

A WALK COMBATING THE GREAT ENEMY IN LIFE: THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH, SINFUL NATURE GALATIANS 05:16–21

Introduction

This and the next passage are two critical passages for the believer's walk. They deal with walking in the Spirit of God and conquering the flesh or the sinful nature. The lessons being taught need to be diligently followed by the believer.

- I. The answer to conquering the lusts of the sinful nature (the flesh): the Holy Spirit (vv. 16-18).
- II. The works or acts of the sinful nature (vv. 19-21).
- III. The judgment of those who live by the sinful nature (v. 21).

I. Galatians 05:16–18 Holy Spirit is the Answer

The answer to conquering the lusts of the sinful nature (flesh) is the Holy Spirit of God. The believer is to walk in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the only conceivable way he can keep from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. No person has the power to control the lusts of his sinful nature — not within himself. Why is clearly seen in the four reasons given by Scripture.

1. The flesh, the sinful nature fights for dominance. It lusts against the Spirit, struggles and fights to control the man. The picture is that of a tug of war (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 311). The flesh stands contrary to the Spirit — toe to toe, face to face — and it seeks to control man.

The word *desires* (epithumei kata) means *a yearning passion for*. Every person has experienced the flesh...

- yearning
- craving
- taking
- pulling
- hungering
- thirsting
- desiring
- grasping
- longing
- wanting
- grabbing

Every person knows what it is to have his sinful nature craving after something, to have it yearning and yearning to lay hold of something. The sinful nature is very strong and difficult to control. This is the first reason why a believer's only hope to control the sinful nature is the Spirit of God.

Rom 7:23 *But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.*

Rom 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

James 4:1-2 *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.*

2. The flesh, sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit. The flesh, sinful nature has within itself base and unregulated urges and passions. A man senses the desire to do what he likes, to lift the restraints and follow his own inclinations, desires, passions and emotions. This is what the Bible means when it speaks of the “desire of the sinful nature.”

However, the genuine believer has another force within his life — the force of the Holy Spirit. When the believer feels *the constraint* and *the pressure* between the sinful nature and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is giving the power to overcome the sinful nature. The constraint *is the power*. The believer who listens to the constraint and walks away from the object of the pressure, and calls upon God for the courage to stay away is the believer who walks in the Spirit. The believer is to know no such thing as peaceful coexistence between the sinful nature and the Spirit (see Rom. 7:14-25; 8:18; 8:28-39).

3. The sinful nature keeps a person from doing what he would. Every person has experienced the power of the sinful nature; everyone has caved in to the sinful nature and done something that he did not want to do. He fought against doing it — knew it was harmful or hurtful — yet he did not resist the sinful nature. He gave in to the power of the sinful nature and did it. He...

- overate
- acted selfishly
- became angry
- committed immorality
- began smoking
- cheated, lied or stole
- got drunk
- became prideful
- did evil things
- cursed
- lusted

Note another fact as well. All of us have been tempted, and we have known how to combat and overcome the temptation. However, the flesh, the sinful nature was so strong we did not overcome it. The struggle we experienced involved that of...

- controlling
- showing kindness
- reaching out
- giving
- loving
- helping
- sacrificing
- being patient
- giving in

The point is this: the sinful nature is so strong that it often keeps us from doing what we would. The only hope of ever controlling the sinful nature is to live by the Spirit of God — in His presence and power.

Rom 7:15-20 *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

2 Cor 10:4 *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world [flesh]. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*

4. The flesh, the sinful nature fails to keep the law. This has been clearly shown in the previous point. No person keeps the law all the time: the flesh causes us to fail, and no matter how much we try, we cannot do everything the law says — not all the time. What then is the answer? It is essential to know the answer, for every time we fail to keep the law, the law is broken and we stand condemned. We cannot satisfy the demands of the law, not perfectly. Therefore, we are guilty and must pay the penalty. Note another fact: our consciences condemn us. They bother and bug us if we are trying to live for Christ and yet continue failing time after time. Again, what is the answer?

