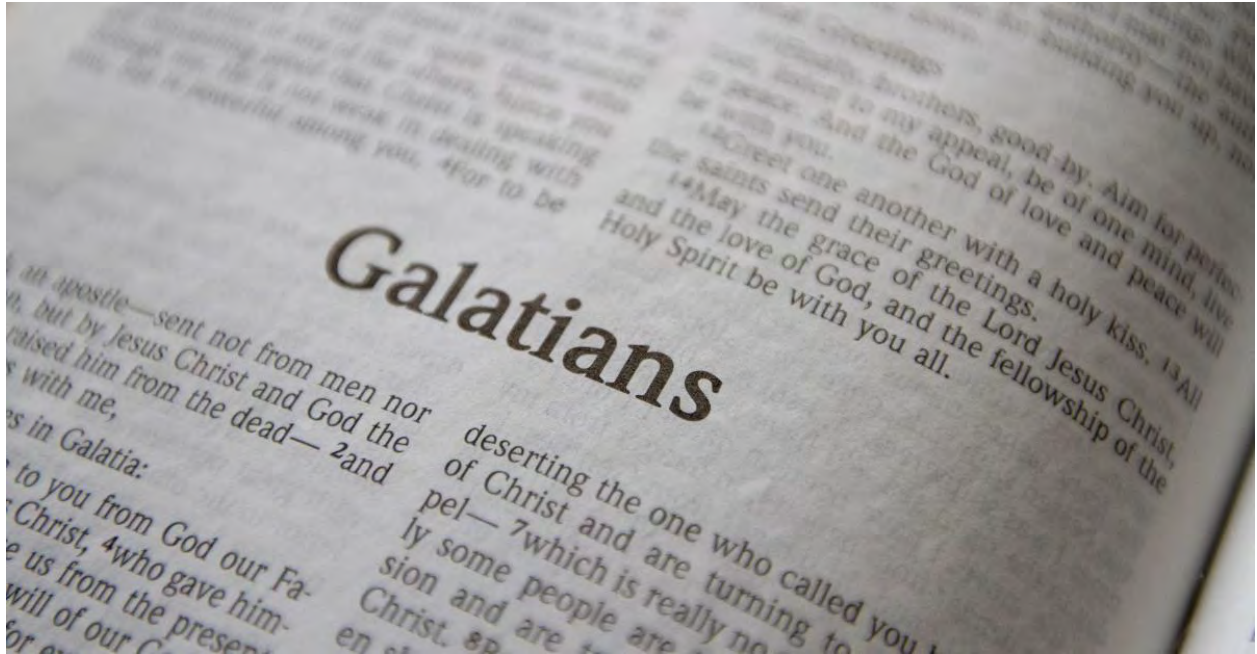


WALK THIS WAY

GALATIANS 5



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Galatians 5

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Galatians 5: Introduction

Christians have been begotten again by the Holy Spirit of God. He is at work within us to teach us God's Law and make us willing and able to do what pleases Him.

But we need to abide in the Spirit and walk in Him if we are to realize the great benefits and blessings of His indwelling Presence. We can't do that if we're still hanging on to fleshly desires, aims, and ways.

On the other hand, the Spirit sets us free from these so that we bear the fruit of holiness in every area of our lives. We should do our best at all times to walk this way.

We hope you find this study of the book of Galatians to provide abundant stimulation for your walk with and work for the Lord.

For His glory and praise!

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1 Stand Fast!

Pray Psalm 105.6-11.

O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,”

Sing Psalm 105. 6-11.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read and meditate on Galatians 5.1.

Preparation

1. What does Paul instruct the Galatians to do?
2. What does he tell them not to do?

Meditation

The yoke to which Paul referred here was of those elemental things that the Galatians were giving into—observing special days and rituals, including circumcision. These things were not sinful in themselves—we recall that Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16.3)—but they became sinful because the Galatians were making them a “Jesus +” way of salvation. Believing in Jesus, the false teachers insisted, was not enough; all this other stuff was also necessary to become a true follower of the Lord. The Galatians were sorely tempted to be “born again again” by going back on faith in Jesus to faith and works for salvation.

