

STUDIES IN GALATIANS

Study #11: Galatians 5:16-26

“You Were Running Well” (Until The Flesh Started Living on Law)

You Were Running Well UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on Law” – Galatians 5:16-26

Key verse 5:7 —“You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”

You Were Running Well UNTIL: The Flesh Started Living on the Law. Remember, I divided the book:

2 chapters on the personal,

2 chapters on the doctrinal, and then

2 chapters on the practical.

We’re in the practical. And this is the heart of the practical. You make the choice of whether you’re going to be a performer and live by the Law or you’re going to accept by grace what God has given. The moment you do that, the Spirit of God comes to dwell within and He brings all of the potential for us to begin to become Christlike.

So study #11: [Galatians] 5:16-26 and our key verse is [Galatians] 5:17. Now, maybe you have enjoyed the privilege that I have of reading Barbara Johnson's books. I love to read her books because she always has so many fun things.

This one has a picture of her sitting on a box with her straw hat on with a big smile. And she says:

A man had just under gone surgery and as he came out of the anesthesia, he said "Why are all the blinds drawn doctor?"

"There's a big fire across the street and we didn't want you to wake up and think the operation was a failure!"

A man and his wife walked into the dentist's office. The man said to the dentist, "Doc, I'm in a big hurry. I have two buddies sitting out in my car waiting for us to go play golf so forget about the anesthetic and just pull the tooth and be done with it. We have a 10 am tee time at the best golf course in town and it's 9:30 already. I don't have time to wait for the anesthetic to work."

The dentist thought to himself, "My goodness, this is truly a brave man asking to have his tooth pulled without using anything to kill the pain."

So the dentist asked him, "Which tooth is it, sir?"

The man turned to his wife and said, "Open your mouth honey and show him."

I love this one too!

A preacher was making the rounds to his parishioners on a bicycle when he came upon a little boy trying to sell a lawnmower.

“How much do you want for the mower?” asked the preacher.

“I just want enough money to go out and buy me a bicycle” said the little boy.

After a moment of consideration, the preacher asked: “Well will you take my bike in trade for it?”

The little boy asked if he could try it out first. After riding the bike around a little while he said “Mister, you’ve got yourself a deal.”

The preacher took the mower and he began to try to crank it. He pulled on the rope a few times with no response from the mower. The preacher called the little boy over and said “I can’t get this mower to start.”

The little boy said “That’s because you have to cuss in order to get it started.”

The preacher said “I’m a minister and I cannot cuss. It’s been so long since I’ve been saved that I don’t even remember how to cuss.”

The little looked at him happily and said “Just keep pulling on that rope, it’ll come back to you.”

This is a new piece of cowboy poetry. This is a guy that I’ve not ever read but I’ve got a whole collection of him. And I was looking at this one the other day. This is by Country Tom Bowser. Maybe you’ve heard of him. He teaches a Sunday school class somewhere but this one’s on a tribute to his wife. It’s called “Ain’t Love Grand.”

“Ain’t Love Grand?!?!”

When you find the one that’s Your True Love
And you know that she’s been sent by the God above
HE’s answered prayer to find this way of life
To give you a partner, this wonderful wife.
You’re like a kid with a new found toy
Everyday things become great joy
When you’re away from her, you miss her so
You cannot wait for the both of you to be on the go!
Not that troubles don’t come your way
But by working together, they do not stay.
Because you take your problems to the Lord each day.
And HE works them out in the Grandest Way,
Sure, there are times when you don’t agree;
But if you just step back, you will see
There are two sides and not just ME!
And, oh, those times when you get sick,
She loves and cares for you so quick;

And on top of this, all your dreams have come true.
You're living in your log cabin and the building is almost
through;

You're next to the river and in the trees;
At the end of the road and you thank the Lord on your knees.
That HE made ALL THIS POSSIBLE 'cause HE really cares

For this simple old cowboy and his wife who shares.

Now, my love for my wife, I feel is so strong

'Cause in my eyes she can do no wrong.

When she gets all "done-up" to go somewhere

With clothes just right and stunning hair.

She sure looks good, but does not compare

To when we first get up and I see her smile.

She's the prettiest girl in many-a-mile.

So ain't love grand? I would surely say;

Thank you Lord for another day!!!!

By Country Tom Bowser

(source unknown)

Let's make up two lists, ok? In making a list, at the top of it on
one list put "LAW" and the top of the other put "GRACE,"
because this is going to summarize everything we've looked at
the in book of Galatians.

LAW	GRACE
Bondage	Freedom
Death	Life
Slaves	Sons
Curse	Blessing
Flesh	Spirit

Now star those two because those are the ones that are going to become the issue in the study.

FLESH under the LAW.

SPIRIT under GRACE.