The Spirit of God is the answer; being led by the Holy Spirit will free us from the sinful nature and from the condemnation of the law. What does this mean? (See *Holy Spirit, Life*, Rom. 8:2-4.) It means that the Holy Spirit frees us to live as Christ lived, to actually live out the life which Christ lived. The *active energy* of life, the dynamic force and being of life — all that is in Christ Jesus — is given to the believer. The believer actually lives *in* Christ Jesus. And the Spirit of life which is in Christ frees the believer from the fate (law) of sin and death. This simply means that the believer lives in a *consciousness of being free*. He breathes and senses a depth of life, a richness, a fullness of life that is indescribable. He lives with power — power over the pressure, strain, impediments, and bondages of life — even the bondages of sin and death. He lives now and shall live forever. He senses this and knows this. Life to him is a *spirit, a breath, a consciousness* of being set free through Christ. Even when he sins and guilt sets in, there is a tug, a power (Holy Spirit) that draws him back to God. He asks forgiveness and removal of the guilt (1 Jn. 1:9), and immediately upon asking, the same power (the Holy Spirit) instils an instantaneous assurance of cleansing. The spirit of life, the consciousness of living instantaneously, takes up its abode within him once again. He feels free again, and he feels full of life in all its liberating power and freedom. He bubbles over with all the depth of the richness and fullness of life itself. He is lull of the “Spirit of life.” Life itself becomes once again *a spirit, a consciousness of living*. He lives now and forever.

Rom 8:2-4 *Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was*

weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Rom 8:14 *Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

John 16:13 *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

II. Galatians 05:19–21 Works of the Sinful nature

The works or acts of the sinful nature show just how strong the sinful nature is. Note a fact of extreme importance: the body in itself is not sinful. The human body is given by God; it is for God’s use. In fact, when a person is converted to Christ, his body becomes a temple for God to dwell in through the Holy Spirit. The Christian is not told to cleanse himself from the body but from “the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16), “everything that contaminates the body” (2 Cor. 7:1), and from “the acts of the sinful nature” (Rom. 13:12; Gal. 5:19). The acts of the sinful nature are the fruit of indwelling sin, and sin originates in the heart not in the body. The acts of the sinful nature listed in this passage are clearly seen all throughout society; and tragically they are not only seen on the daily newscasts of every city, but within every community, home and life on planet earth. The very presence of such fleshly sins shows just how strong the sinful nature is and how helpless man is to control his sinful nature.

1. *Sexual immorality* (moicheia): sexual unfaithfulness to husband or wife. It is also looking on a woman or a man to lust after her or him. Looking at and lusting after the opposite sex whether in person, magazines, books, on beaches or anywhere else is adultery. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act. A broad word including all forms of immoral and sexual acts. It is premarital sex and adultery; it is abnormal sex, all kinds of sexual vice.

Mat 5:28 *“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

Exo 20:14 *“You shall not commit adultery.”* (see Lev. 20:10)

Job 24:15-19 *The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he thinks, ‘No eye will see me,’ and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, men break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, deep darkness is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness. “Yet they are foam on the surface of the water; their portion of the land is cursed, so that no one goes to the vineyards. As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so the grave snatches away those who have sinned.*

1 Cor 6:18 *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*

Eph 5:3 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*

Col 3:5 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

1 Th 4:3 *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.*

2. **Impurity** (akatharsia): moral impurity; doing things that dirty, pollute, and soil life.

Mat 5:28 *"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

Rom 1:24 *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.*

Rom 6:19 *I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.*

Eph 5:3 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*

Col 3:5 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

3. **Debauchery** (aselgeia): filthiness, indecency, shamelessness. A chief characteristic of the behaviour is open and shameless indecency. It means unrestrained evil thoughts and behaviour. It is giving in to brutish and lustful desires, a readiness for any pleasure. It is a man who knows no restraint, a man who has sinned so much that he no longer cares what people say or think. It is something far more distasteful than just doing wrong. The man who misbehaves usually tries to hide his wrong, but a lascivious man does not care who knows about his exploits or shame. He wants; therefore, he seeks to take and gratify. Decency and opinion do not matter. Initially when he began to sin, he did as all men do: he misbehaved in secret. But eventually, the sin got the best of him — to the point that he no longer cared who saw or knew. He became the subject of a master — the master of habit, of the thing itself. Men become the slaves of such things as unbridled lust, wantonness, licentiousness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence (Mk. 7:22), wanton manners, filthy words, indecent body movements, immoral handling of males and females (Rom. 13:13), public display of affection, carnality, gluttony and sexual immorality (1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, 18). (See 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Pet. 2:7.)

