

Paul is very clear on this in:

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 (NASB)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

(Believe in the God Who Believes in You by Robert H. Schuller) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Robert H. Schuller, 1989.

Morality is never dictated by “normal” or “natural” desire. Morality does not ask, “What do I desire?” Rather it asks, “What is right?” Immorality, on the other hand, is doing what you want to do when you feel like doing it, as long as it makes you feel good.

Morality is not based on natural instinct.

To do what you naturally feel like doing is not morality.

p. 185

(The Agony of Deceit edited by Michael Horton) Chicago, IL: Moody Press.  
Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.

When Jimmy Swaggart defied the orders of the Assemblies of God to refrain from preaching for one year, he assured the public that he was free of moral defect, for, he said, Oral Roberts had cast out the demons from his body over the phone. Oral Roberts confirmed Swaggart's report, insisting he saw the demons with their claws deeply embedded in Swaggart's flesh. Now that the rascals were gone, Swaggart and Roberts asserted, Swaggart [*sic*] could get on with preparing the way for Christ's return. Evidently, personal responsibility for sin can be dismissed by blaming it on an external force. Yet Flip Wilson's famous quip, "The devil made me do it" is hardly comedy when we're talking about the biblical view of sin.

For these metaphysical evangelists, even personal sins can be attributed to the bad god, since he is, after all, sovereign over this earthly realm as the good god is relatively in charge of the spiritual domain. Here again, then, is the echo of the Gnostics of old. When that heresy was revived toward the end of the medieval period, Calvin said, "They made the devil almost the equal of God."

In this way, the problem of sin is replaced with the problem of Satan. It is facing Satan, not my own sin and rebelliousness, that becomes the great task of the Christian life. I'm not the problem—the Devil is!  
p. 133

2. **"UNCLEANNES"**—it began by meaning physical and material dirt. Then it came to mean the quality of that which is soiled and dirty. A mind can be like this and soil everything that passes through it. It can reduce the finest action to the meanest motive. It can defile the purest things with a dirty joke. It is that which separates a man from God. How many have said as a result of participating in illicit sexual relationships, "I feel so dirty and unclean."

Someone has described sex outside of marriage as like taking a handful of dirt and throwing it on the carpet. This is not where it belongs and the carpet has been defiled. This is sex outside the bounds of marriage. Whereas dirt in the garden where it was designed to be becomes soil in which it is possible for the production of a crop. This is sex within the bounds of marriage.

2 Peter 2:22 (NASB)

It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”

The wit and wisdom from Ludlow Porch is always pointed:

Never wrestle with a pig. They get you all dirty and the pig likes it.  
(source unknown)

3. “INDECENCY”—this is a general uncleanness of the whole personality, tainting every sphere of life; a love of sin so reckless that a man has ceased to care what God or man thinks of his actions. It has no respect for people or the rights of anyone else, complete indifference to public decency and opinion.

Whereas the FIRST THREE WORDS had to do with MORAL MATTERS, the next TWO WORDS have to do with WORSHIP:

4. “IDOLATRY”—idol worship and sexual sins were closely related in the ancient world. Whenever anything in the world begins to hold the principal place in our hearts and minds and aims, then it has become an idol because it takes the place God should have in our hearts.

This is the REASON JOHN, as he writes the conclusion of his epistle on fellowship with the Father, concludes it with a WARNING:

1 John 5:21 (NASB)

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

5. “WITCHCRAFT”—without exception, every work of the flesh is the perversion of something which in itself is good.

The **FIRST THREE** are a perversion of the **SEXUAL** instinct which is a lovely thing in love:

**“IDOLATRY”** is the perversion of **WORSHIP**.

**“WITCHCRAFT”** is the perversion of the **PROPER USE OF DRUGS**.

The word lapsed from the good use of medications to poisons and then to **“WITCHCRAFT”** and **SORCERY**. We are witnesses of this today on every hand.

The Greek word is **PHARMAKEIA** from which we get our word **PHARMACY**.

The **NEXT EIGHT WORDS** that are given in the list here as **“works of the flesh”** have to do with **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**.

This **TAKES US BACK** to:

Galatians 5:15 (DAV)

But if you are biting and devouring one another, take heed lest you be consumed by one another.

**Someone has said:**

When we are out of fellowship with the Father, it will manifest itself in our relationship to our brothers and sisters within the body of Christ. This is so true because when the flesh gets in it produces selfishness and enmity and strife and all sorts of difficulties that are not present when the Lord's children are dominated by the Spirit.  
(source unknown)



6. **“ENMITIES”**—this is the attitude that puts up the barriers and draws the sword. It is the opposite of love that holds out the hand of friendship and the arm of love.
7. **“STRIFE”**—**“ENMITIES”** is the state and attitude of mind toward other people and **“STRIFE”** is the actual outcome of such an attitude in daily life—broken and interrupted personal relationships strewn along the pathway of those who are out of fellowship with the Lord.
8. **“JEALOUSIES”**—this is the envy that casts grudging looks because someone has something that we want or feel that we should have.
9. **“WRATHS”** or **“outbursts of anger”**—it is like fire in straw, quickly blazing up and then, just as quickly, dying out. It is explosive and can blow things to ruin.

**Someone has said:**

Men are like steel—when they have lost their temper they are of no good.  
(source unknown)

10. **“FACTIONS”** or **“outbreaks of selfishness”**—this has to do with self-ambition. This is a person who is only in any type of thing for what they can get out of it. It is a political word for a man who has as his motive party or personal ambitions. It is the self-devotion to one’s own interests.

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville, TN:  
Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

A friend of mine recently saw one of those bumper stickers which read, "If It Feels Good, Do It." He told me he thought about ramming that car and saying when the driver dared to question him, "It felt good. I did it."  
p. 92

(Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian by Bill Hybels) Grand  
Rapids, MI: Zondervan Books. Copyright - Bill Hybels, 1990.

Never before has a culture been so committed to the buy now, pay later philosophy. Bumper stickers used to read, "It may not be much, but at least it's paid for." Now flashy imports sport this message, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go!" I recently saw a bumper sticker in San Diego that said, "I want it all, and I want it now." For too many people, the key to having it all now is easy credit.  
p. 156

(Occupied Territory by Cal Thomas) Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt,  
Publishers, Inc. Copyright - Los Angeles Times Syndicate and Cal  
Thomas, 1987.

Is this not what has fueled the breakdown in the prevailing moral order? Whether it be scandals involving insider trading on Wall Street or the exercise of raw judicial power by judges who have ceased interpreting the law on the basis of certain self-evident truths and now are making the law based on their own philosophical self-interest, "looking out for number one" has replaced "in God we trust" as our national motto.  
p. 3

**Barclay says:**

*Porneia* is here used as a quite general word for unlawful and immoral sexual intercourse and relationships.

p. 24

**Barclay says:**

In the ritual sense, then, *akatharsia* is that which makes it impossible for a person to come into the presence of God; it shuts him off from God.

p. 29

**Barclay says:**

In this word *akatharsia*, then, there are three ideas.

- i. It is the quality of that which is soiled and dirty. . . .
- ii. In this impurity there is a certain repulsive quality. It awakens disgust and loathing in any decent person who looks at it. . . .
- iii. In this word there remains the idea of that which separates a man from God.

p. 30

**Barclay says:**

. . . *aselgeia* indicates a love of sin so reckless and so audacious that a man has ceased to care what God or man thinks of his actions. A man, he says, may be *akathartos*, impure, unclean, and hide his sin, for public opinion and public decency still have some hold upon him; but a man does not become *aselgēs* (the adjective) until he shocks public decency. As Lightfoot sees it, the essence of *aselgeia* is that it has come to such a stage of sinning that it makes no attempt whatever to hide or cloak its sin; it is sin lost to shame.

p. 31

### Barclay says:

And here is the first basic error of idol worship—idol worship is the worship of the created thing rather than of the Creator of all things. This is precisely what Paul saw in his sketch of the genesis of idol worship:

What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles (Rom. 1.19-23).

This kind of idolatry still exists, for basically this kind of idolatry is the worship of things instead of the worship of God.  
p. 34

### Barclay says:

It may be that here is the best point at which to note a grim fact about the works of the flesh. Without exception, every one of them is a perversion of something which is in itself good. Immorality, impurity, licentiousness are perversions of the sexual instinct which is in itself a lovely thing and part of love. Idolatry is a perversion of worship, and was begun as an aid to worship. Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine. Envy, jealousy and strife are perversions of that noble ambition and desire to do well which can be a spur to greatness. Enmity and anger are a perversion of that righteous indignation without which the passion for goodness cannot exist. Dissension and the party spirit are a perversion of the devotion to principle which can produce the martyr. Drunkenness and carousing are the perversion of the happy joy of social fellowship and of the things which men can happily and legitimately enjoy. Nowhere is there better illustrated the power of evil to take beauty and to twist it into ugliness, to take the finest things and to make them an avenue for sin. The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil.  
p. 39

**Barclay says:**

There is the enmity between man and man. In this case it is simplest to define *echthra* in terms of its opposite. *Echthra* is the precise opposite of *agapē*. *Agapē*, love, the supreme Christian virtue, is that attitude of mind which will never allow itself to be bitter to any man, and which will never seek anything but the highest good of others, no matter what the attitude of others be to it. *Echthra* is the attitude of mind and heart which puts up the barriers and which draws the sword; *agapē* is the attitude of heart and mind which widens the circle and holds out the hand of friendship and opens the arms of love. The one is the work of the flesh; the other is the fruit of the Spirit.

p. 42

**Barclay says:**

It may be said that *echthra* and *eris* are very closely connected, *Echthra*, enmity, is a state and attitude of mind towards other people; and *eris*, strife, is the outcome in actual life of that state of mind.

p. 42

**Barclay says:**

. . . it can describe a quality which is the wrecker of personal relationships, and the destruction of fellowship within the community.

p. 50

**Barclay says:**

There is one answer to all this. So long as Christ is in the centre of the life of the individual and of the Church *eritheia*, personal ambition and partisan rivalry, can never ever begin to appear; but when Christ is removed from the centre and when any man's ambitions and policies become the centre, then inevitably and certainly *eritheia*, personal competition, will invade the Church and will disturb the peace of the brethren.

p. 56

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

Four divisions of sin are obvious in his list: (1) three violations of sexual morality; (2) two sins from the religious realm; (3) eight sins pertaining to conduct in regard to other human beings—i.e., social sins; and (4) two typically pagan sins.  
p. 740

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

Paul goes on to list two sins of religion: “idolatry” (GK 1630), the worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Ro 1:21-25), and “witchcraft” (GK 5758), a secret tampering with and at times a worship of the powers of evil. These two terms are arranged in an ascending horror of evil and indicate that the works of the sinful nature include offenses against God as well as against ourselves or our neighbors.  
p. 740

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

(3) Neighbors are in view in the third section of Paul's list, since it includes much of what would today be called social offenses. Most of the words are self-explanatory. "Hatred" (GK 2397) means "enmities," such as those between classes, nations, and individuals. It is these enmities that have been broken down for those who are in Christ (Gal 3:28; Eph 2:14-16). "Discord" (GK 2251) is the natural outcome of hatred both in the world and in the church. Four out of six of Paul's uses of the word are connected with church life. "Jealousy" (GK 2419) and "fits of rage" (GK 2596) can denote both good and bad qualities. There is a godly jealousy or zeal (see comment on 4:17) as well as righteous anger. When either originates from selfish motives and hurt pride, however, it is evil and harms others. "Selfish ambition" (GK 2249) may be translated in many ways: contention, strife, selfishness, rivalry, intrigues. Its basic meaning is a selfish and self-aggrandizing approach to work. "Dissensions" (GK 1496) and "factions" (GK 146) denote a state of affairs in which people are divided and feuds flourish.

