

Sermon Discussion - 19 June 2022

Read Galatians 5:16-26

Dig Deeper

The answer to the abuses described in the previous verse (v. 15) 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, they should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and power.

When a Christian does yield to the Spirit's control, the promise is that he will not in any way **gratify** (*telesēte, "complete, fulfil" in outward action*) the desires of the sinful nature. Whilst no believer will ever be entirely free in this life from the evil desires that stem from our fallen human nature, we need not capitulate to them and may experience victory by the Spirit's help.

Walk by the Spirit implies both direction and empowerment...that is, making decisions and choices according to the Holy Spirit's guidance, and acting with the spiritual power that the Spirit supplies. To "walk" in Scripture regularly represents the pattern of conduct of all of one's life. The **desires of the flesh** would mean not just bodily cravings but all the ordinary desires of fallen human nature (see examples in v. 19-21). In v. 21, the verb "**do**" refers to those who "*make a practice of doing*" such things, as a pattern of life.

Notice that Paul speaks of "**fruit,**" not "fruits," of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is not a checklist to work through, but the unified blossoming of a heart liberated by the gospel of grace. The Spirit exercises a transforming work of grace in the life of the person who walks by the Spirit (v. 25). This life produces fruit consistent with the character of the Spirit.

1. In this section of Galatians, Paul makes some great comparisons. What does he compare and contrast?
2. Look closely at verses 16-17. Paul tells the Galatians that the flesh and Spirit are "opposed" or set against each other. Take a moment to really stop and think about what the flesh and spirit being opposed means practically for us. What comes to mind?
3. If you grew up around church you are probably familiar with the idea of the fruit of the Spirit, but did you know the works of the flesh produce fruit too? Paul says the fruit produced by the flesh is evident, or obvious. What fruit is produced in a life lived in submission to the flesh?
4. Read Matthew 15:19-20. According to Jesus, where do our fleshly impulses originate? Why is this significant?

5. In verse 20, we see that Paul closes with a stark warning. Sometimes harsh sounding words like these make us bristle. What is the warning? Why do you think he includes this? Have you ever needed to give someone a strong warning to keep them from harm? What was it?
6. We read in v. 25, *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”* What are some practical ways we can keep in step with the Spirit? What can hinder us?

Application & Prayer

There is good news for those who are in Christ! It is God’s kindness that leads us to repentance. Read 1 John 1:9 out loud and rest in the knowledge that if you are in Christ, your sins are forgiven.

What might you need to confess in prayer today to be restored to right relationship with God? Sometimes confession includes admitting an area that we continually struggle with, not just one-off instances.

Look at the list of the works of the flesh in this week’s passage and identify one or two of your weak areas to bring to God. Remember, wherever you are weak, He is strong (2 Corinthians 12:9).