Rom 1:27 *In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

Eph 4:19 *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

Jude 1:4, 7 *For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

1 Pet 4:3 *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

4. **Idolatry (eidololatreia):** the worship of idols, whether mental or made by man's hands; the worship of some idea of what God is like, of an image of God within a person's mind; the giving of one's primary devotion (time and energy) to something other than God. (See *Sin*, pt. 2, 1 Cor. 6:9.)

1 Cor 10:14 *Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*

Gal 5:19-21 *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; Idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Eph 5:5 *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person – such a man is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Col 3:5-6 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

Rev 21:8 *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

Rev 22:15 *Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

5. **Witchcraft (pharmakeia):** sorcery; the use of drugs or of evil spirits to gain control over the lives of others or over one's own life. In the present context it would include all forms of seeking the control of one's fate including astrology, palm reading, séances, fortune telling, crystals and other forms of witchcraft.

1 Chr 10:13 *Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance.*

Isa 8:19-20 *When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*

Micah 5:12 *I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells.*

Gal 5:20-21 *Idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

6. **Hatred** (echthrai): enmity, hostility, animosity. It is the hatred that lingers and is held for a long, long time; a hatred that is deep within.

1 John 2:9 *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.*

1 John 3:15 *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

1 John 4:20 *If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.*

Lev 19:17 *"Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in his guilt."*

Prov 10:12 *Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.*

7. **Discord** (ereis): strife, contention, fighting, struggling, quarrelling, dissension, wrangling. It means that a man fights against another person in order to get something: position, promotion, property, honour, recognition. He deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

1 Tim 6:4 *He is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions.*

Prov 17:14 *Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam: so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

2 Tim 2:14 *Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.*

Prov 26:21 *As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.*

8. *Jealousy (zeloi)*: wanting and desiring to have what someone else has. It may be material things, recognition, honour or position.

Gen 37:4 *When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.*

Prov 6:34 *For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.*

Luke 15:29-30 *But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'*

9. *Fits of rage (thumoi)*: bursts of anger; indignation; a violent, explosive temper; quick-tempered explosive reactions that arise from stirred and boiling emotions. But it is anger which fades away just as quickly as it arose. It is not anger that lasts.

James 1:19-20 *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

Prov 29:22 *An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.*

10. *Selfish Ambition (eritheiai)*: conflict, struggle, fight, contention, faction, dissension; a party spirit, a cliquish spirit.

Phil 2:3 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

2 Tim 2:14 *Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.*

Prov 20:3 *It is to a man's honour to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*

11. *Dissensions (dichostasiai)*: division, rebellion, standing against others, splitting off from others.

1 Sam 15:23 *"For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."*

Isa 30:1 *"Woe to the obstinate children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin."*

Isa 65:2 *All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations.*

2 Pet 2:10 *This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings.*

12. *Factions* (aireseis): rejecting the fundamental beliefs of God, Christ, the Scriptures and the church; believing and holding to some teaching other than the truth.

Mat 15:9 “They worship me in vain: their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

1 Tim 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2 Pet 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2 Pet 3:17 Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

13. *Envy* (phthonoi): this word goes beyond jealousy. It is the spirit...

- that wants not only the things that another person has, but begrudges the fact that the person has them.
- that wants not only the things to be taken away from the person, but wants him to suffer through the loss of them.

Prov 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

Prov 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.

Prov 24:1 Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company.

Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

Gal 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

14. *Drunkenness* (methai): taking drink or drugs to affect one’s senses for lust or pleasure; becoming tipsy or intoxicated; partaking of drugs; seeking to loosen moral restraint for bodily pleasure.

Luke 21:34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.”

Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.*

1 Th 5:7 *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*

Prov 20:1 *Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.*

Prov 23:29-30 *Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.*

Isa 5:11 *Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.*

Nahum 1:10 *They will be entangled among thorns and drunk from their wine; they will be consumed like dry stubble.*

15. **Orgies (komoi)**: carousing; uncontrolled license, indulgence and pleasure; taking part in wild parties or in drinking parties; lying around indulging in feeding the desires of the sinful nature, lusts of the flesh.