**21** "Envy" (GK 5784) is so closely related to "jealousy" that it is hard to tell the difference between them, except for the fact that this attitude is always bad. This third set of words shows the sinful nature to be responsible for the breakdown in interpersonal relationships seen in all strata of society.  
p. 740

**MacArthur says:**

**sorcery.** The Greek word *pharmakeia*, from which the English word *pharmacy* comes, originally referred to medicines in general, but eventually only to mood-altering and mind-altering drugs, as well as the occult, witchcraft, and magic. Many pagan religious practices required the use of these drugs to aid in communication with deities.  
p. 1675

v. 21 divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, carousing and such like (and the things like these); of which I am forewarning you even as I did forewarn you that those who are in the habit of practicing things such as this shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The NET Bible translates verse 21:

envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!

Peterson paraphrases verse 21:

divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**5:21. Envy** (*phthonoi*) is an evil feeling, a wrongful desire to possess what belongs to someone else. Thus the sinful nature is seen to be responsible for the breakdown of interpersonal relationships in homes, churches, and in public society.

Two sins associated with alcohol fall in a fourth category of evils. **Drunkenness** (*methai*) refers to excessive use of strong drink by individuals, and **orgies** (*kōmoi*) probably refers to the drunken carousings commonly associated with such things as the worship of Bacchus, the god of wine. Finally, to show that this long list was only representative and not exhaustive, Paul added the words **and the like**.

The apostle then solemnly warned the Galatians, as he had done when he was in their midst, that **those who live like this**, who habitually indulge in these fleshly sins **will not inherit the future kingdom of God**. This does not say that a Christian loses his salvation if he lapses into a sin of the flesh, but that a person who lives continually on such a level of moral corruption gives evidence of not being a child of God.



The next series in the “works of the flesh” are here in verse 21:

11. “DIVISIONS” or “dissensions”—it is a state of things in which men are divided, in which feuds flourish and in which unity is destroyed. A state in which all fellowship and togetherness is gone. When the tide in the ocean goes out, every crab has his own little puddle. But when the great tide of the love of the Spirit flows in, everyone is together in one big puddle. “United we stand, and divided we fall.”

Kaguaway, a Japanese Christian, distressed by the disunity among Christians said:

I don't speak English very well and when I say denomination some people think I said damnation and to me they are the same thing. God's method in the Spirit is multiplication and addition. Satan's method is division and subtraction.

(source unknown)

12. “HERESIES”—it has to do with the party spirit. The Lord's supper in Corinth is a good illustration of this.

We read in:

1 Corinthians 11:19 (NASB)

For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.

They are dividing into fragments and cliques rather than together in the Lord. Some were feasting sumptuously and others were going without.

The same party spirit has manifested itself in the earlier part of the Corinthian epistle:

**1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (NASB)**

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

**(The Agony of Deceit edited by Michael Horton) Chicago, IL: Moody Press.  
Copyright - The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1990.**

The Gnostics were so called because of their view of revelation. The word gnosis is the Greek word for "knowledge." In many cases the Gnostic heretics did not make a frontal assault against the apostles or against the apostolic teaching of Scripture. In fact, many of them insisted that they were genuine, Bible-believing Christians. It wasn't that they rejected the Bible; they just claimed an additional source of knowledge or insight that was superior to or at least beyond the knowledge of Scripture. The "gnostikoi" were "those in the know." Their knowledge was not derived from intellectual comprehension of Scripture or by empirical research, but was mystical, direct, and immediate. God "revealed" private, intuitive insights to them that carried nothing less than divine authority.

p. 38

(“The Curse of the Black Lords” by Peter Elkind) Texas Monthly, 18 May 1990 94.

The framework of this dogma fit easily within—indeed, borrowed heavily from—writings that would inspire the widely popular New Age movement during the eighties. Terri was tapping the angst of a restless generation dissatisfied with traditional religion and its inability to provide clear answers to impossible questions. Dallas proved fertile territory for her teachings. Divorce, materialism, and pursuit of personal pleasure were rampant. Terri’s doctrines offered forgiveness of sin, reinforcement of pleasure. She told followers what they wanted to hear: They would become comfortable with wealth; they would find bliss in every sexual encounter.

Everyone in the meditation classes sat cross-legged on the floor, listening to the guru’s wisdom on everything from sex to personal finance to ghosts. Then, speaking ever more softly, with an all-forgiving maternal air, Terri led the group into what some would later call a “trancelike” state.  
p. 158

13. “ENVYINGS”—this is the envy that has blossomed into hostile deeds.

The **LAST TWO WORDS** are dealing with the **SINS OF EXCESS**:

14. “DRUNKENNESS”—this is the man-made method of finding joy and that which turns man into a beast.

(Who Cares About Apathy? by Ludlow Porch)

It took him six years, but by some miracle Ronny managed to graduate from college. The joke around the campus was that he had graduated magna cum Lowenbrau.  
p. 11

Ephesians 5:18 (NASB)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

15. **“CAROUSING”**—this was used in a good sense of a victory celebration after winning an athletic event, but the word fell into disrepute because of what was finally associated with this activity.

These **LAST TWO WORDS** speak of **LUSTFUL EXCESS** and **PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL PLEASURE** which is offensive to God and man alike.

Here in these **“works of the flesh”** we see the **POWER OF EVIL** to take:

that which is **GOOD** and to twist it into that which is **EVIL**,

that which is **BEAUTIFUL** and so deform it that it is **UGLY**, and

the **FINEST THINGS** and to make them **AVENUES FOR SIN**.

Paul gives a **WARNING** here when he says:

**“(AND THE THINGS LIKE THESE); OF WHICH I AM FOREWARNING YOU EVEN AS I DID FOREWARN YOU THAT THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HABIT OF PRACTICING THINGS SUCH AS THIS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”**

He is **“FOREWARNING”** them now as he did when he was with them.

It is a very serious warning that when a man is living in legalism, endeavoring to become spiritual by his own personal performance, the flesh begins to take over. The flesh produces these ugly works. They are a manifestation of the fact that a person has really never come to know Jesus Christ when his life is continually reflecting the things described in these previous verses.

The reason the flesh has such power is simply as Martin Luther expresses it:

Men set little value upon that which they have and covet what they have not, as the poet says:

*“The things most forbidden we always desire,  
And the things most denied we seek to acquire.”*

p. 221

Dr. Staupitz, Luther’s friend, used to say to him:

. . . I have promised God a thousand times that I would become a better man, but I never kept my promise. From now on I am not going to make any more vows. Experience has taught me that I cannot keep them. Unless God is merciful to me for Christ’s sake and grants unto me a blessed departure, I shall not be able to stand before Him.

p. 223

It would be a dismal picture indeed if this were all that we had available to see ourselves acceptable before God.

God has not left us in despair to conform to a set of legalistic restrictions, but has provided His Spirit to form within us Jesus Christ as we are available to the Spirit of God to do that work.

(The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic by Stephen R. Covey) New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. Copyright - Stephen R. Covey, 1989.

In the words of Phillips Brooks,

Some day, in the years to come, you will be wrestling with the great temptation, or trembling under the great sorrow of your life. But the real struggle is here, now . . . *Now* it is being decided whether, in the day of your supreme sorrow or temptation, you shall miserably fail or gloriously conquer. Character cannot be made except by a steady, long continued process.

pp. 296-97

**Anders says:**

While a Christian may intermittently get pulled into these sins, **those who live like this** (habitually, continually) are not Christians and will therefore **not inherit the kingdom of God.**

p. 65

**Arthur says:**

The verb *practice* in Galatians 5:21 is in the present tense, which indicates continuous action. Does the usage of this verb then imply that a child of God can never do any of these things, or does it imply that it won't be his habit of life? If it is his habit of life, what does this tell you about his relationship to Jesus Christ? Is it genuine?

p. 39

**Barclay says:**

*Carousing*; this word (*komos*) has an interesting history. A *komos* was a band of friends who accompanied a victor of the games after his victory. They danced and laughed and sang his praises. It also described the bands of the devotees of Bacchus the god of wine. It describes what in regency England would have been called a *rout*.

p. 53

**Barclay says:**

It means unrestrained and uncontrolled revelry, enjoyment that has degenerated into license.

When we really get to the root meaning of these words we see that life has not changed so very much.

p. 54

**Barclay says:**

*Dichostasia* bears its picture on its face; it literally means ‘a standing apart’, that is, a state in which all community, all fellowship, and all togetherness are gone. It is all too obvious that such a state is tragically common among men.  
pp. 56-57

**Barclay says:**

Here again we are presented with the same warning and the same challenge. No one will deny that the Church owes much to those who had the courage and the conviction to stand alone; but the fact remains that a man must closely examine himself, if he finds that his so-called piety and his chosen belief are separating him from his fellow-men, for Christianity was not meant to divide men but to unite them, and, if we claim the right to choose for ourselves, we must concede that same right to others. Christian love must still be able to love those with whose belief and conduct it cannot agree.  
p. 60

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

(4) The final grouping is concerned with sins of alcohol: “drunkenness” (GK 3494) and “orgies” (GK 3269). They denote pleasures that have degenerated into debauchery. There are more items that could be mentioned, for when Paul adds “and the like,” he indicates that the list is not exhaustive.  
p. 740

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

Paul adds a solemn warning, saying that those who habitually practice such things will never inherit God's kingdom. This does not mean that if Christians fall into an isolated lapse into sin through getting drunk or some such thing, they thereby lose their salvation. Rather, Paul is referring to a habitual continuation in sins of the sinful nature, and his point is that those who continually practice such sins give evidence of having never received God's Spirit. When he says that he warned the Galatians of this previously (presumably when he was among them), he reveals that his preaching was never what one might call mere evangelism but that it always contained a strong dose of the standard of morality expected from Christians.  
p. 740

**Bartlett says:**

As well expect a fish to live on dry land as to imagine for a moment that a sinner could ever be happy in heaven.  
p. 110

**Bickel & Jantz say:**

### **Worst Ad Campaign Ever**

There is an ad campaign for a well-known city in Nevada that says, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." That has to be the worst advertising slogan ever developed, because it blatantly tells people that satisfying their fleshly desires is perfectly okay—and even encouraged—as long as no one you know and respect (like your family) finds out about it. Wrong! Everything we do to satisfy the flesh has consequences, even if "nobody" sees.  
p. 131



**Calvin says:**

By this awful threatening he intends not only to alarm the Galatians, but likewise to glance indirectly at the false apostles, who had laid aside the far more valuable instruction, and spent their time in disputing about ceremonies. He instructs us, by his example, to press those exhortations and threatenings, agreeably to the words of the prophet, “Cry aloud, spare not; proclaim to my people their sins.” (Isa. lviii. 1.)  
p. 166

**Lovett says:**

**INHERIT.** As we scan the works of the flesh, we realize we all do some of these things in varying degrees. One might then conclude, “Since I do some of these things am I excluded from heaven?” No. Which nature does them? The old. Indeed the corrupted nature cannot enter heaven. Our true (spiritual) circumcision in Christ removes the old nature from the soul so that it passes away with the flesh at physical death (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11). The “old man” cannot enter heaven. Only the new man does. The Christian, clothed with his new nature, inherits the kingdom. The unsaved man dies with his old nature still attached to enter eternity a child of Satan forever (John 8:24). Paul’s words could be translated, the old nature does not inherit the kingdom of God.  
p. 70

**Luther says:**

This is a hard saying, but very necessary for those false Christians and hypocrites who speak much about the Gospel, about faith, and the Spirit, yet live after the flesh. But this hard sentence is directed chiefly at the heretics who are large with their own self-importance, that they may be frightened into taking up the fight of the Spirit against the flesh.  
p. 230

MacArthur says:

**practice.** Here is the key word in Paul's warning. The sense of this Greek verb describes continual, habitual action. Although believers undoubtedly can commit these sins, those people whose basic character is summed up in the uninterrupted and unrepentant practice of them cannot belong to God (see notes on 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 John 3:4-10). **will not inherit the kingdom of God.** See note on Matthew 5:3. The unregenerate are barred from entering the spiritual kingdom of redeemed people over whom Christ now rules, and they will be excluded from His millennial kingdom and the eternal state of blessing that follows it.

p. 1676

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)  
Grand Rapids, MI.:Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications,  
1985.

