

## Galatians 5:13-26 Walking by the Spirit Enjoying the Fruits of the Spirit

*<sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.*

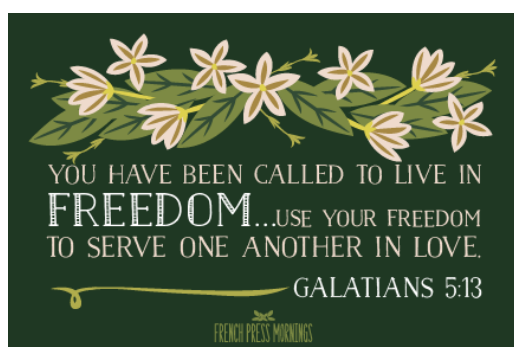
*<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. <sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

*<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:13-26, NASB).*

Paul was writing the church in Galatia because the little church had fallen back into ceremonial obedience and trying to follow the Law. The question at hand was if we are free in Christ then how do we live a moral and righteous life without the law. Some of you may remember when Daniel Schnaider, a Messianic Jewish Rabbi, last preached to us, he told us that even some Christians have tried to take up the laws of being a Jew and apply them to the Church. Much of the confusion about living by the laws of Judaism is because of bad theology. I've told you about "replacement theology." People have been taught that the church has taken over Israel's place. And the logic is that if the Church is now Israel, then the Church inherited some or all of the Mosaic Law. This is not true. The church has not taken over Israel. Israel still has a functional and prophetic function in God's plan. The Church has a completely different covenant than Israel. God never gave us a piece of land anywhere. We have a spiritual covenant with the Lord. We are not under the Mosaic Law. God has put His Spirit within us in a way that that enables us to live godly lives by obeying the Holy Spirit within us.

Time and time again, legalism creeps back into the church. That's why 7th Day Adventists claim that we must meet for church on Saturday. Their logic is that somehow we must observe the Sabbath, so they've transferred Christian worship services to Saturday and they've made that the cornerstone of their denomination. They simply do not understand that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law. If we are not under the Mosaic Law, how should we then live? Paul tells us exactly how to live. Believers are to live by the law of the Spirit that is within each of us. In verse 13, Paul starts off by telling us what it looks like to walk by the Spirit.

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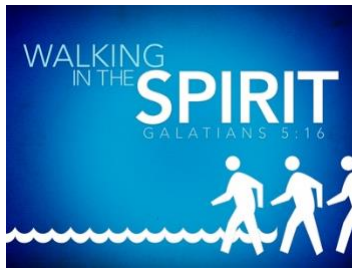


Christians are free and we've been called to freedom, but you wouldn't know that by the way many Christians live. Also, our freedom is a freedom that the world cannot understand. We are essentially "free from the bondage of sin." We certainly can and do sin when we walk in the flesh, but we no longer HAVE TO sin. We are free in Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit in us gives us victory over sin if we submit to Him and call out to Him. Paul says it clearly; "You were called to freedom." We are called to "walk in freedom." Jesus Himself said, "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36, NASB).

We are "set free" in so many ways. This doesn't mean we live a life without moral guidelines. This is what Paul was facing in Galatia. He was being accused of preaching a life without restraints. He says not to use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Don't get into legalistic finger pointing. Just start this life of freedom by loving your neighbors as yourself.

Some of you reading this may have been raised in legalistic churches. The focus of the teaching was: no dancing, no drinking, no card playing, and many other behavioral norms. If you stepped out of line and didn't do things "according to the rules" you were met with criticism and not with love. That is one of the things that caused me to leave the Bible church in which I grew up. There was great Bible teaching, but it was hard to see community and church members loving one another. When churches get more into rule keeping (having your hair cut a certain way, etc.), people begin to feed on one another. In these verses, Paul is talking exactly about that. People eat each other up. That's what

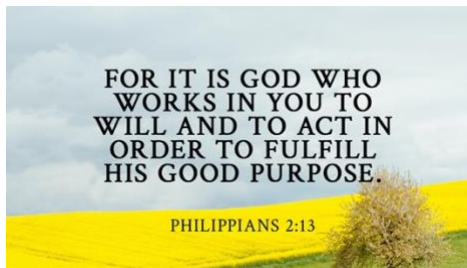
happens in a legalistic church. When we're led by the Spirit there is a love for one another that is filled with grace.