Whatever we have embraced for salvation which is other than Jesus is a yoke of bondage. It cannot bring us what we seek, and the pursuit of it will wear us out. True liberty is only in Jesus and His Spirit. This is the liberty of grace that frees us from every bondage of idolatry and works. This also is the liberty of following Jesus in the path He walked, the path of God’s commandments (1 Jn. 2.1-6).

If there is a passage in Paul’s epistles that should have been marked “Shout Loudly”, it’s this one.

“Stand fast!” the apostle demands. “Do not become entangled in lies and sin and bondage!” As Luther observed, Paul was vigorous and passionate here, not because he was angry at the Galatians but because he deeply and earnestly desired them to remain free in Jesus, to know the liberty, power, and joy of trusting in Him alone.

And he wants that for us as well. Cling to Jesus and stand fast in the freedom of His truth (Jn. 8.31, 32).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

If Galatians 5.1 had been put to music, the singers would have been instructed to *belt* it out, using *crescendo*, to be sung *forte* ramping up to *fortissimo*! Stand fast! Stand fast in the Truth of salvation through Jesus only!

“But now having been set free from sin,
and having become slaves of God,
you have your fruit to holiness,
and the end, everlasting life.
For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6.22, 23).

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I AM gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11.28-30).

“O LORD, truly I am Your servant;
I am Your servant...You have loosed my bonds” (Ps. 116.16).

God has forever shown grace and mercy to whom He chooses;
but He also chooses change from those to whom mercy and grace have been shown.

“I will hear what God the LORD will speak,
for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.
Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
that glory may dwell in our land.
Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.
Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
Yes, the LORD will give what is good; and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway” (Ps. 85.8, 9, 10-13).

Do not ever again be entangled with a yoke of bondage (Gal. 5.1).
Shout it out in liberty—belting, *forte*, *crescendo*, *fortissimo*—God has set us free.
Stand fast.

Reflection

1. What is the role of Scripture in helping us to stand fast in the Lord?

2. What is the role of prayer?

3. What is the role of fellowship with other believers?

*As he comes to the end of his epistle, Paul argues vigorously and passionately for his doctrine of faith and Christian freedom against those false apostles who were its enemies. He hurls anathemas at them like thunderbolts and tells the Galatians to avoid them like the plague. Along the way, he does everything he can to preserve them in the freedom that Christ has won for them. Martin Luther (1483-1546), *Second Lectures on Galatians**

Pray Psalm 105.1-5, 45.

Give thanks to God for your salvation. Call upon Him to keep you in the Jesus Path and to give you opportunities to declare His goodness and love. Rejoice in Jesus and His strength, and praise Him for His favor and promises.

Sing Psalm 105.1-5, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!

Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.

Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.

Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

2 Faith Working through Love

Pray Psalm 105.3-7.

Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

Read Galatians 5.1-6; meditate on verses 2-6.

Preparation

1. What is the state of those who want to be justified by the Law?
2. In the end, what really matters?

Meditation

Paul warned those who were thinking about submitting to circumcision as a “Jesus +” way into salvation that the effort would not only avail them nothing but would cause them to become estranged from Christ (vv. 2, 4). Once you acknowledge that keeping any of the Law is necessary for salvation, you are indebted to keep the whole Law for salvation (v. 3), for the Law is a whole cloth and cannot be cut apart as someone might choose. As James explained, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jms. 2.10) because the Law is all one.

Jesus kept the whole Law, never failing in one jot or tittle. Thus, His perfect righteousness becomes the means for us to be accounted as righteous before the Law, when, by the grace of God, we believe in Jesus alone for our salvation and hope to be made like Him by His Spirit (v. 5). The righteousness of Jesus in us is expressed by faith in the varieties of love which the Law of God describes. True faith comes by grace alone, and the proof of having received it is that it begins to work in us for loving God and our neighbors (v. 6).

Paul uses the term “fallen from grace” here, which could be interpreted to mean that those who submitted to keeping the Law for salvation had lost the salvation they once received by faith in Jesus

alone (v. 4). The verb here can mean “turn away” or “abandon” as well as “fall from”, and Paul seems to be using it to suggest that those who seek a “Jesus +” way to salvation demonstrate that they never had that gracious gift in the first place (cf. 2 Cor. 13.5).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Contrast is always a good way to point out fallacies.