God did not forbid our first parents to eat of the tree of knowledge with a view of depriving them of any *good* they might obtain by partaking of its fruit; but only to debar them from the *evil*. All that was good they had, all that was enjoyable they had; there was no need to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in order to add to their joy. God Himself was their abundant good—all that they attained by their disobedience was the knowledge of *evil*, involving condemnation and eternal death. Hence we learn how the love of God provided a means to cancel the condemnation and bestow life eternal, in the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Even the beginning of this knowledge here on earth is eternal life, commenced in grace: for he that believeth hath eternal life, and the consummation of it in heaven by-and-by will be the fruition of eternal glory.

p. 59

**Big Bad John**

Johnny Cash

Big John

Big John

Every mornning at the mine, you could see him arrive.  
He stood 6 foot 6, weighed 245.  
Kind of broad at the shoulders, narrow at the hip.  
And everybody knew you didn't give no lip to Big John.

Big John

Big John

Big Bad John

Big John

Nobody seemed to know where John called home  
He just drifted into town and stayed all alone.  
He didn't say much, kind of quiet and shy  
And if you spoke at all, you'd just said hi to Big John.  
Somebody said he came from New Orleans,  
Where he got into a fight over a Cajun Queen.  
And a crash and a blow from a huge right hand,  
sent a Lousiana fella to the promised land.

Big John

Big John

Big bad John

Big John

Then came the day at the bottom of the mine,  
when a timber cracked and men started crying.  
Minors were praying, and hearts beat fast  
and everybody thought they had breathed their last  
cept' John.  
Through the dust and the smoke of this man made hell,  
walked a giant of a man that the minors knew well.  
Grabbed a sagging timber and gave out with a groan,  
and like a giant oak tree he just stood there alone, Big John

Big John

Big John

Big Bad John

Big John

And with all of his strength, he gave a mighty shove.  
 Then a minor yelled out, 'there's a light up above!'.  
 And 20 men scrambled from a 'would be' grave  
 now there's only one left down there to save, Big John.  
 With jacks and timbers, they started back down,  
 then came that rumble way down in the ground.  
 And as smoke and gas smelched out of that mine,  
 everybody knew it was the end of the line, for Big John.

Big John  
 Big John  
 Big Bad John  
 Big John

Now they never re-opened that worthless pit,  
 they just placed a marble stand in front of it.  
 These few words are written on that stand,  
 'At the bottom of this mine, lies one Hell of a man, Big John'

Big John  
 Big John  
 Big Bad John  
 Big John.

(<http://www.lyrics007.com/Johnny%20Cash%20Lyrics/Big%20Bad%20John%20Lyrics.html>)

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright— John Ortberg, 2010.

Conviction is not the same thing as fear of punishment. Conviction is when I get a glimpse of what I am capable of, as in, *How did I become the kind of man who can do that? How did I become the kind of person who cheats on tests? How did I become the kind of person who tells lies to get what I want? How did I become the kind of person who is so cowardly about what I say?*

When God is at work in me, however, the pain is not about other people knowing or about consequences. That is all external. The pain of conviction is internal—over who *I am*. I respond by asking, *God, please send as much as I can stand. Clean off the windshield of what I cannot clean.*

Cleanse me.

p. 164

(The Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester selections from the translation by F. E. Brightman) London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.  
Copyright – unknown, 1920.

O LORD,  
as days unto our days,  
so do we add unto our sins withal.  
The just man falleth seven times a day,  
but I, the singular great sinner,  
seventy times seven: . . .

p. 111

v. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

The NET Bible translates verse 22:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Peterson paraphrases verse 22:

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments,

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles verses 22 & 23 and then says:

THE POWER FOR VICTORY OVER SIN (5:22-23).

**5:22-23.** There is a pointed contrast here. As verse 16 indicated, there is no need for a believer to display the works of the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit's power he can manifest the nine graces that are now listed. It is important to observe that **the fruit** here described is not produced by a believer, but by **the Holy Spirit** working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. John 15:1-8). The word "fruit" is singular, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this "fruit" is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian. It also points to the method whereby Christ is formed in a believer . . .

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

The first three virtues are habits of mind which find their source in God. **Love** (*agapē*) is listed first because it is the foundation of the other graces. God is love and loves the world (cf. 1 John 4:8; John 3:16). Such self-sacrificing love that sent Christ to die for sinners is the kind of love that believers who are Spirit-controlled manifest. **Joy** (*chara*) is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. John 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things (cf. Rom. 8:28). **Peace** (*eirēnē*) is again a gift of Christ (cf. John 14:27). It is an inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).

The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by love, joy, and peace. **Patience** (*makrothymia*) is the quality of forbearance under provocation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 1:11; 3:12). It entertains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated. **Kindness** (*chrēstotēs*) is benevolence in action such as God demonstrated toward men. Since God is kind toward sinners (cf. Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:7) a Christian should display the same virtue (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 3:12). **Goodness** (*agathōsynē*) may be thought of both as an uprightness of soul and as an action reaching out to others to do good even when it is not deserved.

The final three graces guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit. **Faithfulness** (*pistis*) is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant . . .

Whereas we have been looking at the "works of the flesh" which automatically focus upon doing, we are now going to turn in the passage to look at the "FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT." This is what happens as a result of:

our **DEPENDENCE** upon the Spirit of God,

our **OBEDIENCE**, and

our **SUBMISSION**.

This is the "FRUIT" that is born.

The word for “FRUIT” is in the SINGULAR. They all go together. They are manifestations of Christ living in me.

As the Lord Jesus talked to His disciples in His final session together with them before the cross, He challenged them with the fact that He was the Vine and they were the branches.

He also exhorted them to abide in Him, for without Him they could do nothing. And as a result of abiding in Him, that is, staying in fellowship with Him, they would see in their lives fruit beginning to be produced.

This fruit is “THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” recorded here in the Galatian passage, as well as external fruit in winning others to Jesus Christ.

To be abiding in Him, we must be doing THREE THINGS:

1. DEPENDING upon all that He can do,
2. DRAWING UPON all that He provides, and
3. DEVELOPING into His likeness.

God expects SPIRITUAL FRUIT, not RELIGIOUS NUTS.

John 15:16 (NASB)

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.



(The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives by Dallas Willard) San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row. Copyright - Dallas Willard, 1988.

Our commercialized environment takes this idea a step too far at times, frequently degrading the vision to its lowest possible level. An advertisement for an expensive automobile that ran for a long while in the *Los Angeles Times* urged readers to “Pursue happiness in a car that can catch it!” In the *Atlantic* for October 1983 there is a full-page advertisement for a certain brandy captioned: “Taste the Good Life!” On the west side of Los Angeles a paper is published under the name *The Good Life*. From the contents one sees that the good life has to do exclusively with weight loss, eating (paradoxically), hairstyling, entertainment, celebrities, fancy automobiles, and hot tubs. That’s about it.

p. 131

(The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction Vol. 17 of The Leadership Library by Eugene H. Peterson) Carol Stream, IL: Word Publishing. Copyright - Christianity Today, Inc., 1989.

The person . . . who looks for quick results in the seed planting of well-doing will be disappointed. If I want potatoes for dinner tomorrow, it will do me little good to go out and plant potatoes in my garden tonight. There are long stretches of darkness and invisibility and silence that separate planting and reaping. During the stretches of waiting there is cultivating and weeding and nurturing and planting still other seeds.

p. 11

(When Being Good Isn’t Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

The late Vance Havner, one of our nation’s greatly loved Bible teachers, said that the difference between Jesus and us is that we advertise and don’t produce; He produced and didn’t advertise.

p. 208

The **FIRST MANIFESTATION** of **“FRUIT”** is:

1. **“LOVE”**—this is the love of Jesus Christ controlling us. This is the godlike kind of love—**AGAPE** love. The idea of whether love is deserved or not has passed out of sight. It flows to the deserving and undeserving alike. It is the love that is willing to sacrifice one’s best interest in order that it might flow freely to others.

**Romans 5:8** (NASB)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** (NASB)

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

**(I Need You: Being Friends with Your Grandkids by C. G. “Spike” and Darnell White) Sisters, OR: Questar Publishers, Inc. Copyright - C. G. “Spike” And Darnell White, 1989.**

Just as Spike does, I enjoy B. J. Thomas’s song, “Whatever Happened to Old-Fashioned Love?” If yours is an “Old-fashioned love,” show it! Live it! Pass it on! Advertise the product and prove its worth: “If you’ve got it, flaunt it!” Let the family see “how sweet it is,” and maybe you can inspire them to emulate that affection and enjoyment in their own marriage.  
pp. 58-59

2. **“JOY”**—this is the distinguishing atmosphere of the Christian life. Joy is the result of a right relationship with the Father and is a product of the Holy Spirit. This is a keynote of the book of Philippians. Independent of circumstances this **“JOY”** is the manifestation of the Spirit in the life of the child of God.

**“JOY”** is the evidence that **THE KING IS IN RESIDENCE.**

John 15:11 (NASB)

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)

Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

**Someone else has said:**

Joy is the flag that flies from the castle when the king is in residence.  
(source unknown)

**(Joy in the New Testament by William Morrice)**

The use of this compound verb in the New Testament serves to emphasize one important aspect of Christian joy—and indeed of the Christian religion in general. It must be shared in order to be properly enjoyed. It is not a selfish joy. All true Christianity is missionary in outlook. The joy of the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is meant to be passed on to others. Indeed, “to preserve the joy of religion, the gaiety of our faith and its humanity, we must share it”.<sup>3</sup> Karl Barth has made this point as follows: “We can have joy . . . only as we give it to others. Like health, joy is also a social matter. There may be cases where a man can be really merry in isolation. But these are exceptional and dangerous . . . It certainly gives us ground to suspect the nature of his joy as real joy if he does not desire—‘Rejoice with me’—that at least one or some or many others, as representatives of the rest, should share this joy.”<sup>4</sup>

A new dimension is given to shared joy within the fellowship of the Christian church; for everything is transformed by *agapē* (love). It is indeed the church alone that can deepen purely social joy and guarantee to it a new and permanent existence, for *agapē*, like faith and hope, “lasts for ever” (1 Cor. 13:13).<sup>5</sup>

3. A. E. Whitham, *The Pastures of his Presence* (Hodder & Stoughton 1939), p. 197.

4. K. Barth, *op.cit.*, 3.4.380.

5. Cf. E. G. Gulin in STT 37 (1937), p. 276 . . .

p. 78

**(Hope Has Its Reasons: From the Search for Self to the Surprise of Faith by Rebecca Manley Pippert) San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, Publishers. Copyright - Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1989.**

What is the basic human disorder? According to Brazilian psychiatrist Keppe, it is “the disease of theomania—the desire to be god . . . the desire to be the playwright instead of the actor in the drama.” What, then, can we conclude from our survey of different paths to happiness? If the happiness we seek includes victory over human limitations, then it cannot be carried out by ourselves or any other human being. We all share the same problems. We simply cannot draw up such a power from within us. Only what transcends us can transform us.

p. 66

(When Being Good Isn't Good Enough by Stephen Brown) Nashville, TN:  
Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Stephen Brown, 1990.