### Walking by the Spirit – If we don't live by the law, then how should we live?

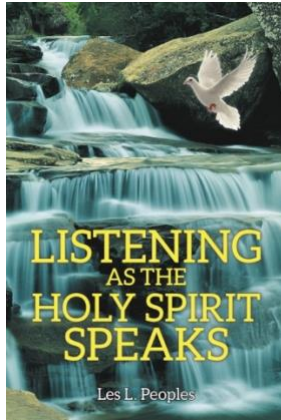
As stated in verse 16, when we walk by the Spirit, we will not be trying to carry out the desires of our flesh. Paul's critics said there's no way to have godly behavior without the law, but Paul was saying that we are under the "law of the Spirit."

We now don't obey the law written on tablets of stone, but rather we are under the law of the Spirit in our hearts. When writing the Corinthian church Paul said, *"<sup>2</sup>You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; <sup>3</sup>being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." (2 Corinthians 3:2-3, NASB).*



The Holy Spirit will speak to us if we open our hearts to Him. Walking in the Spirit is all about listening, and all about obedience. That's what these verses are telling us. Much of the difficulty of "walking in the Spirit" is that we aren't very good listeners. Sometimes I want to hear a word from God, but I just don't want to bother sitting, waiting, and listening. Listening means being in

tune. It means staying in tune. It begins with a desire to walk in the Spirit. Sometimes I have trouble just desiring TO listen to Him. I'm so busy with my own agenda that I don't take time to sit before Him and wait on Him. The Bible actually tells us that He can give us the desire and the ability to obey Him. God is working through us to bring about what He desires for His good purposes. The law is unable to give us the will or the ability to do what God desires for us to do. But, when we are in a personal relationship with Him, He can give us both the desire and the ability. I think it just requires us to ask Him to give us the will to want to walk in step with Him, but we must ask Him to work through us. Paul says, *"<sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13, NASB).* He can create the will and the work within us.



Perhaps, our greatest failure as believers is not listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit. We are talking about something different than listening to our “consciences.” Sometimes our conscience can be influenced, and it can be in error. The Holy Spirit is never in error. The conscience is a moral awareness that may be awry, but the Holy Spirit is a living powerful being that indwells you, giving you wisdom and insight. Being led by the Spirit is listening to the desires of God and exercising the self-control to obey. Let me add a word of caution. If you are listening and you hear things that are contrary to the Word of God, then you are not hearing the Spirit of God. You’re either hearing your own flesh, your own twisted mind (mental

illness), or you’re hearing suggestions from the evil realm. A good place to start walking in the Spirit is to meditate on the Great Commandment. “You shall love (give to) the Lord your God all of your heart (emotions), all of your soul, and all of your mind (your intellect). And, love (give to) your neighbor like you love (give to) yourself”. Ask God to direct you in areas of your life where you need to apply those verses. Also, you need to develop a listening heart. Continue to do the chores of your day, but begin by saying, “Lord, direct me and speak to me the desires you have for me. I want to obey.” We are told repeatedly in scripture that God will direct our paths if we trust in Him with all of our hearts (Proverbs 3:5-6). Sometimes when we don’t hear His voice, we have a tendency to blame God for not speaking. Maybe we’re just not listening. I have learned that much of the Christian life is sitting and waiting and faithfully knowing that He’ll lead us and direct us in His own perfect timing. This waiting can drive us crazy as task-oriented humans. We easily wander from the desire to sit in His presence and wait on Him.