Paul draws a stark contrast between those trusting in works and those trusting in faith for salvation. Those trusting in any works for salvation are debtors to keep the whole law perfectly. Each one must be physically and mentally kept—perfectly. And in choosing to be benighted, “the workers” have become estranged from Christ—an awful place to be—fallen from grace (Gal. 5.4).

But then the other side of the idea: those trusting in Christ, through the Spirit, eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith (Gal. 5.5).

The contrast is palpable.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord” (Eph. 5.8).

We were called “out of darkness into His marvelous light...” (1 Pet. 2.9).

Paul told us what Jesus said when he encountered Him on the road to Damascus:

“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26.17, 18).

Jesus said He would deliver Paul from those circumcised and from those uncircumcised (Gal. 5.6); as salvation is by faith alone.

Paul was teaching the Galatians the Truth that he learned from Jesus many years before. The route to salvation never changes. Grace is a gift. Faith is a gift. But we must open the gifts and claim them as our own. Because without those gifts, it is impossible to please God— “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11.6).

The reality is: there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. We can’t be good enough, smart enough, nor make enough church people happy, to spend eternity with God. All works avail nothing (Gal. 5.6).

And pretending they do leads to “foolish”, “ignorant”, and “bestly” thinking (Ps. 73.22).

But “faith working through love” pleases our Father and brings us into His eternal Presence with exceeding joy (Jude 1.24). Contrast and compare and choose correctly. By all means, let “circumcision” go.

Reflection

1. How has Jesus been expressing love for God and others through you lately?
2. In what specific ways are you working to increase in the love that issues from saving grace?

3. Whom will you encourage today to be faithful in loving as Jesus loves?

Through this faith comes works fitting to salvation. This comes about through the love that we have for Christ and God and thus toward every human being. For it is these two relationships above all that set life straight and fulfill the whole sense of the law. Marius Victorinus (ca. 280-363), *Epistle to the Galatians* 2.5.6

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

Pray that God will help you to abide in His holy Law, so that you increase in love for Him and for others. Praise Him for His great faithfulness and all His precious and very great promises.

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!

Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.

That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.

Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

3 Remember, Reject

Pray Psalm 36.1-4.

An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked:

There is no fear of God before his eyes.

For he flatters himself in his own eyes,

When he finds out his iniquity *and* when he hates.

The words of his mouth *are* wickedness and deceit;

He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.

He devises wickedness on his bed;

He sets himself in a way *that is* not good;

He does not abhor evil.

Sing Psalm 36.1-4.

(No Other Plea: [*My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*](#))

Transgression speaks within the heart of him who fears not God;

he swells with pride to flaunt his sin and boasts in wicked words.

He ceases to be good or wise; he plots a wicked way.

His pathway is unrighteousness and evil all the day.

Read Galatians 5.1-12; meditate on verses 7-12.

Preparation

1. Of what was Paul confident concerning the Galatians?
2. What did he wish for those who were troubling them?

Meditation

Paul reaffirmed his confidence in the Galatians, that they would not be persuaded to abandon faith in Jesus alone for some form of Jesus-plus-works (v. 10). God will judge those who distort His Gospel and lead His sheep astray (v. 10). But before that happens, the people of God must exercise vigilance: Remember Who has called you to His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2.12), and reject any false leaven that may be seeking to corrupt the faithful (vv. 7-9).

Paul did not preach circumcision when he was among the Galatians. He never preached it, and for this reason the Jews in every place persecuted him (v. 11). To the wrong-believing mind, the cross is an offense (v. 11). The reason it is an offense is because it eliminates any place for any kind of human works in finding favor with God. Sinful people naturally think they must have something to do with their being saved if they are to be saved at all. They must “be good enough” or at least “sincere”. Tell them, no, it’s just Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection—and they will take offense. Unless the grace of God humbles them to repent and believe.