A few years ago, *The Anatomy of an Illness* told how a man cured himself of cancer by laughing his way to health. He watched funny movies, read funny books, and listened to funny comedians. And then he got well.

That's how God's people get well too. If you listen you can hear them laugh the laughter of freedom, the laughter of the redeemed.

p. 28

One of the first things to depart as **EVIDENCE OF OUR WALK WITH GOD** when we are out of fellowship with Him is our **"JOY."**

**DAVID**, when making confession after his sin, petitions the Lord:

Psalms 51:12 (NIV)

Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

3. **"PEACE"**—this is serenity or tranquility. The perfect contentment of the life which is happy and secure. It describes the perfection of human relationships. Peace is right relationship in every sphere of life.

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 32:17 (NIV)

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

This “PEACE” points in THREE DIRECTIONS. It is “PEACE”:

1. UPWARD—in the sense that I am right with God.
2. INWARD—in that I know there is nothing hidden within about which I am feeling guilty.
3. OUTWARD—in my relationship to other brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.
4. “LONGSUFFERING” or PATIENCE—It means long-tempered or patient. It expresses that attitude toward people that never loses patience with them no matter how unreasonable they may be.

Plummer says of this word:

The forbearance which endures injuries and evil deeds, without being provoked to anger or revenge; patience both with events and people.  
(source unknown)

1 Peter 2:20-21 (NASB)

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Acts 24:16 (NASB)

In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

Psalm 119:165 (NIV)

Great peace have they who love your law,  
and nothing can make them stumble.

(The Spirit of Christ in Human Relationships by Dr. James R. Bishop) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Zondervan Publishing House, 1968.

Longsuffering connotes both endurance and patience. It is that quality which enables us to be steadfast under severe and long continued trial. It also enables us to bear with the infirmities, failures, and wrongs and others, and to keep on loving and seeing possibilities for good in them. It restrains us from permitting any trial or provocation to rob us of our patience. It enables us really to understand others before reaching conclusions about them. The Apostle Paul calls love the bond of perfection. Longsuffering is the grace which keeps this bond from breaking when under strain.  
p. 28

5. “KINDNESS”—it is treating others the way God has treated us. It is the characteristic of *agape* love in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 13:4 (NASB)

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

Ephesians 4:32 (NASB)

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

(The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic by Stephen R. Covey) New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. Copyright - Stephen R. Covey, 1989.

Leo Roskin taught, "It is the weak who are cruel. Softness can only be expected from the strong."  
p. 198

6. "GOODNESS"—this is the generosity that springs from a heart that is kind. This is love in action constructively involved in doing good things for others.
7. "FAITHFULNESS"—this is the quality of reliability or trustworthiness; a person upon whom you can utterly rely and his words you can trust. "He who is faithful in little will be allowed to be faithful in much."

The apostle in writing to the Corinthians says:

1 Corinthians 4:2 (NASB)

. . . it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

There is nothing that thrills the heart of God any more than a person who is characterized by faithfulness in accomplishing His will.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV)

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.



**Jesus Never Fails**

Arthur A. Luther

Earthly friends may prove untrue,  
     Doubts and fears assail;  
 One still loves and cares for you,  
     On who will not fail.

*Refrain*

Jesus never fails, Jesus never fails;  
 Heav'n and earth may pass away,  
     But Jesus never fails.

<http://www.hymnalaccompanist.com/oldhymns/CH520.html>

Because of this quality in God the Father, so it is His pure delight to produce this within His children.

It is altogether fitting that one of our longing desires as believers is to hear from the Lord when we get to glory:

**Matthew 25:23** (NASB)

. . . 'Well done, good and faithful slave . . . enter into the joy of your master.'

**Arthur says:**

Read Galatians 5:22, 23. Are there nine fruits of the Spirit or is there one fruit of the Spirit with nine manifestations? The text tells you. Look carefully at the subject and the verb. Are they singular or plural?  
p. 39

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

The fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, suggests that which is a natural product of the Spirit, made possible by the living relationship between the Christian and God through Christ (cf. 2:20; Jn 15:1-17). The singular form stresses that these qualities are a unity, like a bunch of grapes instead of separate pieces of fruit, and also that they should all be found in all Christians. In this they differ from the “gifts” of the Spirit, which are given one by one to different people as the church has need (1 Co 12).

The nine virtues that are the Spirit’s fruit hardly need classification, though they seem to fall into three categories of three each. The first three comprise general Christian habits of mind; their primary direction is Godward. The second set primarily concerns Christians in their relationship to others and are social virtues. The last three concern Christians as they are to be in themselves.  
p. 741

**Bartlett says:**

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is . . .”* The use of the singular “fruit” instead of the plural “fruits” is instructive. It suggests the common root and interdependence of these several spiritual graces mentioned. They can be produced only in a life that is rooted in the Spirit; they cannot be hung outwardly upon a life like the toys and ornaments on a Christmas tree. Fruitage in the Spirit requires rootage in the Spirit. As it has been well put, “Christian character is Christ’s excellency reproduced by the Spirit in a renewed life.”  
pp. 110-11

**Baxter says:**

But, of course, the great lesson to take the heart is that we ourselves are to be fruit-bearers, burden-bearers, seed-bearers, brand-bearers for our dear Lord's sake.

p. 154

**Baxter says:**

While we are in this section of the epistle, we ought to notice the way in which Paul speaks of the graces which the Holy Spirit produces in the life of the consecrated believer. He calls them the "*fruit*" of the Spirit. There are nine virtues enumerated; and at a first glance they seem to be written without any reference to order; but when they are more carefully examined they reveal a most significant progress. These nine go in three groups of three each. The first three—"love, joy, peace"—are states which I experience in my own heart; i.e. they directly concern *myself*. The next three—"longsuffering, gentleness, goodness"—are dispositions which I am to reveal toward others; i.e. they look out toward *my neighbour*. The third three—"faith, meekness (or humility), temperance (or self-control)"—are attitudes which I am to maintain as the very first essentials of godliness; they have special reference toward God. So these three trios respectively express the Christian life as concerns myself, my neighbour, and my Maker; or in other words, the first three look *inward*, the next three look *outward*, and the third three look *upward*.

pp. 154-5

### Bickel & Jantz say:

Notice that these qualities are not *fruits*, but *fruit*. This is the total picture of someone living according to their new life in the Holy Spirit. The nine character qualities are a unified whole, giving us a picture of a true Christian lifestyle. John Stott clusters what he calls “nine Christian graces” into three categories:

- *Love, joy, peace*. These virtues point to our relationship with God. Our first love should be for God, our joy should be in God, and our peace should be first and foremost with God.
- *Patience, kindness, goodness*. These three virtues refer to our relationship with others. *Patience* is the quality of hanging in there with people, even when they irritate or offend us. *Kindness* reflects a pleasant disposition, and *goodness* stems from our words and deeds towards others.
- *Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*. These three virtues focus on our inner selves. When we keep our commitments, we are *faithful*. When we act with humility and an attitude of service, we are *gentle*. And when we exercise *self-control*, we are doing the opposite of indulging our flesh.

pp. 131-2

### De Haan says:

These are not FRUITS but FRUIT. The “works” of the flesh are plural and Paul enumerates seventeen of them in detail. But the “fruit” of the Spirit is singular and consists of three groups of virtues:

1. Personal fruit—love, joy, peace. These have to do with our own subjective personal life.

2. Outreaching fruit to others—longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. This is our attitude in grace toward others.

3. Up-reaching fruit—toward God. They are faith, meekness, temperance. Nine parts of one fruit, all supplied by the Spirit. It covers our complete responsibility toward God, our fellow man, and others.

p. 167

**Dunnam says:**

The fruit of the Spirit is the outward expression of Christ dwelling within. This fruit grows and is expressed in any person that willingly dies to what Christ died to so that the Spirit may bring him or her to new life in Christ. Powerfully and surely the Spirit works—sometimes dramatically; sometimes slowly, almost imperceptibly—in our lives to repeat the miracle of a new creation in Christ Jesus.  
pp. 112-13

**Gaebelein says:**

The Spirit also produces His own blessed fruit in the life of the believer. The first three are: Love, joy and peace. These give the blessed consciousness the believer has in his heart of his relationship to God, which consciousness comes through the Spirit. The other six fruits: “long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control,” witness in the believer’s walk to the fact that the love, the joy and peace of God are realities in the soul. The believer who walks according to the Spirit manifests in his walk the fruits of the indwelling Spirit and against such there is no law.  
p. 227

**Harrison says:**

Vital to our problems is the distinction unfolded in the two words, “fruit” (singular) as against “works” (plural). The flesh provokes a wide-range gamut of works; the Spirit produces a blended whole of Christian character.  
p. 94

**Henry says:**

As sin is called *the work of the flesh*, because the flesh is the principle that moves men to it, so grace is said to be *the fruit of the Spirit*, because it wholly proceeds from the Spirit, as the fruit does from the root.  
p. 1845

**Lange says:**

And certainly it is not unintentional, that Paul in the first place names only the disposition of the soul, for the reason that the Spirit primarily and principally changes and must change the inward disposition. When this is done, there is a genuine leading by the Spirit, living by the Spirit, which then finds external manifestation also in a walking by the Spirit.  
p. 139

**Lightfoot says:**

The Apostle had before mentioned the *works* of the flesh; he here speaks of the *fruit* of the Spirit. This change of terms is significant. The flesh is a rank weed which produces no fruit properly so called (comp. Eph. v. 9, 11, Rom. vi. 21); and St Paul's language here recalls the contrast of the fig and vine with the thorn and the thistle in the parable, Matt. vii. 16 sq.  
p. 212

**Lovett says:**

**FRUIT.** When a man surrenders to the Spirit, Christ's nature is displayed in his walk. This is because the Holy Spirit animates his personality and behavior. In those moments when a Christian is totally submissive to the Spirit, he is Spirit-filled. Were such a man fully surrendered 100% of the time, his conduct and attitudes would resemble that of the Lord, though not to the same degree. Why? We must distinguish between surrender to the Spirit (Spirit-filled) and maturity (personality growth), for even Spirit-filled Christians must continue to grow. Some saints have more to surrender for the Spirit's use than do others, just as some have more to surrender to the unholy spirit than do others. Both spirits produce their fruit in the Christian's life insofar as they are permitted to do so, for neither dominates the Christian's will.  
p. 71

**Lucado says:**

Christian freedom doesn't mean permission to do whatever. It means liberation from the prison of self-absorption and from enslavement to insecurity and pride. We grasp that God, in Christ, really does love us and accept us. We realize he lives in us to change us, to meet our needs, to touch others through us, and we are changed. We no longer have to strive to get his attention or earn his approval or stay in his good graces. We already enjoy those things to an infinite degree! Suddenly we are emancipated to turn our focus and attention to the needs of others. We serve them by letting divine love flow through us! The secret to a life of freedom? Resting in his perfect grace and relying on his infinite strength.

p. 99

**MacArthur says:**

Godly attitudes that characterize the lives of only those who belong to God by faith in Christ and possess the Spirit of God. The Spirit produces fruit which consists of nine characteristics or attitudes that are inextricably linked with each other and are commanded of believers throughout the NT.