LAW	GRACE
Performance	Transformation

Remember what Paul said in:

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It's the Spirit's function to transform us from the moment we become Christians to make us daily more Christlike. And so when you're going to see these things in bold relief in the passage, it will help you to go back.

And our key verse is going to be chapter 5, verse 17—the second verse in our study.

John MacArthur at this particular point said something so clear and plain I just had to include it in the notes. I want you

to listen to him as he explains what we're getting ready to look at:

(Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary by John MacArthur, Jr.)

Just as Jesus Christ is the primary Person behind justification, ...

[Now do you understand that? That's your salvation. You are justified and declared righteous in God's sight. So he's using a theological word.]

Just as Jesus Christ is the primary Person behind justification, the Holy Spirit is the primary Person behind sanctification. [That words to be made holy. After we've become Christians we're justified and declared righteous. Then practically the Spirit of God begins the sanctifying work of separating us from the old life and helping us on to the new and to begin to reflect the person of Christ.] A believer can no more sanctify himself than he could have saved himself in the first place. He cannot live the Christian life by his own resources any more than he could have saved himself by his own resources. (p. 151)

Isn't that good? I mean that just brings it all into perspective and it's going to help make this passage come alive to you.

Now, what we usually do is we dig in, don't we?

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

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

So what you have here is the conflict now between the flesh (which is what the performer does). The flesh performs to try to prove that they are righteous. The Spirit transforms and produces Christlikeness within us.

“I am saying, walk”—now that is in the present tense. That’s present imperative so it’s a command. When you have a present imperative in the Greek, I can translate this legitimately, “I’m saying keep on walking.” In other words, it’s something you do every day all the time.

You are walking “by means of the Spirit.” Not the flesh. Not the Law. The moment you became a Christian, the Spirit of God came to dwell in you permanently. And He has very special functions in each of our lives. He’s to guide us. He’s to strengthen us. He’s to focus on obedience. He is the one who is constantly there to counsel and to open up the truth so we can understand it that He should be here today in each of us, helping us understand this passage of Scripture. That’s part of His function.

You know, since I’ve been teaching this this week, I have been so aware of the Spirit of God. You know, you know theological truth but then you recognize some of the specifics. It just

happens to be that I'm reading, I finished Joni Eareckson Tada and I'm reading Chuck Swindoll's new book on the Holy Spirit, but that could help that. But teaching the passage, it's just amazing how much we take for granted that it was a circumstance when really it was an orchestration by the Spirit of God.

It's when you become aware of those things that really delights your heart to know that the Spirit of God is functioning in accordance with what He was said and designed to do. "To walk" means to conduct your life.

Peripateō—to be walking around. Wherever you're walking around, "walk by means of the Spirit."

Now the word "by means of" means "dependent upon." You are dependent upon the Spirit.

"Walk by means of the Spirit." Accept reality. You can't do this. You've got to be dependent upon your teacher. The resources that God put in your heart in the Spirit of God to carry out this function.

"Walk by means of the Spirit and [what?] you will by no means [that's *pneuma*—that's a double Greek negative. It can positively, absolutely, no way can you] fulfill the desire of the flesh" when you're walking by "means of the Spirit." You can't do both. You can't walk by the Spirit and fulfilling the "desire of the flesh." They won't go together any more than Law and

grace. You've already learned that back when we were in chapter 5 earlier.

So the contrast is very real. And all he is saying "Walk by means"—keep on walking—"by means of the Spirit and you will be no means fulfill the desire of the flesh."

You say "But why is the Spirit there?" Well, He's there for power. He's there for guidance. He's there for instruction. He leads us into the will of God for our lives. He's there to be that guidance and that refreshing point for us.

"So walk by means of the Spirit." The secret to victorious Christian living is to be walking in dependence and submission to the Spirit of God.

It's kind of like we could look at these lights up here in the ceiling and say "Oh isn't it wonderful that those lights light." Well those lights don't light but there is an unseen source that lights those lights. And you can go over and turn the switch and you'll realize what the source is that lights the light. The light by itself would not light.

It's the same way with us. You will not light up and be radiant. You will not demonstrate Christlikeness to others with your own resources. Satan tries to convince everybody they can light up their own lives. But ultimately the fallacy becomes real and it's the Spirit of God who does it.

You see, the Spirit of God energizes the new divine nature within each of us. He turns on the lights. And that new divine nature will begin to produce the fruit of the Spirit, which is going to be at the end of the study. The old nature is still in you and in me. And it will function the minute you say sic'em. God will never violate our human will. And you'll see what happens when the flesh is in control.

I just wrote in big letters at the bottom of it the secret:

**CHANNEL ALL YOUR EFFORTS TO BE DEPENDENT
UPON THE SPIRIT!**

That's the key of the day. Channel all your efforts to be dependent upon the Spirit.