Paul took no prisoners where the Judaizers and other false teachers were concerned. God, he insisted, will judge them all (v. 10). But Paul had his own thoughts about what these circumcisers ought to do. Verse 12 could be read to mean “cut themselves off” from the true believers. It could also have a more anatomical suggestion, which, I’m certain, would have raised a gasp the first time

this letter was read to the churches of the Galatians.

But sometimes a little shock and awe are needed to keep the Lord's sheep in their proper pasture.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Besides all the wonderful and precious promises of Scripture, the story of Creation, and the following covenants and mighty works of God; besides all that, Galatians 5.12 stands as one of the greatest comebacks of all writing through all time. Just saying.

Now on to other things.

“You ran well. Who hindered you...?” (Gal. 5.7).

We can hear Paul's plaintive question to his children in the Lord: You started out just fine, what happened?

Who did this to you? Who changed your mind? Who is pushing you off the “good ground” onto places along the “wayside”, or “stony places” that are “scorched” so that you are “withered away”, or in amongst the “thorns” to be “choked” (Matt. 13.3-8)?

Paul's heart is so weighed down that his masterful comeback (Gal. 5.12) is understandable.

We, too, should be enraged by the wiles of the enemy that woo us, our family, and friends off the Jesus Path.

The encouragement that Paul used for the Galatians is effective for all times: “have no other mind” (Gal. 5.10) than Jesus only for salvation.

When the children of Israel first left Egypt for the land of Promise, Moses wrote about their journey: “They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians” (Num. 33.3). They started well. They ran well for a time. And then, what hindered them from a successful trip? How did an eleven-day journey end up taking forty years? (Deut. 1.2).

Job, amidst many trials, said to his unhelpful friends:

“I will teach you about the hand of God;
what is with the Almighty I will not conceal.

Surely all of you have seen it;

why then do you behave with complete nonsense?” (Job 27.11, 12).

Why did they?

Why did the Galatians?

Dare I ask, why do we?

God promises to strengthen us to know His will and do it.

To understand grace and faith and salvation, then works.

“But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint” (Is. 40.31).

“I will run the course of Your commandments,
for you shall enlarge my heart” (Ps. 119.32).

Who or what has hindered you from understanding the Truth?

No one, and no thing. “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

“...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us” (Rom. 8.31, 37).

As Paul reaffirmed his confidence in the Galatians, I reaffirm our confidence in believers today: we will never “be persuaded to abandon faith in Jesus alone for some form of Jesus-plus-works.”

We will reject false teachers and their teachings—hoping that they will “even cut themselves off!” (Gal. 5.12)

And we will remember that amazing comeback.

Reflection

1. Paul hated the devil and his wiles. Should we? Explain.

2. What can believers do to help one another keep from straying off the Jesus Path?

3. Whom will you encourage today in their walk with and work for the Lord?

If Paul and others would have admitted that the observance of the law of Moses was to be joined with faith in Christ, as necessary to salvation, then believers might have avoided many of the sufferings they underwent. The first beginnings of such leaven should be opposed. And assuredly those who persist in disturbing the church of Christ must bear their judgment. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Galatians 5.7-12

Pray Psalm 36.5-12.

Thank the Lord for His mercy, faithfulness, and righteousness. Call on Him to keep and use you this day so that others might know the refreshing grace of Jesus through you.

Sing Psalm 36.5-12.

(No Other Plea: [*My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*](#))

Your lovingkindness, LORD, is great, it reaches heav'n above;

Your faithfulness mounts to the skies, and keeps us in Your love.

Your righteousness like mountains high and judgment like the deep
preserve Your creatures one and all and in Your mercy keep.

How precious is Your love, O LORD; we shelter in Your wings.

We drink refreshment to the full from Your abundant springs.

You give us freely of Your grace, we drink it with delight;

life's fountain is with You, O LORD, in Your light we see light.

O let Your grace continue, LORD, to those who love You well.

Grant righteousness to all who trust and Your salvation tell.

Keep wickedness and pride away; LORD, keep us in Your grace!

For sinners fall before Your wrath, rejected from Your face.

4 Free to Serve

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works...
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance...”

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read Galatians 5.1-15; meditate on verses 13-15.