p. 1676

**Simpson says:**

It is a spontaneous development of life, not the result of effort and labor. It is just as natural and easy as the growth of the cluster on yonder vine, or the bursting of the bud into fragrance and beauty on the branch. The works of the flesh cost many a strain, for the way of transgressors is hard, but the fruit of the Spirit is a living joy. Of the life of the sanctified it is true indeed, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

p. 30

**Spurgeon says:**

The Holy Ghost not only creates the inward contest against sin, and the agonizing desire for holiness, and leads us onward in the way of life, but He remains within us, taking up His residence and somewhat more: for the text suggests a still more immovable steadfastness of residence in our hearts, since according to the figure, the Spirit strikes root within us. The text speaks of “fruit,” and fruit cometh only of a rooted abidance; it could not be conceived of in connection with a transient sojourning, like that of a wayfaring man. The stakes and tent pins that are driven into the ground for an Arab’s tent bear no fruit, for they do not remain in one stay; and inasmuch as I read of the “fruit of the Spirit,” I take comfort from the hint, and conclude that He intends to abide in our souls as a tree abides in the soil when fruit is borne by it. Let us love and bless the Holy Ghost!

pp. 322-23

**Spurgeon says:**

You must have noticed that *in the list of the fruit of the Spirit it is the first*—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” It is first because in some respects it is best. First, because it leads the way. First, because it becomes the motive principle and stimulant of every other grace and virtue. You cannot conceive of anything more forceful and more beneficial, and therefore it is the first. But *see what followeth at its heel*. Two shining ones attend it like maids of honour, waiting upon a queen. “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace”; he that hath love hath joy and peace.

p. 325



**Spurgeon says:**

Love has this for its excellence, that it fulfils the whole law: you cannot say that of any other virtue. Yet, while it fulfils the whole law, it is not legal. Nobody ever loved because it was demanded of him; a good man loves because it is his nature to do so. Love is free—it bloweth where it listeth, like the Spirit from which it comes. Love, indeed, is the very essence of heart liberty. Well may it be honoured; for while it is a true grace of the gospel, it nevertheless fulfils the whole law. If you would have law and gospel sweetly combined, you have it in the fruit of the Spirit, which is love.

Love, moreover, is Godlike, for God is love. Love it is which prepares us for heaven, where everything is love. Come, sweet Spirit, and rest upon us till our nature is transformed into the divine nature by our becoming burning flames of love. Oh, that it were so with us this very day!

p. 325

**Wuest says:**

The choice of *fruit* here instead of *works* is due probably to the conception of the Christian experience as the product of a new and divine life implanted in the saint. In 5:25, Paul speaks of the fact that the Christian lives in the Spirit, that is, derives his spiritual life from the indwelling Spirit, which spiritual life is the motivating force producing the fruit of the Spirit. The word *fruit* is singular, which fact serves to show that all of the elements of character spoken of in these verses are a unity, making for a well-rounded and complete Christian life.

p. 159

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications  
Association, 1992.

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.  
(January 7)

(The Barbarian Way: Soul Cravings by Erwin Raphael McManus) Nashville,  
TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright– Erwin Raphael McManus, 2005.

How is it that the same thing that can make your life a  
rhapsody can also leave you gutted,  
like a dead fish wrapped in day-old newspaper?  
p. (Entry #1)

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)  
Grand Rapids, MI: Moody Press. Copyright – Kregel Publications,  
1985.

“These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

I know not how to open out these words: it is quite overwhelming to think of them. That they might have — “joy,” joyless as they were; poor, weak, needy, helpless ones; that sin had marred, that sorrow had dimmed, and the fear of death had long held subject to bondage. “That they might have joy,”—what joy?—“*my joy*”—heavenly joy, this! Nothing of earth in it; joy like His who came down from heaven—“my joy *fulfilled*,”—not merely presented and proposed to them; joy fulfilled, apprehended, realized, and entered into; joy complete, satisfying, sustaining; joy fulfilled, and “*in themselves*”—not in another but in themselves; joy with which no stranger could intermeddle. The joy of the Lord is the strength of His people (Neh. 8:10), and He would have them take their stand in His own joy! Speaking to His Father, but still to them, *words* evermore sufficient to fill us  
pp. 238-9

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI:  
Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications  
Association, 1992.

### DESTINED TO BE HOLY

**“... it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:16).**

We must continually remind ourselves of the purpose of life. We are not destined to happiness, nor to health, but to holiness. Today we have far too many desires and interests, and our lives are being consumed and wasted by them. Many of them may be right, noble, and good, and may later be fulfilled, but in the meantime God must cause their importance to us to decrease. The only thing that truly matters is whether a person will accept the God who will make him holy. At all costs, a person must have the right relationship with God.

(September 1)

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister) Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright – Banner of Truth, 2007.

Alas, that we should love by measure and weight, and not rather have floods and feasts of Christ's love! O, that Christ would break down the old narrow vessels of these narrow and ebb souls, and make fair, deep, wide, and broad souls to hold a sea and a full tide, flowing over all banks, of Christ's love.  
pp. 67-68

(Days of Grace Through the Year by Lewis B. Smedes) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Copyright– InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Our world cannot understand that love is power and that kindness is the work of that power. The German philosopher Nietzsche hated Christianity for encouraging kindness. He accused Christian love of draining strong people by making them kind, driving them to waste their energies on lepers, cripples and oppressed people. Thus, love weakened the strong of the human race by turning them toward kindness. Were we to rid the world of faith in Christ, and thus of love, he prophesied, we might again produce supermen. The strong could get stronger and the weak die out.

How wrong Nietzsche was! And how wrong are people today who think along such lines. Far from being weakness, kindness is enormous strength—more than most of us have, except now and then. Kindness is the power that moves us to support and heal someone who offers nothing in return. Kindness is the power to move self-centered ego toward the weak, the ugly, the hurt, and to move that ego to invest itself in personal care with no expectation of reward.  
p. 80

Love moved God to become a person like us. Love led him, as a man, to use his power wholly as servant-power. In love's power he gave himself as kindness. He washed dirty feet, wept with grief-wracked people, empathized with a harlot, entered the lives of the disowned and disdained. All his life he was *powerful* in kindness.

PRAY: *Spend some time in prayer, reflecting on the servant-power and servant-kindness shown on Calvary. In response, thank God for the redemptive work of the cross.*  
p. 82

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

There are certain sweet things in the Word of God which we have not enjoyed yet, and which we are obliged to leave for awhile; for we are like the disciples to whom Jesus said, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” Yes, there are graces to which we have not attained; places of fellowship nearer to Christ which we have not reached; and heights of communion which our feet have not climbed. At every banquet of love there are many baskets of fragments left. Let us magnify the liberality of our glorious Boaz.

p. 159

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms) Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Copyright – Chad Helms, 2006.

Those in the third group of Christians, incomparably more perfect than the other two sorts of justified Christians, have an entirely selfless love that has been termed pure, to define it as being without any mixture of any other motive other than that of loving God’s beauty in and for itself. This is what all the early fathers meant by speaking of three states. The first is that of the righteous who are still fearful due to the remnants of a spirit of slavery. The second is that of those who are still anxious for their own self-interest due to the remnant of a mercenary spirit. The third group comprises those who deserve to be called children of God *because they love the Father without any selfish motive, either of hope or of fear.*

p. 223

v. 23 meekness, self-control. Against such things as these there is no law.

The NET Bible translates verse 23:

gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Peterson paraphrases verse 23:

not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**Gentleness** (*prautēs*) marks a person who is submissive to God's Word (cf. James 1:21) and who is considerate of others when discipline is needed (cf. "gently" in Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25; "gentle" in 1 Cor. 4:21; Eph. 4:2; "gentleness" in Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:16). **Self-control** (*enkrateia*; this noun is used in the NT only here and in Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6) denotes self-mastery and no doubt primarily relates to curbing the fleshly impulses just described. Such a quality is impossible to attain apart from the power of God's Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16). As a final summary statement Paul affirmed that there are no prohibitions (lit., **there is not a law**) **against such** virtues. In a *litotes* (understatement) he asserted that obviously no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

8. **"MEEKNESS"**—strength and gentleness go together. The best illustration of **"MEEKNESS"** is the watchdog that is bravely hostile to strangers and gently friendly with familiars whom he loves and knows. **"MEEKNESS"** is displayed in Jesus Christ when, taking the whip, He cleansed the temple. We can then put together the tenderness that is manifested when He forgave the woman caught in the act of adultery, and when He took the towel and washed the disciples' feet.

**"MEEKNESS" IS NOT WEAKNESS.** It is a manifestation of a controlled individual—controlled by the Spirit of God.

9. **"SELF-CONTROL"**—Self-discipline in matters of bodily and physical pleasure. It describes that strength of soul by which a man takes hold of himself and is in full control and possession of himself so that he can restrain himself from every evil desire.

This is the man who prevents desires from being the dictator of his life and action.

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NASB)

but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

It is saying:

**"NO"** to the **BODY** and

**"YES"** to the **SPIRIT**.

**Xenophon describes Socrates when he says:**

He was of all men the most master of the desires of love and appetite.  
(source unknown)

(Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian by Bill Hybels) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Books. Copyright - Bill Hybels, 1990.

Imagine that someone walked into your office, handed you the keys to a fifty thousand dollar European car, and said, “Happy New Year! This car is yours. Enjoy. One thing, though. It’s an engineering marvel with a very sophisticated engine. It won’t run on regular unleaded fuel. If you don’t fill it with super unleaded, you’ll eventually ruin the motor. So will you agree to use only the best fuel?”

Wouldn’t you say, “Well, sure, that’s the least I can do to show my appreciation for this wonderful gift. I’ll never use anything but super unleaded!” It would be unthinkable to ruin the motor of a fifty thousand dollar car by using inferior grades of fuel. Unthinkable!

But many of us have done the unthinkable to God’s engineering marvel. We’ve filled the incredible bodies He created, bought, and dwells in with inferior fuel—junk foods. And we’ve slowly ruined them inside.

Statistics bear that out. The U.S. loses nearly one million people a year to food-related diseases of the heart and blood vessels. There’s also a dramatic increase in diabetes and obesity. A recent study reveals that only one in four Americans can be considered normal in regard to weight.  
pp. 168-69

The apostle concludes verse 23 by saying:

**“AGAINST SUCH THINGS AS THESE THERE IS NO LAW.”**

**Calvin says:**

Walk according to the Spirit. You will then be free from the dominion of the law . . .  
p. 164

The things which the Spirit produces within the heart of the child of God do not run in conflict or counter the law which we have been speaking about in this epistle.



**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

These are the qualities of the life that has been claimed by Jesus Christ and is led by the Spirit. “Against such things there is no law” (v.23b). The last clause is most likely an understatement used for rhetorical effect. The law, as Paul has said, was given to restrain evil; but these qualities do not need to be restrained. Hence, no law opposes them. There may also be a sense in which Paul is suggesting that the law cannot be against those who live in this manner because by being so led, they are in principle fulfilling all that the law requires.

p. 742

**MacArthur says:**

***gentleness.*** Better translated “meekness.” It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe three attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2).

p. 1676

**MacArthur says:**

***no law.*** When a Christian walks by the Spirit and manifests His fruit, he needs no external law to produce the attitudes and behavior that please God (cf. Rom. 8:4), nor does any law prohibit these distinctly Christian qualities.

p. 1676

**(The Expositor's Bible: The Book of Psalms-Volume I- Psalms I-XXXVIII by A. Maclaren, D.D.) New York, N.Y.: A.C. Armstrong and Son. Copyright – 1899.**

The exclamation in ver. 8, “How precious is Thy loving-kindness!” expresses not only its intrinsic value, but the devout soul's appreciation of it. The secret of blessedness and test of true wisdom lie in a sane estimate of the worth of God's loving-kindness as compared with all other treasures.

p. 350

v. 24 Now those (who belong) of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its affections (passive emotions) and desires.