And declare your dependency. It's not weakness to declare that you are dependent and that you're going under without Him. It's almost like Peter walking on the water. I mean as long as he was looking to the Lord, everything was fine. But as soon as he got his eyes off the Lord and on the water, the flesh took over and he sunk. That's exactly the description that is given here by Paul in this passage.

Now the problem you have is when the old nature takes over, you do two things:

1. You grieve the Holy Spirit. He is the HOLY Spirit so you grieve Him by sin. When something's said, something's done in the flesh that immediately grieves the Holy Spirit.
2. You quench the Holy Spirit. You put out the fire of the Spirit by saying no or resisting the obvious directly that He's taking you. When you say "no I don't want to have a part of that" or "no I won't go there," we immediately lose our peace. But that shuts down the function of the Spirit until we deal with that issue. And it's very, very real. So channel all your efforts to be dependent upon the Spirit.

John Ortberg put it this way. I love reading his books and this one's *The Me I Want to Be* or *Becoming God's Best Version of [Me]* is the subtitle to the book:

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)

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

God will never lead us to manage a desire in a sinful way. If I want to walk down the wrong road, I must begin by

silencing God's divine voice within me. I must be careful not to pray about this desire with a submitted spirit. I must make sure I don't talk about this desire with wise friends who will hold me accountable. I must make sure I don't look carefully at passages of Scripture on the subject and reflect on them. I must do all these things without recognizing I am doing them. I must keep myself in a state of spiritual and mental vagueness where God is concerned. (p. 139)

He's just described it. I mean, it's the subtly of all of these piling up together. Knowing this is compromising. It's not pleasing to the Lord. But you've got to go through all these other things too. You've got to withdraw from your brothers and sisters who would counsel you and be accountable to you, and you to them. And then you've got to make these decisions knowing that you're violating what the Lord wants for you and therefore you've got the consequences that take place.

Now, verse 17 is our key verse. Watch how he builds on this now.

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

“For—REASON why we are to be walking “by means of the Spirit”—the flesh [that's that old nature that's still within us] is constantly having a strong desire to suppress the Spirit.

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

That is so clear. Over here you’ve got the flesh fighting against anything that’s spiritual. And over here you’ve got the Spirit who is in the process of transforming us and working in our lives to make us more Christlike. So I picked this verse because it just spells it all out for us. And it’s not abnormal. In fact, it’s very normal to have a conflict in your Christian life—to battle this issue. And the more transparent you are, and the more you’re honest about it and admit that it’s true. We’re so proud, though, and we still want to be in control that it’s hard for us to tell the truth about some of the stuff we’re going through.

What does everybody say when you see them? “How’s it going?”

“Great!”

You know it’s not. You get it dear. You did something today. It’s refreshing when we recognize, truthfully, where we’re coming from and we’re accepted and loved in the midst of it.

If you’re struggling with some things, listen to the Apostle Paul because you’re awful good company. He is so transparent that people think he was a sinner and he was describing this before he became a Christian. It’s not!

Romans 7, beginning at verse 15. Listen to what he says:

Romans 7:15-19

For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

And he goes right on to describe it.

But you get to Romans 8:1. Therefore the Spirit of God has delivered me from condemnation and I now understand the pathway to victory is being totally and completely submitted and dependent upon the Spirit of God to produce this in me and that there is a tug-of-war going on in me—"between my old nature, the flesh"—that will be with you until the day you die (by the way). You're not going to get your new redeemed body and get your new nature until you get to glory. That's why you can never say "I've arrived" spiritually. You never will until you take the last breath and you're home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:6

But we can be confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in us will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I remember doing one funeral of this dear guy. One of the ladies said after the funeral “He sure didn’t have to change very much.” It was just a beautiful testimony of a life that was lived in real dependence upon the Lord and the Spirit of God. And his witness had been so clear that someone had to summarize it all by saying “He didn’t have to change very much because he had already changed a lot while he was down here.”

I’m reading a book by Ruth Paxson. Now this is an old, old book. Ruth Paxson was a missionary with China Inland Mission. I started reading all of Isobel Kuhn’s book. When I was reading her books on her mission to the Lisu people in China, I found out that they were sitting under the teaching of Ruth Paxson. And I knew I had found at the doctor’s book fair back in the boondocks, a book by Ruth Paxson. And sure enough, it was the book *Life on the Highest Plane*. I think we got it for 50 cents or a dollar, or something like that. Amazing. Listen to what she said this morning on this business of the flesh.

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(Life on the Highest Plane: A Study of the Spiritual Nature and Needs of Man by Ruth Paxson)

In Scripture the word “flesh” has several meanings but in the verses quoted it is used in the ethical sense and means the whole natural man, spirit, soul and body, living in self-will and alienated from the life of God. The flesh is what man became through the Fall. It is man “without God” (Ephesians 2:12).

The “flesh” manifests nothing but antagonism to God and defiance of authority. It is irrevocably opposed to God and to His Law. (p. 73)

So she’s saying, that’s the way we came into this world and that nature is going to be with you until the day you die. That’s the conflict that you have within.