1 Pet 4:3 *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

2 Pet 2:13-14 *They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed – an accursed brood!*

Gal 5:21 *And envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Exo 32:6 *So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry. (see Judges 9:27; 1 Sam. 30:16)*

III. Galatians 05:21 Judgment of Sinful Life

The judgment of those who live by the flesh, the sinful nature. Very simply, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. This can be clearly seen: if God is righteous, then people must live righteous lives in order to be accepted by Him. However, people ignore the fact of God's righteousness and His demand for righteousness. People divorce their behaviour from religion. People...

- profess religion
- practice religion
- talk religion
- defend their beliefs about religion

However, they go ahead and live like they want regardless of their religion. If they want to do something, they do it feeling that God will forgive them. There are few

people who really think that God will reject them. They feel that they will have done enough good to be acceptable to God...

- enough kindness
- enough religion
- enough works
- enough service

In the final analysis, most people just think that God will accept them. This attitude comes from a false concept of God, a concept that looks upon God as a father who is indulgent and who gives his children the license to do *some* wrong.

This is a fatal mistake. It was the mistake that some of the Galatian church members were making, and it is the same mistake that teeming multitudes of religious people have made down through the centuries.

1 Cor 6:9 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.*

Believers are to inherit a kingdom, a new heavens and earth where God will rule and reign. They are to be given eternal life and given the glorious privilege of being citizens in God's kingdom and world. They are to live with Him and serve Him in *perfection* for all eternity (see *Reward*, 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Lk. 16:10-12). But this glorious privilege is to be given only to genuine believers, those men and women who have truly given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ — given their lives to live as Jesus Christ says to live. No matter how religious a person is — no matter how much zeal a person may have in keeping religious rituals and in attending services and in giving to charity — if he does not live a pure and righteous life, he “will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Cor 6:9 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.*

Mat 5:20 *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

1 Cor 15:50 *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

Eph 5:5 *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Rev 21:27 *Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Rev 22:15 *Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ■*

A WALK BEARING GOD'S NATURE: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT GALATIANS 05:22–26

Introduction

A genuine believer stands before God approved and acceptable. He is embraced and loved by God, looked after and cared for by God. And he is the recipient of eternal life and of the absolute assurance of eternal life.

But note: the believer has not been accepted by God because he deserves it, not because he kept enough laws to win the approval of God. The believer has been accepted by God because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for man's transgressions of the law. He died to free men from the law, from its judgment and condemnation. Therefore, standing before God, the believer is not there because he has kept laws and has earned the right to stand there. He is there because of his faith in Jesus Christ. His faith honours God's Son, and God loves His Son so much that He honours anyone who believes in His Son. He honours the person by doing exactly what the person believes. Therefore, the man who believes that Jesus Christ makes him acceptable to God becomes acceptable to God.

The point is this: since the believer has to approach God through Jesus Christ and not through the law, he is freed from the law. He is under Jesus Christ, not the law. Does this mean then that the believer has no restraint upon his life and behaviour — that he is free to live like he wants? Is he free to follow the desires and lusts of his flesh, sinful nature — to seek the things of the world and give in to the urges to look, think, touch, taste and do?

The answer is no! A thousand times no! For the believer has been given God's nature; he walks through life bearing God's nature (2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). God has absolutely nothing to do with sin, not within His nature. Therefore, the believer is not to cave in to the desires of the sinful nature; he is to walk bearing the fruit of God's nature, that is, the fruit of God's Spirit.

- I. The believer is to walk bearing God's nature (vv. 22-23).
- II. The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh or sinful nature (v. 24).
- III. The believer is to walk consistently with his position in Christ (v. 25).
- IV. The believer is to walk free from selfishness, super-spirituality and envy (v. 26).

I. *Galatians 05: 22—23 The Fruit of the Holy Spirit*

The believer is to walk bearing God's nature, that is, the fruit of God's Spirit. Note that the word "fruit" is singular, not plural. The Holy Spirit has only *one fruit*. It is broken down into a list of traits in order to help us understand His nature. However, the Spirit has only one nature, one fruit. Therefore, when He lives within a person, all these traits are present.