The NET Bible translates verse 24:

Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Peterson paraphrases verse 24:

Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles these remaining verses and then says:

THE PROVISION FOR VICTORY OVER SIN (5:24-26).

**5:24.** Paul next explained that believers (lit., “those who are of Christ Jesus”) need not be responsive to **the sinful nature** because they **have crucified** it. This does not refer to self-crucifixion or self-mortification. Rather, it refers to the fact that by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Christians were identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Paul declared that this had been his experience (cf. 2:20) and that of all believers (cf. Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:11; 3:9). While co-crucifixion took place potentially at the cross, it becomes effective for believers when they are converted. This does not mean that their sin nature is then eradicated or even rendered inactive but that it has been judged, a fact believers should reckon to be true (cf. Rom. 6:11-12). So victory over the sinful nature’s **passions and desires** has been provided by Christ in His death. Faith must continually lay hold of this truth or a believer will be tempted to try to secure victory by self-effort.

We noted together that the apostle said in:

Galatians 2:20 (DAV)

With Christ I have been crucified and I no longer am living but Christ is living in me and that life which now I am living in the flesh I am living by faith, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf.

The **CROSS** in the book of Galatians has done its work. It crucified:

1. **CHRIST**—Galatians 3:1,
2. **THE CHRISTIAN**—Galatians 2:20,
3. **THE FLESH**—Galatians 5:24, and
4. **THE WORLD UNTO US**—as we will see together in Galatians 6:14.

Romans 6:11 (NASB)

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Anders says:**

**The Solution to the Sinful Struggle (vv. 24-26)**

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** *The Christian has died to sin and is alive to a Spirit-controlled life of righteousness.*

p. 65

**Anders says:**

The struggle between our flesh and our new nature is real. Yet there is more truth to help us win this battle. Paul explains that those who know Jesus Christ do not have to respond to the flesh because they **have crucified the [flesh] with its passions and desires**. This crucifixion refers to our identification with Christ in his death and resurrection (Gal. 2:20). When Christ died, our flesh was judged. This does not mean our propensity to sin has been eradicated or rendered inoperative. We must accept that our old nature has died with Christ and that as new people we have an increasing power to resist sin (Rom. 6:10-12).

p. 65

**Gutzke says:**

If one wants actually to live the Christian life, he must get started right. He must make a commitment to Christ. If one is going to walk with the Lord, there are some things he must leave behind. This is such a simple truth, and yet in Christian living it is sometimes missed. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." And this attitude must be constantly renewed. A person does not do this just one time and then forget about it. Notice the strong word: he has "crucified" the flesh! That can be rough. It is not unfair to say that about this matter a person should be candid. A Christian should ask himself: "Have I crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts?" A great many believers never have any joy in their Christian experience and are weak as Christians because they did not get started right. Had they yielded themselves to the Lord and crucified the flesh with the afflictions and lusts, their relationship with Christ Jesus would have been different.

p. 145

**Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:**

The oldest MSS. read, "They that are of Christ Jesus"; they that belong to Christ Jesus; being "led by (His) Spirit" (vs. 18). **have crucified the flesh**—They nailed it to the cross once for all when they became Christ's, on believing and being baptized (Rom. 6:3, 4): they keep it *now* in a state of crucifixion (Rom. 6:6): so that the Spirit can produce in them, comparatively uninterrupted by it, "the fruit of the Spirit" (vs. 22).

p. 1275

**McGee says:**

When was the flesh crucified? When they reckon that when Christ died, they died, they will yield themselves on that basis. In Romans 6:13 Paul says, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourself unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”  
p. 191

**Radmacher, Allen & House say:**

**5:24** Christians are spiritually “crucified with Christ” (2:20). They no longer have to follow the values or desires of the world (6:14). However, it remains difficult for Christians to apply this spiritual reality to the **passions** (affections) **and desires** (lusts) **of the flesh** (v. 16). Those who have mastered these sinful desires are those who have kept their focus on God . . .  
p. 1528

**Wiersbe says:**

*The old nature must be crucified (v. 24).* Paul explains that the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6). Christ not only died *for me*, but *I died with Christ*. Christ died for me to remove the *penalty* of my sin, but I died with Christ to break sin’s *power*.

Paul has mentioned this already in Galatians (see 2:19-20), and he will mention it again (6:14). He does not tell us to crucify ourselves, because this is impossible. (Crucifixion is one death a man cannot inflict on himself.) He tells us that the flesh has already been crucified. It is our responsibility to *believe* this and *act on it*.

p. 133

**Wuest says:**

Christians crucified the evil nature with its affections and lusts, in the sense that when they put their faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, they received the actual benefits of their identification with Christ in His death on the Cross, which benefits were only potential at the time He was crucified. The Christian's identification with Christ in His death, resulted in the breaking of the power of the sinful nature over the life. This victory over sin which the Lord Jesus procured for us at the Cross, is made actual and operative in our lives as we yield to the Holy Spirit and trust Him for that victory.

p. 161

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Patience, then, believer, eternity will right the wrongs of time.

Let us not fall into the error of letting our passions and carnal appetites ride in triumph, while our nobler powers walk in the dust. Grace must reign as a prince, and make the members of the body instruments of righteousness. The Holy Spirit loves order, and He therefore sets our powers and faculties in due rank and place, giving the highest room to those spiritual faculties which link us with the great King; let us not disturb the divine arrangement, but ask for grace that we may keep under our body and bring it into subjection. We were not new created to allow our passions to rule over us, but that we, as kings, may reign in Christ Jesus over the triple kingdom of our spirit, soul, and body, to the glory of God the Father.

p. 280

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Gerald B. Smith) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications. Copyright – Christian Publications, 1980.

I want to give you some rules for the time of discouragement:

First, do not accept the judgment of your own heart about the matter. A discouraged heart will always go astray, so do not think about yourself the way you feel about yourself!

Instead, go to God and Christ. God loves you, and Christ loves you enough to have died for you. He thought you were worth something. Remember that discouraged Gideon was hiding until God sought him out and said, “Get up, thou mighty man of God!”

The second rule is this: make no important decisions while you are discouraged. Don’t resign your job. Don’t sell your property. Get down before God and ask Him to take the defeat out of your spirit and the reserves out of your heart.

Finally, go the Bible and read the promises of God. Read and claim the promises until your heart leaps with the joy of His promises. Remember that the living God is everything. Our victory cannot enrich God and our defeat cannot impoverish Him. Live on the side where the promises of God are bright!

(August 31)

(In the Arena by Isobel Kuhn) Littleton, CO: Overseas Missionary Fellowship International. Copyright— OMF International, 2006.

When we allow the Lord to nail our affections to the cross (to use the Scriptural metaphor), we do not cease to love. We love even more widely, but it is a love stripped of corrupting influences. Love is not killed — only the seed of corruption in natural affection is killed.

To go back to the practical illustration. When the little candle-flames of human joy were allowed to burn out, it hurt. So when God gave me a new one, presented Eva to me, I was immediately on my guard. *Natural affection* would have prompted me so to embrace her that we became all-in-all to one another. *Crucified affection* caused me to love her but always be alert that it might never become *inordinate affection*. Always I reminded myself “The time will come that I must do without her. How should we live so when that time comes, we can each separate without being *undone*?” That is, never to let the other one become indispensable, so that when the human prop is removed, there is a painful sprawl. Never to let *home* become so indispensable that at His call I cannot give it up! This brought me into a realm of unexpected freedom and relaxation. Human loves did not cease to delight but they no longer enslaved.

p. 112



v. 25 If we are living by the Spirit let us also order our steps by the Spirit.

The NET Bible translates verse 25:

If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

Peterson paraphrases verse 25:

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

**5:25-26.** Again Paul reminded the Galatians that in addition to a divine judgment of the sinful nature there is a divine enablement in the person of the Holy Spirit. He made the believer alive by regeneration (cf. John 3:5-6), so each believer is exhorted to **keep in step** (stoichōmen, trans. “follow” in Gal. 6:16) **with the Spirit**.

In these last two verses of our passage, there are going to be **TWO FINAL COMMANDS**.

**COMMAND #1:**

**“LET US ALSO ORDER OUR STEPS BY THE SPIRIT.”**

**COMMAND #2:**

**“LET US STOP BECOMING VAIN-GLORIOUS, PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER, ENVYING ONE ANOTHER.”**

Here comes an **OBVIOUS COMMAND** in light of the truth that has been presented in the previous verses.

Since there is a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, and since we have been made alive by the Spirit in the fact that the Spirit of God is the regenerator or the giver of life and responsible for our salvation, then let us also—in light of that fact—**“ORDER OUR STEPS (OR OUR CONDUCT) BY THE SPIRIT.”**

Paul, as we started this study, said:

Galatians 5:16 (DAV)

But I am saying, walk by means of the Spirit and you will by no means fulfill the desire of the flesh.

The **COMMAND THAT OPENS** the passage deals with **“walk[ing] by means of the Spirit.”**

One of the **COMMANDS THAT CLOSES** the passage also deals with **“walk[ing] by means of the Spirit.”**

**“IF WE ARE LIVING BY THE SPIRIT LET US ALSO ORDER OUR STEPS BY THE SPIRIT.”**

Psalms 37:23-24 (NIV)

If the Lord delights in a man's way,  
     he makes his steps firm;  
 though he stumble, he will not fall,  
     for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Here he now **TIES TWO THINGS TOGETHER:**

1. **BECOMING A CHRISTIAN** and
2. **LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

**“IF WE ARE LIVING BY THE SPIRIT”—and we are—**LET US ALSO ORDER OUR STEPS BY THE SPIRIT**”—in our daily walk.**

**Ian Thomas graphically illustrates this truth from Matthew 14:24-32:**

The disciples were in the boat going across the sea. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea tossed with waves for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled saying “It is a spirit,” and they cried out with fear. But straight away Jesus spake unto them saying, “Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.” And Peter answered and said, “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water.” He said, “Come.” And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid and beginning to sink, he cried saying, “Lord, save me.” And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him and said unto him, “Oh thou of little faith, wherefor didst thou doubt?”  
(source unknown)

Walking by the Spirit is the impossible, but with Christ the impossible is the inevitable. We cannot walk by the Spirit and manifest its fruitage ourselves, but Christ within us can. Walking on the water is impossible, but with the Lord it is not. He was taking each step not in his own power, but being sustained by Christ. When his faith turned to fear, he began to sink.

We saw this earlier in this epistle where Peter, when he began fearing the circumcision, was drawing back and separating himself, and in the act, losing his freedom in Christ.

Here Christ demonstrated to His disciples that everything that threatened to be over their head, His Father had already put under their feet. So Christ, living through us, can cause us to walk by the Spirit and to manifest the fruitage of the Spirit.

To “ORDER OUR STEPS” we are going to have to have COMMUNICATION and this comes through:

1. READING THE WORD,
2. PRAYER, and
3. FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER.

Philippians 4:13 (NASB)

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Colossians 2:6 (NASB)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

1 John 2:6 (NASB)

the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Anders says:

In addition to the flesh that is judged, Paul reminds the Galatians that they have the Holy Spirit to strengthen them against sin. We must **keep in step** by following the Holy Spirit's direction and guidance. He ends our bondage to evil desires.

p. 66

**Barclay says:**

It was Paul's belief and experience that the Christian died with Christ and rose again to a life, new and clean, in which the evil things of the old self are gone and the lovely things of the Spirit have come to fruition.  
p. 57

**Lucado says:**

Most Christians find the cross of Christ easier to accept than the Spirit of Christ. Good Friday makes more sense than Pentecost. Christ, our substitute. Jesus taking our place. The Savior paying for our sins. These are astounding, yet embraceable, concepts. They fall in the arena of transaction and substitution, familiar territory for us. But Holy Spirit discussions lead us into the realm of the supernatural and unseen. We grow quickly quiet and cautious, fearing that we can't see or explain.