Just remember that you didn’t have a conflict before you became a Christian, did you? Now I tell kids all the time, “Listen don’t sweat it man. Did you have a conflict before? No? Well that’s the new nature within you that’s stirring up all of this stuff. And the flesh is suppressing all of that as well.”

So the battle that’s going on is a pretty healthy thing. You see the Law stirs up the flesh and grace is operative through the Spirit. That’s where you put the two.

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

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

Now it's the areas of our lives where we think that we don't need Him that we are the most vulnerable. Satan loves to pick those areas and prove the fact that you are no match for [him] and the flesh.

Apart from the Spirit of God giving the victory so we must live each day in a constant awareness of what the Holy Spirit is doing. And allow Him to keep on doing that work in us and reminding Him every morning that we are completely dependent upon Him.

Ian Thomas says:

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

The same picture. Remember the twelve spies, when they got to Kadesh-Barnea, Moses told them to go in and look at the land. What do you have? Ten guys in the flesh that said “We cannot take the land.” Only two, Joshua and Caleb, were walking by means of the Spirit.

It’s already been given to us. All we have to go in to do is go in and possess it.

The danger of the flesh is what the Galatian Christians are facing because they are going back to the Law and to performance.

Now we can sit here today and say, “Oh, wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could just overcome the law of gravity.” We get up and we jump but we come right back down. Gravity, gravity.

But then we go to the airport and we get on an airplane. There is a new law—the law of aerodynamics—that supersedes the law of gravity. And we’re flying away in a jet plane. And we think when we’re up there that we can do that and live by the law of aerodynamics whether we’re in the plane or not. Once you step outside you realize that the law of gravity is still there and it will take over.

That’s exactly what happens to us when we think that we have arrived at such a spiritual level, we don’t have to keep close communion and contact with the Spirit of God who is endeavoring to produce Christlikeness in us.

Oh how much we desperately need to be aware of the Lord's presence.

Do you remember Philip? This last year before sunrise service I did Philip. I love doing him. He's one of the nutty-buddies, along with Andrew.

Remember what the Lord said to Philip when there were 5,000 people waiting to eat? "Let's get some bread for these people to eat!" That was basically what the Lord said.

And the text says the Lord knew already what He was going to do but He was testing Philip. What did Philip say? In charge of food service for 12 is one thing, 5,000 is a completely different deal. He gets his menu calculating book out and he says "Two hundred penny worth! That's a whole year's salary. It wouldn't give everybody a little bite."

Where did he make his mistake? The Bread of Life is standing right there in his presence. Totally ready to do what He's getting ready to do anyway and Philip doesn't comprehend this.

I'm just telling you that this week has refreshed my spirit because I'm more aware of the Spirit this week. I've been so busy and involved in these missions without communing. We've got to stay in contact. And the Spirit of God is the one who makes all the difference but we limit our lives so many times by disregarding the resources that are standing right there. I love it, I love it, I love it.

John Ortberg says:

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg)

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

He's trying to describe the whole issue that comes before us in the conflict between the flesh and Spirit.

When you get to verse 18, he gives you a summary. Then the rest of the study is going to be the contrast between the two ways of life here.

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

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

Peterson in *The Message*—this is so cool:

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

In essence he's just throwing it down. He's saying “I have taught you. I have helped you understand the seriousness of giving yourself to the Law.” And now it comes time to make the decision. And “if you are being led by the Spirit,” I want you to understand that “you are not under Law.”

So because many of them are already circumcised and under the Law, then they are not walking in the Spirit.

That's got to be very painful to them because they thought that by keeping the Law they were becoming more and more spiritual. You see the fallacy in their thinking? Strong, strong

“Walk by means of the Spirit” is the command in verse 16.

Then the TWO REASONS:

1. “the flesh is constantly having a strong desire” against the Spirit.

2. And the Spirit is against the flesh,

But:

“If you being led by the Spirit, you are not under law.”

You know, sometimes when you read these old commentaries you think you’re reading somebody from the twenty-first century.

I had Martin Luther’s commentary on Galatians. Of course, Luther had a great struggle with the performance of the Catholic church and understanding that there was something more to life.

As you know he made famous “the just shall live by faith and by faith alone.”

Listen to what he says:

(Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians by Martin Luther, abridged translation by Theodore Graebner)

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

That pretty well says it. You know, he just comes to the bottom line.

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

First of all, we're going to look at the works of the flesh. Remember I asked you to circle that word last week? Trying, trying, trying—Performance, performance, performance.

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

Well, he uses another word today. He uses the word “works.”

“Now [these are] the works of the flesh [and they] are plain to see, which are:”

Peterson says:

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

That pretty well summarizes it all.

Let me just read a passage from Jesus for a minute.