The genuine believer does not experience and bear just some of them: the Spirit of God produces them all in the life of the believer.

1. There is the fruit of *love* (agape). Agape love is the love of the mind, of the reason, of the will. It is the love that goes so far...
 - that it loves regardless of feelings — whether a person feels like loving or not.
 - that it loves a person even if the person does not deserve to be loved.
 - that it actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

Note four significant points about agape love.

- a. Selfless or agape love is the love of God, the very love possessed by God Himself. It is the love demonstrated in the cross of Christ.

=> It is the love of God for the *ungodly*.

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

=> It is the love of God for *unworthy sinners*.

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

=> It is the love of God for *undeserving enemies*.

Rom 5:10 *For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

- b. Selfless or agape love is a gift of God. It can be experienced only if a person knows God *personally* — only if a person has received the love of God, that is, Christ Jesus, into his heart and life. Agape love has to be poured out, flooded, spread about by the Spirit of God within the heart of a person.

Rom 5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

- c. Selfless or agape love is the greatest thing in all of life according to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 12:29-31 *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

- d. Selfless or agape love is the greatest possession and gift in human life according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 13:1-13).

1 Cor 13:13 *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

2. There is the fruit of *joy* (chara): an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behaviour. (See *Joy*, Ph. 1:4.)
3. There is the fruit of *peace* (eirene): it means to bind together, to join, to weave together. It means that a person is bound, woven and joined together with himself and with God and others.

The Hebrew word is *shalom*. It means freedom from trouble and much more. It means experiencing the highest good, enjoying the very best possible, possessing all the inner good possible. It means wholeness and soundness. It means prosperity in the widest sense, especially prosperity in the spiritual sense of having a soul that blossoms and flourishes. (See *Peace*, Eph. 2:14-15.)

- a. There is the peace of the world. This is a peace of escapism, of avoiding trouble, of refusing to face things, of unreality. It is a peace that is sought through pleasure, satisfaction, contentment, the absence of trouble, positive thinking or the denial of problems.

- b. There is the peace of Christ and of God.

=> The peace of God is, first, a *bosom peace*, a peace deep within. It is a tranquillity of mind, a composure and a restfulness that is undisturbed by circumstances and situations. It is more than feelings — even more than attitude and thought.

=> The peace of God is, second, the *peace of conquest* (cp. Jn. 16:33). It is the peace that is independent of conditions and environment; the peace which no sorrow, danger, suffering or experience can take away.

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

=> The peace of God is, third, the *peace of assurance* (cp. Rom. 8:28). It is the peace of unquestionable confidence; the peace with a sure knowledge that one's life is in the hands of God and that all things will work out for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

=> The peace of God is, fourth, the *peace of intimacy with God* (cp. Ph. 4:6-7). It is the peace of the highest good. It is the peace that settles the mind, strengthens the will and establishes the heart.

- c. There is the source of peace. Peace is always born out of reconciliation. Its source is found only in the reconciliation wrought by Jesus Christ. Peace always has to do with personal relationships: a man's relationship to himself, to God and to his fellow men.

=> A man must be bound, woven and joined together with himself in order to have peace.

=> A man must be bound, woven and joined together with God in order to have peace.

=> A man must be bound, woven and joined together with his fellow man to have peace.

Eph 2:13-14 *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one [both Jew and Gentile, all men] and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.*

Col 1:20-21 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour.*

4. There is the fruit of *patience or long-suffering* (makrothumia): bearing and suffering a long time, perseverance, being constant, steadfast and enduring. Long-suffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.

=> Pressure and hard work may fall upon us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.

=> Disease or accident or old age may afflict us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.

=> Discouragement and disappointment may attack us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.

=> Men may do us wrong, abuse, slander and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.

Two significant things need to be noted about patience or long-suffering.

a. Patience or long-suffering never strikes back. Common sense tells us that a person who is attacked by others could strike back and retaliate. *But* the Christian believer is given the power of patience – the power to suffer the situation or person for a long, long time.

b. Patience or long-suffering is one of the great traits of God. As pointed out in this verse, it is a fruit of God's very own Spirit, a fruit that is to be in the life of the believer.