Preparation

1. How must we not use our freedom in Jesus?
2. How should we use it?

Meditation

Jesus said that, as we abide in Him, we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free (Jn. 8.31, 32). Free from mere self-interest. Free from grudges and resentments. Free from cold indifference to the needs of others. Free in the truth of God’s Word to know what love requires.

Paul explained that our freedom consists not in being slaves to the flesh and its selfish desires, but in the Law of liberty (vv. 13, 14), to love God and our neighbors by works of loving service. We serve God by worship and devotion, and we serve our neighbors by good works of love. And we do this not to *be* saved but because we *are* saved. Denying self and serving others is what saved people do (Eph. 2.8-10).

We are truly free when we deny ourselves and follow Jesus in laying down our lives for our neighbors. This sounds completely contrary to the way of things in our wrong-believing age, where people think they must do everything they can for themselves if they would be happy. So why are so

few truly happy?

Because they have it backwards. True joy comes in knowing Jesus at work in and through us, making Himself known and spreading grace to others through our self-denying and loving service. It's a simple formula: The more we empty ourselves in love for others, the more Jesus fills us with Himself. And, since Jesus is the locus of all joy, we will know joy in loving and serving. For this is the true freedom all believers know in Jesus.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God has more respect for us human beings than we have for ourselves.

Since the beginning He has trusted us with freedom.

He created the perfect garden and gave it all to Adam and Eve to tend and live in with vigor and joy. He just offered one caveat: “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2.17). Now that is freedom! Do whatever, just don't eat that.

God offers us the gift of salvation. Free and clear. Do nothing, just believe that “by grace you have been saved through faith”—not because of anything you did or didn't do, or what bits of flesh you may or may not have removed from your person—so that you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt that redemption is not by your good works. Therefore, boasting is not allowed nor necessary; and we are wholeheartedly appreciative of this gracious, unearned gift.

But here's where it gets grisly and gross. Somewhere along the line someone thought it would be a great and freeing idea that all behaviors are relatively acceptable because of this liberty, free to be you and me! Or so we think. But Paul clearly states: Do not use this liberty as an opportunity for the flesh. There really aren't any gray areas there. Places where we might scratch our heads and query: “Wonder what he means?”

He means we have been saved by grace, we are freed from bondage to sin and death, so don't misuse your freedom as a coupon to sin. “Yep, just clipped this coupon out of the newspaper for one free day of lying.”

Our freedom now frees us up to serve and love one another. For all the law, that needs to be kept, is summed up in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Gal. 5.14). And the best way to do that is by keeping the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20.1-17). There is no way around it. It is just the way things are in the Kingdom of goodness, mercy, grace, love, and light.

*We've a story to tell to the nations
That shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy,
A story of peace and light,
A story of peace and light.*

*For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom
Shall come to earth,*

The Kingdom of love and light.
(H. Ernest Nichol, 1896)

Reflection

1. Why do we say that we are “free” in Jesus Christ?
2. To what does that freedom lead us?
3. Whom will you encourage today in the freedom we have in Jesus?

Nothing is so sure a proof that a sinner has passed into a state of justification, as Christ being formed in him by the renewal of the Holy Spirit; but this cannot be hoped for, while men depend on the law for acceptance with God.
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 4.19, 20*

Pray Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

Seek the Presence and strength of the Lord to serve others in love today. Pray for specific people, situations, and opportunities, that the love of Jesus may overflow from you.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.

Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!

He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.

Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

5 Antidote to the Flesh

Opening Prayer: Psalm 119.25-27.

My soul clings to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.
I have declared my ways, and You answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

Sing Psalm 119.25-27.

(Festal Song: [Rise Up, O Men of God](#))

My soul clings to the dust; revive me by Your Word!
My ways I have declared to You; teach me Your statutes, LORD!

Make me to understand Your precepts and Your ways,
as on Your works I meditate with wonder and with praise!

Read Galatians 5.1-21; meditate on verses 16-21.

Preparation

1. How can we keep from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh?
2. What will they miss who continue to practice the works of the flesh?