It helps to consider the Spirit's work from this angle. What Jesus did in Galilee is what the Holy Spirit does in us. Jesus *dwelt among* the people, teaching, comforting, and convicting. The Holy Spirit *dwells within* us, teaching, comforting, and convicting. The preferred New Testament word for this promise is *oikeo*, which means "live or dwell." *Oikeo* descends from the Greek noun *oikos*, which means "house." The Holy Spirit indwells the believer in the same way a homeowner indwells a house.

*Those who trust God's actions in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! . . .*

*But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms (Rom. 8:5, 9-10 MSG). (From Come Thirsty by Max Lucado)*

p. 106

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

In these verses, Paul exhorts the Galatians to walk in the Spirit because they are already living in the Spirit. Such an action should be natural, but unfortunately we are at war with the flesh. **Walk in the Spirit** means to obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit. A believer following the Spirit's lead (v. 16) will not **become conceited**, provoke others, or envy others.  
p. 1528

Simpson says:

Finally, the sanctified life is a habit and not an event. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). Step by step, moment by moment, little by little we dwell in Him and walk in Him. The grace that can keep us from a moment can keep us for a lifetime. The strength that is sufficient for today is pledged for all the days. So let us live in the Spirit; so let us walk in the Spirit; so let us abide in Him who has said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."  
p. 31

Wuest says:

In view of the fact that we are being sustained in spiritual life by the Spirit, by means of the Spirit let us go on ordering our conduct. Let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.  
p. 209

(Grace Notes: Daily Readings with a Fellow Pilgrim by Philip Yancey) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright– Someone Cares Charitable Trust, 2009.

Dr. Vernon Grounds says that when he hears of someone in need of healing, he prays like this: "God, I know you have your own purposes and undoubtedly have a plan for this person, but I'll tell you straight out what I would like to see happen."  
p. 125

(The Five Languages of Apology: How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships by Gary Chapman & Jennifer Thomas) Chicago, IL: Northfield. Copyright – Gary Chapman & Jennifer Thomas, 2006.

Repentance is more than saying, “I’m sorry; I was wrong. How can I make this up to you?” It is saying, “I’ll try not to do this again.” For some individuals, it is repentance that convinces them that the apology is sincere. The offending person’s repentance, then, elicits the offended person’s forgiveness.

Without genuine repentance, the other languages of apology may fall on deaf ears. What people who’ve been hurt want to know is, “Do you intend to change, or will this happen again next week?”

In our research, we asked the question, “What do you expect in an apology?” Repeatedly we heard statements like the following:

“Show that you are willing to change, and do it differently next time.”

“I expect them to find ways to stop it from happening again.”

“I expect a change of behavior so that the insult does not recur.”

“I want them to have a plan for improvement, a plan to succeed and not to fail.”

“A sincere apology should have a component of willingness not to repeat the offense.”

“I expect him not to go into a rage a few minutes later or do the same thing again.”

These are scores of similar statements reveal that for many people, repentance is at the heart of a true apology.

p. 70

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers) Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House. Copyright– Oswald Chambers Publications Association, 1992.

Temptation is not something we can escape; in fact, it is essential to the well-rounded life of a person. Beware of thinking that you are tempted as no one else—what you go through is the common inheritance of the human race, not something that no one has ever before endured. God does not save us from temptations—He sustains us in the midst of them (see Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16).

(September 17)

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

We need the Spirit of God, then, all through the sermon to keep our hearts and minds in a proper condition, for if we have not the right spirit we shall lose the tone which persuades and prevails, and our people will discover that Samson's strength has departed from him. Some speak scoldingly, and so betray their bad temper; others preach themselves, and so reveal their pride. Some discourse as though it were a condescension on their part to occupy the pulpit, while others preach as though they apologized for their existence. To avoid errors of manners and tone, we must be led of the Holy Spirit, who alone teacheth us to profit.

p. 234

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson) San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson, 2006.

*Great God, consummate all my desires in your love, complete all my wants in your grace. Thank you for the invitation and the promise: the invitation to put all my needs before you, the promise that you will meet them in wisdom and peace. Amen.*

p. 83



v. 26 Let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

The NET Bible translates verse 26:

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another.

Peterson paraphrases verse 26:

That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:

Step by step one's Christian walk should conform to the Spirit's direction and enablement, lest believers **become conceited, provoking and envying each other**. The latter traits would be true of a walk in the flesh (cf. 5:19-21) and may point to divisions in the Galatian churches occasioned by the Judaizing error (cf. v. 15).

In verse 25 we have the **POSITIVE RESPONSIBILITY**.

Here in verse 26 we have the **NEGATIVE RESPONSIBILITY**.

The **CONCEIT** that is talked about here is conceit in our **ACHIEVEMENT**.

As a **RESULT** of this glory, we are **PROVOKING OTHERS** by our boasting, bringing about a situation where they are envying one another.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB)

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

(You Don't Have to Quit. by Ray & Anne Ortlund) Nashville, TN: Oliver-Nelson. Copyright - Anne and Ray Ortlund, 1988.

We mutter and sputter.  
We fume and we spurt.  
We mumble and grumble.  
Our feelings get hurt.  
We can't understand things.  
Our vision grows dim,  
When all that we need is  
A moment with Him.

pp. 124-25

(I Need You: Being Friends with Your Grandkids by C. G. “Spike” and Darnell White) Sisters, OR: Questar Publishers, Inc. Copyright - C. G. “Spike” And Darnell White, 1989.

The speaker gave a list of twelve “Be’s” to live by. They cover the gamut, and I think they are especially worthy to pass on to all grandparents (and potential grandparents) of all ages, male or female:

1. Be there
2. Be prepared
3. Be a hugger
4. Be caring
5. Be yourself
6. Be motivated
7. Be professional
8. Be positive
9. Be a good influence
10. Be enthusiastic
11. Be kind to everyone
12. Be a Believer

p. 160

Anders says:

Finally, Paul challenges the Galatians to live a life of harmony. Conceited legalism sees no need of the Spirit’s help and thinks it has accomplished salvation apart from the Spirit. Instead, it leads to arguments. Paul says to stop **provoking and envying each other**. These negative traits point to the divisions in the church caused by the legalists. The only answer to such disharmony is love empowered by the Holy Spirit.

p. 66

**Calvin says:**

The special exhortations which were addressed to the Galatians were not more necessary for them than they are adapted to our own time. Of many evils existing in society at large, and particularly in the church, ambition is the mother. Paul therefore directs us to guard against it, for the *vain-glory* . . . of which he speaks is nothing else than *ambition*, . . . or the desire of honour, by which every one desires to excel all others.  
pp. 169-70

**Fergusson says:**

The apostle (having hitherto prosecuted and enforced the use-making of that first rule, given ver. 13, for directing them in the right use of Christian liberty) returneth now to prosecute the other rule, “By love serve one another;” and in this verse dehortheth them from some vices which do wholly impede this service of love, especially from ambition, or an itching desire after vain glory, estimation, and applause; which vice is usually attended with other two: first provoking of others, chiefly inferiors, by reproaching and doing of real injuries to them, as being nothing in the vain-glorious man’s esteem, he esteemeth so much of himself. Secondly, envying of others, chiefly superiors and equals, in so far as any thing in them doth seem to eclipse that glory and esteem of which the vain-glorious man is so much desirous.  
p. 99

**Gutzke says:**

“Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (5:26). This expression “vain glory” means they should not be too particular or sensitive about their reputations. “Vain glory” is the glory that makes a man vain—the kind of glory, or praise, that feeds vanity and makes one think he is someone big. After all, if a person is conscious of the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will remember that Christ Jesus died for him, that he was a sinner and under condemnation, and that if it had not been for the Lord Jesus Christ he would have been destroyed.  
p. 147

**Gutzke says:**

J. B. Phillips translates it this way: “Let us not be ambitious for our own reputation, for that only means making one another jealous.” Oh, how much of the Lord’s work is hampered by this!  
p. 147

**Hendriksen says:**

**Let us not become boasters, challenging one another, envying one another.** In other words, “Let us neither brag about that which we have (or think we have), thereby calling forth equally pretentious swagger on the part of the person to whom we are speaking, nor grudge that other person what he has.” Haughtiness and conceit, the “know-it-all” attitude, brutal aggressiveness, these ill become those who claim to be followers of him who was always showing the very opposite spirit . . .  
p. 227

**Henry says:**

4. The apostle concludes this chapter with a caution against pride and envy, v. 26. He here cautions them against being desirous of vainglory, because this would certainly lead them to provoke one another and to envy one another. Thus a foundation is laid for those quarrels and contentions which are inconsistent with that love which Christians ought to maintain towards each other. This therefore the apostle would have us by all means to watch against. (1) The glory which comes from men in vain-glory, which, instead of being desirous of, we should be dead to. (2) An undue regard to the applause of men is one great ground of the unhappy strifes and contentions that exist among Christians.  
p. 1845

**Lightfoot says:**

26. St Paul works round again to the subject of ver. 15, and repeats his warning. It is clear that something had occurred which alarmed him on this point.

p. 214

**Lovett says:**

**NOT BECOME.** Citing pride as an example, Paul asks the Galatians not to become proud. If they will surrender to the Spirit instead of their old natures, the very desire to be proud will be slain in that moment. It will stay crucified so long as they maintain the surrender. Thus the crucified life is not a one-time experience, but a walk which must be constantly maintained. That's not easy. Why? There is one who continually stirs the flesh, so that it wars against the spirit to prevent such a surrender (Vs. 17).

p. 72

**Ridderbos says:**

This last verse of Chapter 5 puts the social life of the believers among each other under the point of view of modesty. A person is *vainglorious* when he swaggers in vain things, when he brags. Such an attitude is provoking, challenging, precisely because the one is so eager to amount to more than the other. The other side of the same thing is envy, jealousy. The person who wants to be first cannot stand in the success of another. Self-glorification goes hand in hand with jealousy and provokes it.

p. 211

### Wuest says:

The words, “vain glory” are from *kenodoxos* which means, “having a conceit of possessing a rightful claim to honor.” It speaks of that state of mind which is contrasted to the state of mind which seeks God’s glory. There were two classes of Christians in the Galatian churches. One class thought that they had attained to freedom in the absolute sense, freedom from any restraint whatsoever. These were in danger of turning liberty into license. This class took pride in their fancied liberty from all restraint. The other class was composed of the more scrupulous and timid brethren. The former class would be tempted to dare the latter group to do things which the law forbids, insinuating that they were afraid to do them. The former class thus would be guilty of vain glory, empty pride, provoking the latter group to do things which it did not think right.  
pp. 162-63

In verse 26 Paul uses the **NEGATIVE COMMAND** and he uses it here in stopping **THREE THINGS** that they are obviously doing. **“LET US STOP”:**

1. **“BECOMING VAIN-GLORIOUS,”**
2. **“PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER,”** and
3. **“ENVYING ONE ANOTHER.”**

(Days of Grace Through the Year by Lewis B. Smedes) Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. Copyright– InterVarsity Press, 2007.