I think if I do this, you'll understand why the works are so negative.

Jesus in Mark 7:20-23 describe us to a T by our nature without Him.

Mark 7:20-23

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

Now, it's all of that that's going to come to the floor as he describes the works of the flesh and what they do. What are we supposed to do? We're supposed to be walking in dependence upon the Spirit, aren't we? And so these works should not be showing up in our lives unless there's an accident or there's been something that we have definitely done to grieve and quench the Spirit and therefore it happens.

Now, these 15 words are described in 4 different ways. There's:

3 words on the sexual,

2 words on the religious,

8 words on interpersonal relationships, and

2 words on excess to wrap it up.

So you'll have 15 total:

3 sex,

2 religion,

8 human relationships, and

2 sins of excess that conclude it.

Now, I've done a Greek study on all the words but I'm not going to take a long time with them other than give you the results of the work and the definition of each.

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

“Fornication, uncleanness, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions,”

Now, these are what we said are the **WORKS OF THE FLESH**.

1. “Fornication” is any unlawful and immoral sexual relationship that is outside the bounds of marriage.

We're living in a day when purity is a sign of ugliness and it's tragic.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

It is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no man transgress and defraud his brother in this matter . . .

Robert Schuller of course is one of those power of positive thinking guys that was pretty dominant while I was in seminary. And I did read some of his books. But I want to tell you one thing, when it came to morality he said it just exactly right so I am quoting from him here. Not that I have bought into his theological position, please. Sometimes you find something that is really truth that you want to communicate.

(Believe in the God Who Believes in You by Robert H. Schuller)

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

Morality is not based on natural instinct.

To do what you naturally feel like doing is not morality.
(p. 185)

So he really does lay it out there for us with this first word.

Second word is:

2. “uncleanness”—that has sexual overtones. Whenever you are involved sexually outside the bounds of marriage, or in pre-marital sex and relationship. You’ll hear kids, if you’ve been around them after this experience: “I feel so dirty inside.” The “uncleanness” is a manifestation of what has happened as a result of it.

The third word is the word:

3. “indecenty”

Now when it comes to the dirty part, Ludlow Porch says:

Never wrestle with a pig. They get all dirty and the pig likes it.

(source unknown)

That’s pretty much uncleanness. “Indecency” means you don’t care what people think. You’re above shockability because you’re totally selfish in this regard.

Ball caps worn backwards, belts around their bunds, suitless bathing straps for swimming suits. All of that is the crud that is accepted by the society that we live in. And we understand it.

Now those are the 3 words that have to do with MORALITY.

The next 2 have to do with IDOLATRY or WORSHIP.

4. “idolatry”—or idol worship and sexual sins are closely related in the ancient world. Do you remember when they worshipped the idols there was also sexual involvement as part of the participation. He ran into this in all those Greek cities, in Thessalonica, in Corinth, and many places.

When we say “idolatry” I notice Christians kind of get really comfortable because you don’t have a little golden idol sitting over in the corner so therefore you’re free from idolatry.

Can I just bring this up just a tad and bring it to the 21st century? Fifty-two inch plasma TV, cell phones, laptops, blackberries, Mp3 players, and the list goes on until you just can’t stand it anymore. To realize how many things really are [idols].

John said:

1 John 5:21

My little children, keep yourselves from idols.

The second word from worship is:

5. “witchcraft”—now this is hard to translate. The word is PHARMAKEIA, where we get the word PHARMACY.

Have you noticed that every one of these 15 words takes something which is good and acceptable and makes it distorted and perverted and ugly? That’s the way Satan works.

All 15 of the words in themselves are ok. I mean, sex is wonderful. God created it for the marriage relationship. And every one of the words could be recognized as being distorted by the devil himself.

So when you think of drugs you think of drug culture, don’t you? When I think of drugs I just go out and look at the little deal outside of Pearl’s office with the stack of Bibles that she’s worked on that given day because there’s a constant flow of addictive behavior materials going out to prisons all around our area. There’s never a day that goes by but she has several of those things out there or in the process of ministering to these people who are there because they have been snagged. They have been trapped and as a result of it, they’ve broken the Law.

So you've got 3 words on SEXUAL, 2 words on WORSHIP, and then the next words (are you ready?) 8 words on PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. Do you think the flesh shows up more on interpersonal relationships than he does on the sexual or the worship part of it? Paul certainly must have felt so because he puts 8 of the 15 words that have to do with our relationships with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Do you remember the last verse we had last week? No you don't. I've got it to remind you. Remember what he said?

Galatians 5:15

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

He kind of indicated by that, that interpersonal things is in the body of Christ, is where it shows up and the flesh becomes dominant.

Look at number 6:

6. "enmities"—this is an attitude that puts up the barriers and draws the sword.
7. "strife"—is what comes from it and the outcome of this attitude.