Meditation

Walk in or by the Spirit (either translation works), and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, neither will you indulge in its works. These are contrary to spiritual life in Christ; persisting in them proves that we have not inherited the Kingdom of God (v. 21).

The Holy Spirit is the antidote to the flesh. Being filled with the Spirit so that we walk with Him is our ongoing, day-by-day calling. But what does this involve?

First, embracing the Spirit's destination, which is to become more like Jesus until at last we see Him as He is and are made like Him (2 Cor. 3.12-18; 1 Jn. 3.1-3). Second, striving to realize His benchmarks of progress, that is, the fruit He works to bear in our lives (vv. 22, 23; cf. Jn. 15.1-16). For this, we must draw on the Spirit's power, by working out our salvation in disciplined acts of growth and obedience (Phil. 2.12, 13; Rom. 8.5-8), and by prayerfully and faithfully stretching into new areas of work and witness, where the Spirit can fill us beyond where we have ever been before (Eph. 3.20; 5.18-21; Acts 1.8).

We must daily submit to the schooling of the Spirit, as we search the Scriptures so He can teach us the things of Christ and fit us for good works of love (1 Cor. 2.12, 13; Jn. 15.26, 27; 16.8-14; Ezekiel. 36.26, 27; 2 Tim. 3.15-17). To walk in or by the Spirit we will seek and employ His gifts in loving service to those to whom He sends us (1 Cor. 12.7-11; Jn. 20.21). And we will resist every temptation to turn from or neglect this agenda, and thus give place to the devil and his works.

This is a daily, moment-by-moment way of life, and it can only be accomplished as we wait on the Lord continuously in prayer. The Spirit is the only antidote to the works of the flesh, the only suppressant of the lusts of the flesh, and the only power that can help us to stand firm in Christ and bear fruit for Him in every area of our lives.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Just in case anyone was wondering if their practiced sins were going unnoticed to the watching world, Paul sets that crooked thinking straight: “the works of the flesh are evident” (Gal. 5.19). So first, walk in the Spirit and you won’t practice sinful behaviors; and second, heads up, you’re not fooling anyone.

Anyone who has taken up a sport or played an instrument has been told over and over, “Practice makes perfect.” But if you are practicing incorrectly, it doesn’t make perfect, it just reinforces the error.

So, practice doesn’t make perfect, it merely makes permanent. If we “practice” (Gal. 5.21) the works of the flesh, that are contrary to the Spirit, they will become etched in our minds and hearts and have the potential to become permanent.

And Paul adds this warning: “those who practice such things [the works of the flesh] will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5.21).

However, merely cleaning out these obvious, evident, fleshly behaviors, but neglecting to refill our life with the Holy Spirit, creates an equally dire situation.

Hear Jesus’ words of warning to the Pharisees: “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation” (Matt. 12.43-45). Thus, “walk in the Spirit” and be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5.18).

Clearly, we are saved by grace through faith, but we are saved for a purpose. And the purpose is not to live with a license to sin, but with a love to obedience.

As Solomon wrote: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Eccl. 12.13, 14).

We are saved to be sanctified, to sing the praises of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

And to grow into His likeness. “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Ps. 17.15).

And the only route to sanctification, to practice being like Jesus (1 Cor. 11.1; 1 Pet. 1.16), is through daily reading, meditating in, and studying God’s Word, and through communing with God in prayer.

We must practice godliness with intention, through the Spirit, always.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor stands in the path of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
that brings forth its fruit in its season,
whose leaf also shall not wither;
and whatever he does shall prosper” (Ps. 1.1-3).

Practicing correctly, the antidote to the flesh.

Reflection

1. What does the idea of “practice” suggest to you?
2. What can you do to make sure your practices are those the Spirit commends?
3. How can believers encourage one another to walk in the Spirit so that they will not fulfill the desires of the flesh?

The works of the flesh are many and manifest. And these sins will shut men out of heaven. Yet what numbers, calling themselves Christians, live in these, and say they hope for heaven! Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Galatians 5.16-26

Pray Psalm 119.28-32.

Call on the Lord to keep you from the lusts and works of the flesh and to fill you with His Spirit through the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 119.28-32.