Take a look at another piece of scripture. <sup>5</sup> *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.* <sup>6</sup> **The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.** <sup>7</sup> *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.* <sup>8</sup> *Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:5-8, NIV).*

I don’t know about you guys, but I want my mind to be filled with life and peace. That happens when our minds are focused on Him instead of self. Where are you focusing your mind? “The mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.” So, how do I develop a mind governed by the Spirit. How is it exactly that we “set our mind?” It is not automatic. It takes an act of submission within ourselves to the will and purposes of God. It requires us to STOP STRIVING for what our flesh wants.



Verses 17-18 of the text clearly tell us that we have two natures pulling on us. We have the old sin nature which pulls us to live after the flesh. When we were born again, we were filled with a divine nature that pulls us towards the things of God. The question becomes which “pull” will we yield to. The flesh is against the Spirit and the things of God. While the Spirit is against the flesh. Being against God is the default position of the flesh. It’s in the nature of the flesh to just be against the things of God. I want to remind you, as I told you last Sunday, that the values of the world are at war with the values of God. We don’t need to fear our flesh, rather we need to recognize it and put it under the authority of God in our lives. We don’t need to fear the world, rather we need to understand that the values of the world are most often at odds with the values of God.

Verses 19-21 are a discussion of the deeds of the flesh. Paul tells us that the works of the flesh **are evident**. If someone says they are being led by the Holy Spirit and the outcome is in line with this list, then the flesh is being listened to. Last Sunday, we went over this list extensively in our service. We discussed sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality (desiring pleasure and physical sensation above all else), idolatry (money, power, pleasure, people...whatever we’re running after), sorcery (refers to *pharmakeia, alcohol, drugs and mind-altering substances*), strife (some are addicted to drama, always picking a fight or being contentious), jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions and divisions (making sides and taking sides), envy, drunkenness, carousing (focused on licentious partying), and THINGS LIKE THESE. I think the great take-away in these verses is to be aware that when we are not walking in the Spirit, by default we give ourselves over to the flesh. It takes good choice-making to walk in the Spirit. Choose Him and not yourself. Choose the mind of Christ and not your fleshly nature. I once heard a pastor say, “Our problem is that we really don’t understand how diabolical our flesh is.” We also learned that we really don’t need any help in sinning. We cannot claim, “The devil made me do it.” Our flesh is the alternate paradigm from walking in the Spirit. They are at odds with one another.

The Fruits of the Spirit are laid out for us in verse 22. What do these fruits look like? They are so incredibly beautiful. They are what God desires for us and what we should desire for ourselves.

*<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:22-26, NASB).*





Wow! How wonderful a life lived this way will be to ourselves and to those around us. As I have explained, the Hebrew word for love is based in giving. Translated into Greek this was described as *agape* love (a love given without expectation). Give all of yourself to God. As the Holy Spirit leads us, our lives will result in the list that we read here. We will have a love, a joy, and a peace that are non-fleshly. There is a joy and a peace brought about by walking in the Spirit that cannot come about by the flesh. There is a patience that comes about that can NEVER be ginned up under the flesh.

These fruits ARE the evidence that we're being ruled by the Holy Spirit. There is a kindness and a goodness that are supernatural. Faithfulness is a fruit that follows a Spirit filled life. There is a gentleness that will take me over that will NEVER be present when I am ruled by the flesh.

Last but not least, Paul explains perhaps the greatest fruit that results from walking by the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh. The last fruit of the Spirit listed is SELF-CONTROL. It is faith that brings about the belief that you don't have to be a slave to the sinful passions of your body. It is knowing and believing that myour flesh has been crucified with Christ. We no longer have to be slaves to our errant wants and desires.