8. “jealousies”—the thought that we don’t have the advantages that somebody else does and so we get the green-eyed monster of jealousy.
9. “wrath”—is outbursts of anger. It’s like lighting a fire and an explosion that takes places.
10. “factions”—you could translate those words “outbreaks of selfishness. I believe this so heartily and they don’t believe this and so therefore I would create a faction. I would go my own way and do what I want to do.

(When Being Good Isn’t Good Enough by Stephen Brown)

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

Bumper stickers used to read:

“It may not be much, but at least it’s paid for!”

Do you remember that?

Now fleshy imports have the message:

“I owe, I owe, so it’s off to work I go!”

Pearl and I were—Friday night's our date night—and so we always make a choice where we're going to go. I forgot, I think it was my turn to choose so I knew that we had two Christmas cards from On the Border so I wanted a cheap date. So we went to On the Border. Right after dinner we were coming out and would you believe, here drives this van up right next to our suburban. And on the front license plate it said "God is my Co-Pilot."

Now I have said this to hundreds of people: "If God is your Co-Pilot, you're sitting in the wrong seat." But that van had some big honkers in there that I didn't realize until I got to the door and I kept my mouth shut and went and got into my suburban.

You've got to be careful about how you respond. You thought you were better off but the van was full of folks that could have put me in never-never land.

Verse 21—look at the rest of them.

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

11. "divisions"

12. “heresies”—You understand heresies, don’t you? That’s straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel by taking verses out of context and stuff.
13. “envyings”—the same green-eyed monster as jealousy.

Then you’ve got the last two:

14. “drunkenness” and
15. “carousing”

“and such like”—now pay attention in verse 21—“(and the things like these); of which I am forewarning you [PRESENT TENSE] even as I did forewarn you” [IN THE PAST].

Now look at the last phrase, the way I’ve translated it because I’ve made it just as accurate to the Greek text as I could:

“that those who are in the habit of practicing things such as this shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

You say, I’ve done some of them so I don’t get to inherit the kingdom of God. Would you look at the word “practicing.” It’s in present tense. Don’t let the devil deceive you into thinking that you did something back years ago that’s impossible to be forgiven, therefore, you don’t have the assurance that you’re going to heaven. That is not what he’s saying.

He says “I’m warning you and telling you that if this is the modus operandi for your life and these 15 words characterize your life on a daily basis—and that’s the way people see you and know you—then you better go back to the basics and find out whether you’ve ever come to know Christ.

These are the issues that he’s trying to describe for you as the difference between a person who knows Christ and is walking with the Lord and a person who isn’t.

Now, the words that we have described here are the words:

“divisions” and

“heresies.”

That kind of party spirit that you had in Corinth. Remember? “I’m of Paul” and “I’m of Apollos.”

On the word “divisions” I always remember when I was a child on the Oregon coast. I used to love to go, when the tide was out, and sit on those rocks. If you’ve ever been on the Oregon coast, there are these huge outcroppings of rocks. And you know, you could sit on those rocks and watch the tide start to come in.

But there would be tide pools all over those rocks. And in those tide pools you’d see little crabs.

And the Lord really spoke to me one morning while I was sitting there:

“Didn’t you know, Don, when the Spirit of God and the tide is out every crab has his own little puddle. But when the Spirit of God comes all the crabs are in one big puddle.”

You know, that’s really the difference between the flesh and the spirit. And to understand those truths help us sometimes to recognize we better recognize the fact that we are living in the flesh rather than the spirit.

And then you had to those last two words:

14. “drunkenness” and

15. “carousing.”

What does Ephesians 5:18 say?

Chuck Swindoll really waxes eloquence on this. He says: “Be continually being filled with the Spirit.”

Just like you are to be walking in the Spirit, “be continually being filled with the Spirit and do not be drunk with wine.”

In other words, once the Spirit of God comes in and takes over, then we are to ask Him daily to continue to be filling us.

And then you had that big warning. But keep your focus on having practiced all of these things.

I remember one morning I was going to work and I loved when I got that satellite radio, listening to the songs of the 40's.

You know, it indicates Pearl and I are aged. But it was so fun. And one of the songs that kept coming on it seemed like every morning was Johnny Cash's "Big Bad John."

It's the description of a guy who really was just one heck of a guy. And the story is so tear-jerking because he ends up dying in the bottom of the mine and releasing all the other miners and becoming the big hero.

That's all going to pass away, isn't it? That's certainly not a picture of what we know in the person of Christ.

Well, there's so much I could say to you but I can't say it because you wouldn't come back next week for the last.

What we have to do now, we've got to take a little bit of time with the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

I'm assuming you've had some studying in this.

The word “FRUIT” is singular. You can’t go out of here today and say I’m going to start with the list of 9 and I’m going to start with “love.” If it’s of the Spirit of God, it’s not performance and you’re not going out of trying. You’re asking the Spirit of God to produce all 9 of these manifestations of His presence in your life. And Paul has chosen the word “fruit.”