When I *feel* that I am loved while everything about me says I am unlovable, then I am believing, really believing. When I *feel* that life in this valley of death is much worth living, then I am believing. When I *feel* that all is right with me even when everything around me is the pits, then I am actually believing.

APPLY: *How do you handle the conflicts, when they arise, between what you think about God and what you feel in the midst of the tremors and questions and storms of life?*  
p. 109

(Choosing Forgiveness: Your Journey to Freedom by Nancy Leigh DeMoss) Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Nancy Leigh DeMoss, 2006.

But the Word of God makes clear that the cost of unforgiveness is great. We cannot expect to live at peace with God or to experience His blessing in our lives if we refuse to forgive our debtors. To do so is to choke out His grace and to allow Satan to “get an advantage of us” (2 Corinthians 2:11 KJV).

The wounds that have been inflicted upon you will not be made one ounce lighter by being stored up and left to fester. In fact, they will only become heavier and more burdensome.

Sympathy can provide temporary *relief*, but nothing short of forgiveness can procure lasting *release*.  
p. 25



(Right with God: Loving Instruction from the Father's Heart by Ron Mehl)  
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ronald D. Mehl, 2003.

We need to make conscious decisions to respond to those inner whispers of God's Spirit. Whenever the Lord speaks to us, we need to act on His promptings right away. Because if you say what you know you shouldn't say, someone will be hurt or damaged. You'll realize that you have seized control of your own life again—and grieved the Spirit of the Lord.

### **BE ACCOUNTABLE**

Be accountable to the Holy Spirit. When He says "Watch it," then watch it. When He says "Don't," then don't. When He says "Bite your tongue," then put your teeth into it. You'll feel that nudge and you'll think, *I shouldn't be saying this.*

Listen to that voice, even if it makes for an awkward moment or two. Even if you come off looking a little silly or overly sensitive. What is that in comparison to pleasing God?  
pp. 74-75

(Closer Walk: 365 Daily Devotionals that Nurture a Heart for God by Bruce H. Wilkinson) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, 1992.

Maturity thus becomes a measure of one's ability to forsake the childish and embrace the "grown-up" in attitudes and actions. Our generation has been described as one that "worships its work, works at its play, and plays at its worship." Christian, if you are to become an exception to the status quo, how will you approach your responsibilities in the household of faith?  
p. 214

(Lectures to My Students by C. H. Spurgeon) Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust. Copyright– Unknown, 2008.

Put the truth before men in a logical, orderly manner, so that they can easily remember it, and they will the more readily receive it.  
p. 151

(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)  
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,  
 2006.

*Where are my values, Lord Jesus? I pay lip service to the priorities of people, but I give an enormous amount of time and attention to things. Examine me carefully; if there is any possession that is making it impossible for me to love people and praise you for your work in them, show me how to get rid of it. Amen.*  
 p. 96

*Lord Jesus Christ, I want to understand exactly the ways in which you expressed the truth, and want to patiently submit myself to experiencing that way of life, not trying to get out of the hard parts, not complaining about the unpopularity, but enduring and faithful. Amen.*  
 p. 107

**CONCLUSION:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: As soon as you introduce the law and the keeping of it to the Christian life and experience, you must also introduce the flesh. It is the flesh that is the performer. It is the Spirit that is the transformer.

LESSON #2: Dependence, submission, and obedience are involved in walking by means of the Spirit.

LESSON #3: The command of the apostle is very clear in verse 16: “But I am saying, walk by means of the Spirit and you will by no means fulfill the desire of the flesh.”

LESSON #4: We can say that it is victory through dependence upon the Spirit.

LESSON #5: Within the child of God there is this tug-of-war going on between our flesh, our old nature, and the Spirit who energizes the new nature.

LESSON #6: To live for yourself is to walk after the flesh. To live for God is to walk after the Spirit.

LESSON #7: To be dominated by the flesh is to be dominated by the devil. To be dominated by the Spirit is to be controlled by God.

LESSON #8: When we are living by the law or after the flesh, the focus is off dependence and on doing. It is on performing. It is carrying out the curriculum. It is doing the demands of the law.

LESSON #9: Here in these works of the flesh we see the power of evil to take that which is good and to twist it into that which is evil. To take that which is beautiful and so deform it that it is ugly. To take the finest things and to make them avenues for sin.

LESSON #10: Paul's warning in the passage is that if you are living by the flesh and continuing to practice the things of the flesh, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

LESSON #11: The fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives is beautiful to behold.

LESSON #12: The Lord is longing to bear fruit through us.

LESSON #13: When we are abiding in Christ, we are depending upon all that He can do, drawing upon all that He provides, and developing into His likeness.

LESSON #14: Joy is the flag that flies from the castle when the King is in residence.

LESSON #15: If we are living by the Spirit let us also be ordering our steps by the Spirit.

Throughout this passage we have had contrasted before us:

**THE LIFE OF THE FLESH**—The life of living under the domination of **LAW** and

**THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT**.—The life living in a love-gracious relationship with **JESUS CHRIST**.

It is my prayer that you might continue running well and that you might recognize the manifestation of the flesh when it comes out in your personal life. As a result of recognizing these things, you might deal with them in confession before the Lord so that the Spirit of God can continue His unhindered work in producing within you the life of Jesus Christ.

**Arthur says:**

Beloved, if you see the inability of the law to make you righteous, how can you think you need the law to sustain your righteousness once you come to Jesus? Can the law perfect you before God? When you enter into the new covenant of grace, you receive the promise of the Holy Spirit! Don't quench or grieve the precious Spirit of God! Let Him control your life, conquer sin, and bring forth His fruit—that of Christlikeness.

You are saved and given life by the Spirit—now habitually walk under His control.

If you say, "But I can't!" then it is quite possible that you have never been truly saved, born again of the Spirit. Ask God to show you the condition of your heart.

p. 40

**Ironside says:**

Some of you may say, “That is a tremendously high standard, and I am afraid I can never attain to it.” No; and I can never attain to it in my own strength, but if you and I are yielded to the Holy Spirit of God and allow Him to make these things real in our lives, then we will indeed attain to the ideal set before us here, but it will not be ourselves, it will be Christ living in us manifesting His life, His holy life, in and through the members of our body. God give us to know the reality of it!

p. 212

**Wiersbe says:**

In short, the secret is the Holy Spirit. He alone can give us that “fifth freedom”—freedom from sin and self. He enables us to fulfill the law of love, to overcome the flesh, and to bear fruit.

Will you yield to Him and let Him work?

p. 137

(So, You Want To Be Like Christ? by Charles Swindoll) Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group. Copyright – Charles R. Swindoll, 2005.

Check out what he said a little later, It gets worse: “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not” (Romans 7:18).

How honest is that? Isn’t that true for all of us? I can will it, but I can’t pull it off. I can *want* to do right, but I can’t make it happen. I promise myself at the beginning of the day, “I will not say what I shouldn’t say.” And then I ignore my better judgment and wind up saying it anyway, only to regret it and wish I could take it back. I can’t count the times I have asked myself, “Why? Why did I do something so foolish?” Paul’s analysis exposing the root cause comes back, loud and clear. I especially like Eugene Peterson’s para-phrase:

Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

—ROMANS 7:20–23 MSG

Fritz Ridenour puts the inner struggle in different words in his fine book titled, *How to Be a Christian without Being Religious*:

What’s your problem? Temper? Impatience? Self-control? Sex? Being honest? Your thought life? Pride? Laziness? Self-centeredness? Everyone has skeletons, and they don’t always stay in the closet. You want to do right but you do wrong. You want to choose obedience but you choose sin. Sometimes you’d almost swear you were a split personality, a regular “walking civil war.”<sup>1</sup>

That’s me. That’s you. That Paul. That’s everyone. We’re all in this “civil war” together! Can you admit it? Or do you try to convince everyone that you have some kind of consistent Spirit-walk going the straight and narrow? Don’t waste your time.

1. Fritz Ridenour, *How to Be a Christian Without Being Religious* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Association, 1967), 55.  
pp. 149-50

(Cries Of The Heart: Bringing God Near When He Feels So Far by Ravi Zacharias) Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Ravi Zacharias, 1998, 2002.

The first is that, one way or the other, as we live we will be broken; we will *have* to be broken. We will either be broken by a lie or by the truth. Even Jesus embodied and very dramatically showed this certainty in one very significant choice. This choice lies at the heart of what God's nearness and farness are all about, but we do not give it due reflection. When He came face to face with the cross, He knew what lay before Him, and He knew that any path He chose was going to deeply wound Him. An anguished cry came from within Him indicating how He eschewed that moment. He asked His disciples to stay close to Him. He needed their nearness. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" He said, as they slept while His troubled soul cried out in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:40). His prayer, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by . . ." (Matt. 26:39 NEB) catches us off guard until He adds, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42 KJV).

What was the dread? Certainly not the physical pain. He could face that. It was the knowledge and the feeling of being abandoned by even God the Father *while at the same time being in the center of God's will*. God would not be near during that eternal transaction but would turn His back upon His Son. Thus, it was He who on the cross cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46 NKJV).

Here is the point: In an effort to forestall the rupture with His Father, Jesus could have walked away from that sacrifice, but in so doing He would have actually ended up being alienated from His Father's will and heart. By choosing to die and endure that momentary separation He was drawn completely into the bosom of the Father. Putting it differently, He had a choice—to resist the cross and leave the world a broken place, or else to be broken Himself so that the world might be drawn near and live. In that death and separation from the consolation of His Father, He was able to bring us who were far off into the embrace of God.

p. 58



(A Year With Jesus: Daily Readings and Meditations by Eugene H. Peterson)  
 San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright– Eugene H. Peterson,  
 2006.

*God, instead of asking for many things I'll never need, from merchants and entertainers and friends, I will ask you for the few things I need eternally—light to take the next step in faith, grace to persevere for another day, forgiveness that changes sin to salvation. Amen.*  
 p. 332

*Lord, your invitation is insistently gracious. It is quite plain that you don't leave any middle ground for casual, occasional more-or-less religious visits between us. It is either "abide" or be "cast forth." I choose to abide in you, even as you have invited and commanded. Amen.*  
 p. 343

## CATS IN THE CRADLE LYRICS

Artist: **Harry Chapin**

*Album: Cats In The Cradle*

My child arrived just the other day  
 He came to the world in the usual way  
 But there were planes to catch and bills to pay  
 He learned to walk while I was away  
 And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it, and as he grew  
 He'd say "I'm gonna be like you dad  
 You know I'm gonna be like you"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
 Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
 When you comin' home dad?  
 I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
 You know we'll have a good time then

My son turned ten just the other day  
 He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on let's play  
 Can you teach me to throw", I said "Not today  
 I got a lot to do", he said, "That's ok"  
 And he walked away but his smile never dimmed  
 And said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah  
 You know I'm gonna be like him"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
 Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
 When you comin' home?  
 I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
 You know we'll have a good time then

Well, he came home from college just the other day  
 So much like a man I just had to say  
 "Son, I'm proud of you, can you sit for a while?"  
 He shook his head and said with a smile  
 "What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys  
 See you later, can I have them please?"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
 Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
 When you comin' home?  
 I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
 You know we'll have a good time then

I've long since retired, my son's moved away  
 I called him up just the other day  
 I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind"  
 He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time  
 You see my new job's a hassle and kids have the flu  
 But it's sure nice talking to you, Dad  
 It's been sure nice talking to you"

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me  
 He'd grown up just like me  
 My boy was just like me

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
 Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
 When you comin' home son?  
 I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
 You know we'll have a good time then

(<http://www.lyricsdepot.com/harry-chapin/cats-in-the-cradle.html>)