

Bible Studies for Life: July 10

Walking in the Spirit • Galatians 5:16-25

By Clay Anthony



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In our text this week, the Apostle Paul reminded the Galatians of this truth (v.17). Each morning I find my prayer becoming, "Lord, just give me a holy day of living." That simple prayer at times seems to be just what sends me prepared to my daily battle station, for it is not long after my "amen" that the struggle to which Paul refers begins in my heart. Yet, I need to always remember certain truths about this battle.

First, I have the right tool with which to fight. Paul tells the Galatians to walk by the Spirit (v.16). This is not a suggestion; it is a command. The command to walk is synonymous with living our lives. If we simply live our lives by the Spirit, we will not give into our sinful desires.

It really is a simple equation but – being honest – it does take work.

We know that the gift of salvation is free to all and we rejoice in that, but have you ever noticed the work involved with walking in the Spirit? Our thoughts are to be held captive. Our hands are to be serving. Our tongues are to be bridled. Our hearts are to show compassion. Our feet are to keep on the narrow path.

Please do not misunderstand. Being a Christian is worth every ounce of holy sweat we shed, but know there is more to the Christian walk than sitting on the sidelines. Paul even said elsewhere that he disciplined himself so he might have a more effective walk. Walk by the Spirit daily and watch sin flee.

Secondly, I can recognize my enemy. There are many dangers in life we cannot recognize, but that list does not include our sins. Paul writes out an extensive, yet not exhaustive list of sins (vv.19-21) from which believers are to stay away. Any number of these sins can ruin lives, homes, churches, and futures.

These sins are easy to recognize once they have someone in their clutches. This means that not only can we see what dangers lie ahead of us, but when we witness enmity, anger, impurity, sexual immorality, or any other vice on the list, we can work against them and help set free from an eternity without Christ those captured by them (v.21b).

Thirdly, I have freedom not to sin. Sounds strange, but it's true. Sinful desires lead to sinful actions which lead to sin-filled lives. Such lives are marked with visible sins that wreck all of life. Conversely, the Spirit has its own list made up for a life that is not desirous of sinful deeds. We call this list the fruits of the Spirit.

As we have seen in previous lessons, when an apple tree is full of its fruit you do not expect to see oranges hanging from its branches. When a Christian is walking (living) by the Spirit, you expect to see the appropriate fruit on display.

Unlike drunkenness or brawling, the rightful fruits are not always visible. How can one describe what kindness looks like? What exactly does peace resemble? No, this fruit does not have form but is always embodied by a believer. Amazingly enough, there is no law of God or man that is against being kind or gentle (v.23).

Let us agree on this point: the best way to kill sin is to live a life under the guidance of the Spirit. How do we do that? An easy plan is to always refer to the spiritual skills many of us learned as children in Sunday School.

Pray and do so daily. My prayer mentioned above shows that praying is simple. "Lord, give me a holy day. A day where I live for you and walk with you."

Read your Bible and do so daily. Pick a book, section, or character study. Stick to a reading plan. Start in Mark or Leviticus as long as you are reading God's word.

These two simple actions come with guaranteed results. Just as Jesus was crucified to death, sinful passions and desires will pass from the believer. Keep up the good fight, my friend!

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