That’s very significant because the last word that Jesus gave them in the upper room was:

John 15:4, 8 & 16

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can you. ... Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit. ... You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit ...

So out of the relationship, this is what the Spirit of God is doing and producing in us and it will become more and more manifest as you grow and mature in Christ. And you’re aware that the Spirit is the one who’s doing this. In the transformation process of making each of us more Christlike—which is His goal and objective—these are the words that would characterize our relationship. You’ve got a whole list of words for the FLESH, you’ve got 9 words to describe the “FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.”

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

“But the fruit of the Spirit is”

1. “love”—Now if you’ll take the word “love,” that’s AGAPE. That is the manifestation of the Spirit. That’s not *phileo*—friendship love. It’s not *eros*—lustful love. It is that which the Spirit of God produces, *agape* love.
2. “joy”—Joy is the evidence that the King is in residence. Joy is the flag that flies when the Spirit of God is in the castle or in the palace.

The picture that’s described here is what happens the minute you stifle or grieve the Spirit, you lose joy. Remember what David said?

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me.

But what did he say right after that?

Psalm 51:12

Restore to me the joy of my salvation.

It's like it goes immediately.

3. "peace"—It's peace upward, inward and outward.
4. "long-suffering" (or patience)—that's waiting for the process.
5. "kindness"—Be kind one to another (Ephesians 4:32)
6. "goodness"

I think the thing that the Lord loves more about believers is:

7. "faithfulness"—because He's going to acknowledge that. "Well-done good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy which I have for you" (Matt. 25:23).

It's dependence. It's obedience. It's submission and fruit begins to be born in your life. Just the Spirit of God surprises you as you're depending upon Him. You're drawing upon His resources and you're developing into Christlikeness. Be thrilled the way you responded to a situation and how you had some victory. And just thank the Lord for showing up and providing that victory for you.

1. "love"
2. "joy" and then
3. "peace" in all of these different directions it is there.

And then that word:

4. “longsuffering” is really translated PATIENCE. It’s long-tempered or patient. The attitude toward people that never loses patience.

Psalm 119:165

Great peace have they which love Thy law,
And nothing shall cause them to stumble.

Then you’ve got the word:

5. “kindness”—that’s in the characteristics of the love in 1 Corinthians 13.
6. “goodness”
7. “faithfulness.” And then remember that’s self-control. The discipline to do what we know the Spirit of God would want us to do.

There are so many observations we could make from Oswald Chambers and several other authors.

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

Verse 23:

8. “meekness”
9. “self-control”

“Against such things as these there is no law.”

All 9 of them—You will never be a violator of the Law when the fruit of the Spirit is being manifest in your life. Isn't that a beautiful statement?

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

“Now those (who belong) [to] Christ Jesus”—what did they do?—“crucified the flesh with its affections (passive emotions) and desires.”

The only problem is, He's still alive and can manifest Himself when we (by an act of the will) deliberately allow the flesh to do that.

I put Galatians 2:20 there:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ is living in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loves me and gave himself for me.

You know, I never thought of this but Isobel Kuhn in her book *In the Arena* says:

(In the Arena by Isobel Kuhn)

When we allow the Lord to nail our affections to the cross (to use the Scriptural metaphor), we do not cease to love. (p. 112)

In other words, so many times in our intimate relationships with people we become so dependent upon them we think that they're indispensable. And she just describes that she moves from mission station to mission station and how she had to nail her affections so that the Lord could move her to another field of service (strategically) and not weep and be all broken hearted over the ones that she had grown so close to that she was leaving.

This has helped me so much with the Hide-a-Way situation because 22 years over there. It was 2 weeks ago and that was an emotional rollercoaster for both of us. Basically we believe very strongly that when we leave somewhere, we're not going to be a preacher that is going to stay around and mess with anything. When our assignment is done, it's done.

And so it's been very emotional. But has helped me so much to realize that the Spirit of God has got other things that He wants to do in our lives and we need to trust Him.

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

“If we are living by the Spirit let us also order our steps by the Spirit.”

We're living because the Spirit of God is living within us. But let's let Him filter down into our lives and begin ordering our steps or our conduct by the Spirit so Christ is beginning to be seen in us in a very definite way.

“Order our steps,” read the Word, prayer, fellowship with the Father.

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

“Let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Last week, be careful not to “consume and devour each other” is the way we ended it. And today it’s the same way.

“Let us stop becoming”—Negative present tense.

They’re doing it. And when you have that, you can literally translate it:

“stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.”

You had “dividing,” “abiding” and “devouring” in our last time together.

Well, there are a number of lessons that come out of this study.

Would you believe 15? There was so much in this study that this is page 147 in my lecture notes. That’s where I am right now to give you an idea of the work’s that gone into research and development on it.