(Festal Song: [*Rise Up, O Men of God*](#))

My soul weighs down with woe, I need Your strength, O LORD!
Remove from me all lying ways; grant me Your holy Word!

I choose the way of truth; Your judgments I proclaim.
Your testimonies I embrace, LORD, put me not to shame!

Command my course, O LORD; Your gracious truth impart.
I cling to You and know You will enlarge my seeking heart.

6 The Fruit of the Spirit

Opening Prayer: Psalm 1.1, 2

Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

Sing Psalm 1.1, 2

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Blessed the one who walks not in the counsel of ungodly men;
stands not in the path of sinners, joins not scorners in their sin.
But his joy is in the LORD's law, and he meditates therein.

Read Galatians 5.1-26; meditate on verses 22-26.

Preparation

1. If we live in the Spirit, what should we expect?
2. What should we do?

Meditation

The Spirit of God brings forth this desirable fruit in our lives, with increasing consistency and abundance. This is the evidence that Christ lives in us, which the Spirit brings forth by His power, making us willing and able to obey that which is pleasing to God (Phil. 2.13).

How does He do that?

The Holy Spirit writes the Law of God on our new heart (Ezek. 36.26, 27). Thus, He renews our understanding and affections Godward, and for righteousness. He opens the Word to us and shows us Jesus, as in a mirror. As we gaze into the glory of Jesus' face (2 Cor. 4.6), the Spirit uses the Law and all the Word of God to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18). That likeness appears in the fruit of the Spirit, manifested in our lives in all we do.

At the same time, the Spirit changes our thoughts, desires, and values so that we suppress and reject "the flesh with its passions and desires" (v. 24). We cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit unless we are filled with Him and walk with Him (v. 25), staying on the Jesus Path and refusing to be drawn aside to fleshly snares.

There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit (v. 23) because, in fact, all the Law of God encourages and promotes such fruit. Bearing this fruit and crucifying fleshly desires will keep us from becoming "conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (v. 26). On the contrary, it will move us to encourage and edify one another, to seek the wellbeing of others, and to position ourselves as their servants for Jesus' sake.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

If we live in America, we are expected to follow the laws of the land. The same for any country one resides in.

If we work at a particular job, we are expected to follow the by-laws for that particular business.

If we drive a car, we must follow the rules of the road lest there be disasters.

We all experience the benefits that come with country, work, and transportation; therefore, we adhere to the accompanying laws.

Thus, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5.25).

Walking in the Spirit has its own set of guidelines—the benefits of which shower the doer and the recipients.

Who does not benefit from these traits? Obviously, there is no law against: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—qualities that bless individuals and multitudes.

But then Paul, in his pervasive wisdom, throws in the caveat of what not to do, be, or think. Don’t be conceited, don’t be provoking, and do not envy.

In other words, the strength to pull off this good behavior is a gift from God, the work of the Holy Spirit; so, don’t be conceited, or break your arm patting yourself on the back, if this goodness begins to exude from you.

Also, righteousness, if not done humbly, can be really provoking. So don’t go there either.

And lastly, if a Christian brother or sister happens to be both righteous and humble, and actually lives and walks in the Spirit, don’t envy them (Gal. 5.26). Maybe try imitating them instead (1 Cor. 11.1).

“Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments...

You are good and do good; teach me Your statutes” (Ps. 119.66, 68).

“Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;

he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous” (Ps. 112.4).

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11.30).

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jms. 2.26).

“In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity;

and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil” (Prov. 16.6).

“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5.24).

The benefits of living in the Spirit require the fruit borne of walking in the Spirit.

Reflection

1. Live, walk, be filled. Explain each of these terms with respect to your life in the Spirit of God.

2. Which of the fruit of the Spirit would you like to see more consistently present in your life? Make this a matter of ongoing prayer.

3. How can believers help one another to walk in the Spirit and not in the lusts of the flesh?

The fruits of the Spirit plainly show, that such are led by the Spirit. By describing the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, we are told what to avoid and oppose, and what we are to cherish and cultivate; and this is the sincere care and endeavor of all real Christians. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 5.22-26*

Pray Psalm 1.3-6.