=> God and Christ are patient, long-suffering toward sinners.

Rom 2:4 *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

=> God saves believers so that they may be examples of patience.

1 Tim 1:16 *But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.*

=> God withholds His judgment from the world because He is patient, waiting for more and more to be saved.

2 Pet 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* (cp. 1 Pet. 3:20)

Isa 48:9 *For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.*

William Barclay says that if God had been a man, He would have long ago wiped man off the face of the earth because of his terrible disobedience (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 56). But God loves and cares for man; therefore, God is patient, long-suffering toward man. God is patient a long, long time with man, allowing more and more men to be saved.

Col 1:11 *Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully.*

2 Tim 4:2 *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.*

5. There is the fruit of *kindness* (chrestotes): it is being kind and good, useful and helpful, gentle and sweet, considerate and gracious through all situations no matter the circumstances. A person who is kind does not act...

- hard
- unconcerned
- indifferent
- too busy
- harsh
- bitter

Kindness cares for the feelings of others and feels with them. It experiences the full depth of sympathy and empathy. It shows care and gets right into the situation with a person. Kindness suffers with those who suffer, and struggles with those who struggle, and works with those who work.

=> God is kind.

Luke 6:35 *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*

Eph 2:4-7 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

=> Believers are to be kind to one another.

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

Eph 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Col 3:12 *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

2 Pet 1:5-7 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

6. There is the fruit of *goodness* (agathosune): it is being full of virtue and excellence, kindness and helpfulness, peace and consideration. It means that a person is full of all good and he does all good. It means...
- that he has a good heart and good behaviour
 - that he is good and does good
 - that he is a quality person

Note that a good person lives and treats everyone just as they should be treated. He does not take advantage of any person nor does he stand by and let others take advantage. He stands up and lives for what is right, good and just. This means that goodness involves discipline and rebuke, correction and instruction as well as love and care, peace and conciliation. A good person will not give license to evil, will not let evil run rampant. He will not allow evil to indulge itself and treat others unjustly. He will not allow others to suffer evil. Goodness steps forward and does what it can to stop and control evil.

Rom 15:14 *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*

=> God is full of goodness.

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

Eph 5:9 *(For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth).*

2 Th 1:11 *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.*

Psa 33:5 *The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.*

Psa 34:8 *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*

Isa 63:5 *I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me.*

=> Believers are to be full of all goodness.

Rom 15:14 *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*

Eph 3:19 *And to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

7. There is the fruit of *faithfulness* (pistis): it means to be faithful and trustworthy; to be loyal and steadfast in devotion and allegiance. It means to be constant, staunch and enduring. A faithful person denies and sacrifices himself — all he is and has — and trusts God. He believes God and knows that God will work all things out for good. Therefore, he casts himself totally upon God and becomes faithful to God.

=> Faithfulness does not doubt God — not His salvation, provision or strength to help.

=> Faithfulness does not begin with God then back off and give up.

=> Faithfulness does not walk with God then give in to the lusts of the flesh.

=> Faithfulness begins with God and continues with God. Faithfulness continues on and on; it never slackens or surrenders.

=> God is faithful.

1 Cor 1:9 *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

1 Pet 4:19 *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

Deu 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

1 Kgs 8:56 *“Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”*

Psa 89:1 *I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.*

=> The believers are to be faithful.

Luke 19:17 *‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’*

1 Cor 4:2 *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust [believers] must prove faithful.*

Heb 3:5 *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.*

Exo 19:5 *Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine.*

8. There is the fruit of *gentleness* (prautes): it means to be tender, humble, mild and considerate, but strongly so. Gentleness has the strength to control and discipline, and it does so at the right time.
 - a. Gentleness has *a humble state of mind*. But this does not mean the person is weak, cowardly and bowing. The gentle person simply loves people and loves peace; therefore, he walks humbly among men regardless of their status and circumstance in life. Associating with the poor and lowly of this earth does not bother the gentle person. He desires to be a friend to all and to help all as much as possible.
 - b. Gentleness has *a strong state of mind*. It looks at situations and wants justice and right to be done. It is not a weak mind that ignores and neglects evil and wrong-doing, abuse and suffering.
 - => If someone is suffering, gentleness steps in and does what it can to help.
 - => If evil is being done, gentleness does what it can to stop and correct it.
 - => If evil is running rampant and indulging itself, meekness actually strikes out in anger. However, note a crucial point: the anger is always at the right time and against the right thing.
 - c. Gentleness has *strong self-control*. The gentle person controls his spirit and mind. He controls the lusts of his flesh. He does not give way to ill temper, retaliation, passion, indulgence or license. The gentle person dies to himself, to what his flesh, sinful nature would like to do, and he does the right thing — exactly what God wants done.