Fifteen lessons that come out of it. Please, since this is such a critical passage, you go before the Spirit of God and spend some quality time in prayer and communion and honestly evaluate all this.

The difference of the life of the flesh and the life of the spirit and ask God to produce it within you.

Warren Wiersbe is another great commentator. I love what he says:

(Be Free: Galatians by Warren Wiersbe)

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

Will you yield to Him and let Him work? (p. 137)

Don’t put it off. Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts in the day of conviction. Realize the fact.

Remember I told you last week that I was reading Joni Eareckson Tada’s book? And that it had been rumored that she had cancer. I wanted to give you a complete update on that and it’s going to take me a minute.

I finished the book and it is fabulous. You will not read a more mature definition of God’s will to be put in a wheelchair for 40 years because of millions of people around the world who are victorious in their disabilities because of Joni’s witness for Christ. And now she has cancer.

She had surgery this last summer—a radical mastectomy. And it was fun to see her on the website because she and Ken were talking and she said initially “I’m cancer free” and Ken said “Uh oh, wait a minute. You’ve got 5 years.” And he listed

all the things she has to go through, which is a procedure. She said “Then I’m a cancer survivor.” And Ken said “Yes, and thank God that you are.”

And so it was a beautiful testimony. But I want to read just the last part of the book and then I want to read a little statement from their blog because I think it will put it all in perspective for you and be a blessing to you.

(A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God’s Sovereignty by Joni Eareckson Tada)

In our little Maryland church, people preached the gospel, read from the liturgy, sang hymns from the heart, and they kneeled in prayer before the Lord. Worship was a serious thing, and I learned as a child what it meant to bend the knee before the Lord.

It’s not that I want to make a big thing about kneeling in prayer, per se. It’s just that...I wish I could do it. Being paralyzed in a wheelchair, it’s impossible to literally bend my knees and bow in prayer.

I remember a banquet at a big conference I attended not long ago. I was sitting along with everyone else in a *huge* ballroom. At the close of the message, the speaker asked everyone to do something unusual: He asked us to push our chairs away from the table and, if we felt comfortable in doing so, get out of our chairs and kneel on the carpeted floor, together, in prayer.

Well, I sat there in my wheelchair and watched as everyone else in the room, maybe five hundred or six hundred

people, got out of their chairs and down on their knees for a brief time of worship. With everyone kneeling in that great banquet hall, I'm afraid I stood out as the only one remaining seated.

Looking around the room, I couldn't stop the tears.

Oh, I wasn't crying out of self-pity or because I felt strange or different that I was the only one sitting. My eyes were wet because it was so *beautiful* to see everyone kneeling in prayer. (Maybe I am making a big deal about kneeling!) It made me think of the day when I, too, will be able to get out of this wheelchair on new, resurrected legs.

I can't wait for that day, because when I get my glorified body, the first thing I'm going to do with my new made-for-eternity legs is to fall down on grateful, glorified knees. I will once again have the chance to say with Psalm 95:6: "Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker." (pp. 206-207)

I can't kneel, but if you can, do.

Kneel before the Lord God, your Maker and mine. And while you're down there, if you feel so inclined, thank Him for being so good to a paralyzed woman named Joni. (p. 208)

They said: "Long obedience is the key to staying with it."

They quoted Philippians 3:13-14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

This is from her blog:

“You have heard me often say that our afflictions come from the hand of our all-wise and sovereign God. And although cancer is something new, I am content to receive from God whatever He deems fit for me. Yes, it’s alarming, but rest assured that Ken and I are utterly convinced that God is going to use this to stretch our faith, brighten our hope and strengthen our witness to others.”

Acts 20:24

But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Father, thank You for the inspiration that Joni’s been to all of us for so many years. Thank You that this accident occurred back there in 1967 just as the time Pearl and I came to Texas. So we’ve kind of traveled together. Lord, for her it’s been very difficult to spend 40 years in a wheelchair but she thanks You today for that chair. And thank You for the thousands of people who have come to know Christ, for those who’ve been encouraged because of her witness for You. Lord, I just pray for each of us that we would learn how to be submissive to Your Spirit. And that Your Spirit would begin to produce some of these lovely manifestations of the fruit of His presence in our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

STUDY NUMBER ELEVEN – UNTIL: THE FLESH STARTED LIVING ON LAW
– GALATIANS 5:16-26

KEY VERSE 5:17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Galatians 5:16-26 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What command is given in verse 16?

3. What is the relationship between the “flesh” and the “Spirit” in verse 17?

4. Make a list and explain the meaning of the “works of the flesh” in verses 20 & 21.

5. Make a list of the “fruits of the Spirit” and explain them, according to verses 22 & 23.

6. What have “those who belong to Christ Jesus” done, according to verse 24?

7. How does one “order” his steps by the Spirit?

8. What command is given in verse 26?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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