Pray that God will bring forth the fruit of His Spirit in you today, making you an agent of His grace for His glory and praise (2 Cor. 4.15).

Sing Psalm 1.3-6.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

He shall flourish like a tree transplanted by the streams of grace;
rooted near life-giving waters, growing strong in this blessed place—
ever fruitful, never with'ring, prospering before God's face.

Not so rooted are the wicked, like chaff blowing in the wind.
They shall not stand with the righteous but shall be judged in their sin.
For the LORD knows all the righteous, but the wicked's ways shall end.

7 A Daily Protocol

Opening Prayer: Psalm 116.7-9

Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.

Sing Psalm 116.1-3,7-9

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise To God Who Reigns Above*](#))

I love the LORD because He hears my cries and pleas for mercy.
Because He bends to me His ear, my prayers shall ever thus be.
The snares of death encompassed me; hell's grip could not unloosened be;
distress and anguish pressed me.

Full well the LORD has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
and dwell with them forever

Read Galatians 5.1-26; meditate on verse 25.

Preparation

1. What must we do about the lusts and works of the flesh?
2. If we live in the Spirit, how should we walk?

Meditation

Let me summarize this chapter briefly, because I think Paul sets up a pattern here that should guide our walk with and work for the Lord every day:

1. Remember that *God has called you*, and that He has called you to be free from bondage to sin (v. 13).
2. Resolve before the Lord in prayer to *stand fast in that calling* and to resist anything that would draw you away from it (v. 1).
3. Look ahead—short term and long—to *realizing more of the hope of righteousness* in becoming more like Jesus (v. 5).
4. *Confess all sin* and *put your fleshly lusts and works to death*, right from the start of the day and throughout (v. 24).
5. Seek the filling of the Spirit and commit yourself to *walking in the Spirit* throughout the day (vv. 16, 25).
6. In every situation *bear Holy Spirit fruit* by listening for His leading and drawing on His strength (vv. 22, 23).

7. Finally, make the most of every opportunity to *serve others in love* (vv. 13, 14).

Any questions?

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“With my whole heart I have sought You:

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” (Ps. 119.10)

“I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end” (Ps. 119.112).

“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119.11).

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Lk. 11.13).

“For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Lk. 12.12).

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world,
but the Spirit Who is from God,
that we might know the things
that have been freely given to us by God” (1 Cor. 2.12).

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;
in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,
to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1.13, 14).

“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.
Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God,
Who has also given us His Holy Spirit” (1 Thess. 4.7, 8).

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5.25).

*Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art,
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.*

*Hast Thou not bid us love Thee, God and King?
All, all Thine own, soul, heart and strength and mind.
I see Thy cross—there teach my heart to cling:
O let me seek Thee, and O let me find.*

*Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heav’n descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.
(George Croly, 1854)*

Reflection

1. How would you counsel a new believer to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh?
2. How can believers help one another to keep focused on increasing in the righteousness of Jesus?
3. Whom will you encourage today to stand fast in the Lord and bear fruit in His Name?

The death of the flesh is the life of the Spirit. If the Spirit of God lives in us, let him govern our actions... As the soul does not remain idle in the body, but gives motion and rigour to every member and part, so the Spirit of God cannot dwell in us without manifesting himself by the outward effects. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 5.25*

Pray Psalm 116.4-6, 10-19.

Commit your day to the Lord, to stand fast in your calling, crucify the lusts and works of the flesh, look forward to the hope of righteousness, walk in the Spirit, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and serve others in love.

Sing Psalm 116.4-6, 10-19

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*](#))

I called to God, "O LORD, I pray, my soul redeem with favor!"
The LORD is gracious in His way, and righteous is our Savior.
His mercy to the simple flies; He lifted me up to the skies—
I rest in Him forever!

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the LORD for all His blessings to me?
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart—make me Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand'ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your Presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

Galatians 5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. To what has God called us? What does that mean? How can we “stand fast” in that calling?
2. What does it mean to “crucify” the lusts and works of the flesh? When should you do that?
3. What are the works of the flesh? What should our attitude be toward these?
4. What is the fruit of the Spirit? How can we bear such fruit?
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from Galatians 5?

For Prayer:

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