In summary, the gentle man walks in a humble, tender, but strong state of mind; he denies himself, giving utmost consideration to others. He shows a control and righteous anger against injustice and evil. A gentle man forgets and lives for others because of what Christ has done for him.

=> God is gentle.

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

=> Jesus Christ was gentle.

Mat 11:29 *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

Gal 6:1 *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

Eph 4:1-3 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

2 Tim 2:25 *Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.*

Titus 3:2 *To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.*

James 1:21 *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

James 3:13 *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

1 Pet 3:4 *Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.*

9. There is the fruit of *self-control* (egkrateia): to master and control the body or the flesh (sinful nature) with all of its lusts. It means self-control, the master of desire, appetite and passion, especially sensual urges and cravings. It means to be strong, controlled and restrained. It means to stand against the lust of the flesh (sinful nature), the lust of the eyes, and the boasting of what a person has and does (1 Jn 2:15-16).

=> Self-control is of God, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

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

=> The believer is to proclaim self-control to the lost.

Acts 24:25 *As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."*

=> The believer is to control his sexual desires.

1 Cor 7:9 *But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

=> The believer is to strenuously exercise self-control, just as an athlete controls himself.

1 Cor 9:25 *Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*

=> The believer is to grow in self-control.

2 Pet 1:6 *And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness.*

=> The aged believer is especially to be on guard to control himself.

Titus 2:2 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

In concluding our discussion we should remember that the fruit of the Spirit is the very nature of God (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:18). The believer is to walk in the Spirit; that is, he is to live in such a consciousness of God and in such open confession that he is kept constantly clean from sin. God keeps him clean and pure and acceptable as though he were perfect. As the believer so walks in such an awareness of God, he assimilates the very nature of God and the Holy Spirit's fruit is produced. No law can stand against such things (see *Fruit Bearing*, Jn. 15:1-8).

JOHN 15:01–08 FRUIT-BEARING; ABIDE

There are four stages of fruit-bearing given: (1) no fruit (v. 2), (2) fruit (v. 2), (3) more fruit (v. 2), and (4) much fruit (vv. 5, 8).

What does it mean to say a Christian is to bear fruit? It means to bear converts (Rom. 1:13), to bear righteousness (Rom. 6:21-23), to bear Christian character or the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Note also the conditions for bearing fruit in life: cleansing (v. 3) and abiding or remaining in Christ (v. 5), and obedience (vs. 10, 12). A true Christian is a person who really does abide in Christ (1 Jn. 2:10). John said that to abide or remain in Christ means eight things.

1. A person walks in open confession before God. He walks through life opening up his life to God; he confesses all known sins. He does not walk in sin, and he does not allow any sin to go unconfessed (1 Jn. 1:6-10).
2. A person walks and has fellowship with Christ. He lives and moves and has his being with Christ. He communes and lives in consciousness of God's presence, and from God's presence, he learns of God and he draws the strength and authority to live victoriously day by day (1 Jn. 2:6; 2:27; see Psa. 16:11; Prov. 3:5-6).
3. A person continues in the church; he has not gone out from the church (1 Jn. 2:19).
4. A person possesses confidence, an unashamedness in life, that prepares him for eternity (1 Jn. 2:28).
5. A person does not walk in continuous sin (1 Jn. 3:6). He experiences constant victory over sin.
6. A person actively surrenders himself to obey God's commandments (1 Jn. 3:24).
7. A person experiences the indwelling presence and witness of the Spirit (1 Jn. 4:12-13).
8. A person dwells in love and unity and fellowship with all other believers (Jn. 17:21-23; 1 Jn. 4:16; see 1 Jn. 4:20). □

II. *Galatians 05:24 Walk Bearing a Crucified Flesh*

The believer is to walk bearing a crucified flesh or sinful nature. This is a striking verse. Note several points.