In verse 24, Paul comes to the bottom line. *"<sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.*

We each have a point of decision. As we identify with Christ's death, let us allow our own flesh to be crucified and die. This is an ongoing exercise while we "walk." If we are truly going to walk in the Spirit and not by the law, then we must consciously and purposefully decide to walk in the Spirit. This will produce a life that is not boastful, doesn't challenge or try to put down others, nor fall into the trap of measuring oneself by the progress or lack of progress in others. Below I have included an excerpt from a book entitled ***What the Bible Teaches About SPIRITUAL WARFARE.***

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

The following is an excerpt from a book entitled ***What the Bible Teaches About SPIRITUAL WARFARE***. It is an excellent book that is now out of print. It was authored by Dr. Robert Dean and Dr. Thomas Ice. I have never read better descriptions of the Fruit of the Spirit.

#### Nine Kinds of Fruit<sup>1</sup>

Over a period of time, walking by the Spirit (just like walking by the flesh) will produce certain results called fruit. The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22-23. These nine character traits are evident in the life of the Christian who is walking by the Spirit. God has given us these check lists so that we can evaluate our lives to see if we are walking by the Spirit or the flesh.

Love, the first fruit of the Spirit, is often misunderstood today. This is not an emotional or sentimental word. Several different words are used in Greek for love, each focusing on a different shade of meaning. The word used here is AGAPE, which connotes a mental attitude of selfless concern for others rather than an emotional attachment. The best description of this love is found in 1 Corinthians 13 and in Christ Himself (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

The second fruit of the Spirit is Joy. This is neither happiness nor exuberance, but a kind of stable, uplifted mental attitude that is neither disturbed or upset by shifting circumstances. It is the attitude that Christians are to have when they face difficulties and suffering.

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Robert Dean & Thomas Ice, *What the Bible Teaches About SPIRITUAL WARFARE*, 2013, Dean Bible Ministries, Inc. 1500 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. N., Suite 104, Houston, TX 77043

Peace is next. Most often in scripture this word is used to indicate the opposite of anxiety. It is not a reference to world peace, military peace, or political peace, but to a mental attitude that is relaxed and untroubled by worry and anxiety because it rests in the care and provision of God (Philippians 4:6-7).

Patience has the idea of long-suffering or not responding to immediate threats but giving people time to change and come around. The perfect example of this is the patience that God has with us. This patience is manifested toward both people and events. This is not some grim, bleak hanging-in-there attitude but is linked with joy and peace.

Kindness and Goodness are closely related ideas. Kindness is the attitude, and goodness is the action. Kindness is in some sense related to patience. It is an attitude of courtesy, respect, and consideration for other people. Goodness describes the gracious action towards others that are motivated by kindness.

Faithfulness expresses the idea of loyalty and consistency-values sorely needed in contemporary society. This characteristic includes loyalty to God, loyalty to one's spouse, loyalty to one's children, and loyalty to the Church. Too often, commitments in these areas are honored only when they are convenient. Faithfulness is demonstrated when the commitment to these areas is neither is convenient or pleasant.

Gentleness is sometimes translated "meekness". Someone who is gentle or meek is too often pictured as being a wimp or a door mat, but nothing could be further from the biblical concept. The biblical idea of meekness is often contrasted with pride or arrogance, a central characteristic of the world system. In this sense, meekness is synonymous with humility. We must be reminded that "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Gentleness flows from recognizing who we are and submitting to God. This quality is in direct opposition to the self assertive works of the flesh.

The last fruit of the Spirit mentioned is self-control, or self-mastery. This particular type of self-discipline is often associated with the control of sexual desire, but it also applies to every other area of life. As we continue to grow and to develop godly habit patterns in our life, the Holy Spirit strengthens our ability to master our sinful self and to control those fleshly desires so that we do not give in to sinful temptations.

The sin problem with which we so often struggle is the direct result of yielding to our own sinful nature. It is the flesh that wars against the soul. It is the flesh that is drawn and attracted to the temptations of the world and Satan. It is the flesh that is



weak. Because neither Satan nor the world system can cause us to sin, the secret of deliverance lies in learning to walk in moment-by-moment, step-by-step dependence on the Holy Spirit.