1. Note the words, "those who belong to Christ Jesus." A person becomes the *property and the possession* of Christ when he first trusts Christ as his Saviour. When a person comes to Jesus Christ to save him, he is coming because he wants to be delivered from the enslavement and bondage of sin, death and judgment. He wants to live forever with God. He does not want to continue being the slave of the flesh (sinful nature), subjected to its lusts, death and sure judgment. He wants to be saved from the flesh of a corruptible world. Therefore, when a person comes to Christ, he is turning away from the flesh to God; he is turning his back upon the mastery of the flesh (sinful nature) and all that it stands for. He is turning to Jesus Christ as his new master. Consequently...
 - the believer no longer belongs to the flesh (sinful nature); he belongs to Jesus Christ.
 - the flesh or sinful nature no longer possesses the believer; Jesus Christ possesses him.
 - the believer no longer serves the flesh; he serves the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Note that the believer has crucified the flesh (sinful nature) with the passions and desires. How? By dying with Jesus Christ. How can a person die with Jesus Christ? By an act of God. Only God can count a person to have died with Jesus Christ and *it be true, an actual occurrence*. This is exactly what God does. When a person genuinely believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that person's belief and counts it as his death with Jesus Christ. God honours his faith by identifying him with Christ. God counts and considers the person...
 - to have died in Christ's death
 - to be placed into Christ's death
 - to be identified with Christ's death
 - to be a partaker of Christ's death
 - to be in union with Christ's death
 - to be bound in Christ's death

Now, note the point: if the believer is counted by God as having been crucified with Christ, then the believer. ..

- has died to the flesh (sinful nature)
- has died to the passions of the sinful nature
- has died to the lusts of the sinful nature
- is freed from the flesh or sinful nature
- is freed from the passions of the sinful nature
- is freed from the lusts of the sinful nature

Once a person has died, he is dead. The rule, reign, the habits and desires of the flesh or sinful nature no longer have control over him. The sinful nature ceases to have a place or a position in his life. He is free from the sinful nature, free from...

- fleshly habits
- fleshly enslavement
- fleshly control
- fleshly condemnation
- fleshly bondage
- fleshly death
- fleshly judgment

To be crucified with Christ means that we no longer live *in the flesh (sinful nature)*, in the place and position of the sinful nature. We cannot live *apart* from the flesh, for we are in this body upon this earth. But we are free from living *after* the flesh. We no longer follow the passions and cravings of the flesh. We desire and follow righteousness, seeking to please God in all that we do.

Rom 6:2 *By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*

Rom 6:11 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Col 3:3 *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

2 Tim 2:11 *Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

III. Galatians 05:25 The Holy Spirit Guides and Directs the Believer Day by Day

The believer is to walk consistently with his position in Christ. To be in Christ is to be in God's Spirit. When the believer trusts Jesus Christ as his Saviour, God places His Spirit in the heart of the believer. The Spirit is placed there to guide and direct the believer day by day. Therefore, the believer is to live by the Spirit; he is to live just as the Spirit of God directs. This is the point of this verse. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. The Spirit gives us life, the life of God; therefore, let us *walk and live out* the life He gives us.

Rom 6:4 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Rom 8:1 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Rom 8:5-6 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds*

set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

Rom 8:9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

Rom 8:13-14 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Gal 5:6 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

IV. Galatians 05:26 Challenges of the Believer

The believer is to walk free from super-spirituality and envy. When believers are challenged to live spiritual lives, there is always the danger that some will become super-spiritual and others will begin to envy the spiritual gifts of those who are genuinely spiritual and greatly blessed by God.

1. There is the danger of super-spirituality. There is the temptation of pride and of showing superiority. It is the attitude that says, "I have it, and you don't." This attitude, of course, irritates and provokes people. It causes division within the church.

Luke 6:25 *"Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep."*

Rev 3:17 *You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*

Psa 17:10 *They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance.*

2. There is the danger of envy (see *Flesh, Sinful Nature*, pt. 13, Gal. 5:19-21). ■