

Galatians 5:16-26

Main Point: Walking by the Spirit is a daily practice that is absolutely necessary for growing in our relationship with Christ.

WHAT: (What is going on in this passage?)

Paul calls us to walk by the Spirit, and not by the flesh in this passage. When we walk by the Spirit, we will not carry out the desires of the flesh. Paul presents the state of the believer as possessing a sinful, human nature, yet all the while possessing the Holy Spirit of God. These two conflicting entities are always at war, and whichever one is focused on, will take the driver seat of our lives. Paul states that at any point, we are either walking by the Spirit, or by the flesh, and that there is no neutral state. Paul gives the deeds of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit as a litmus test for the believer to check whether their life falls into the flesh category, or the Spirit category. As a believer, as ones who possess the Spirit, Paul encourages the Galatians to keep in step with the Spirit, and cultivate the gift that was given to us.

WHY: (Why does this passage mean anything to us?)

1. We Possess the Spirit as Believers

As a believer in Jesus Christ, we now also possess the Holy Spirit on top of our sinful, flesh nature that resides in us. All believers have received the Holy Spirit. The question is, what will we do with the Holy Spirit within us? Will we follow His leading, or will we walk after the flesh? V.24 reminds us that as Christ followers, we have crucified the flesh and its desires to the cross. We are to cultivate the gift of salvation that Christ has given to us, not walk backwards into the flesh.

2. Our Flesh is Contrary to the Spirit

It is easy to see today that the flesh is against walking by the Spirit. Having quiet times, engaging in prayer, sharing our faith, all of these things are hindered by our flesh trying to have ownership of the believer. Many wake up and struggle to have a quiet time with the Lord because they are swept away by social media. Many will not share their faith out of fear of rejection, and comfort. It is easy to see that the Holy Spirit and the flesh cannot both have their way. As Christ followers, we are called to become more like Jesus every day, and so this practice of walking by the

Spirit allows us to walk in obedience rather than fulfilling our own pleasure and purposes according to the flesh.

3. Walking by the Spirit is the Key to Overcoming our Sin

Many of us know our struggles very well. Whether it is lying, gossiping, lazy work ethics, to the very real struggles of pornography, drinking, smoking, we all wish that some things would change in our lives. Many of us also fail to see however that when one begins to walk by the Spirit daily, those struggles become less and less. God knows that we cannot walk through life alone, that we cannot overcome sin on our own, which is why He sent Christ in the first place. By walking by the Spirit, we can have victory over our sins, and begin to see the fruit of the Spirit rather than the deeds of the flesh.

We as believers have the choice every day to walk by the Spirit or the flesh. Which will we choose?

HOW: (How can I apply this passage in my own life?)

1. Recognize that Walking by the Spirit is Daily, Moment by Moment

Very practically, walking by the Spirit means waking up every day, and acknowledging that we cannot live this life without the help of God. It means getting on our knees before God and asking Him to move. Asking Him to change our desires. Asking Him to make us more like His Son. Walking by the Spirit is trusting in God continually throughout the day. Trusting that He truly does satisfy. That He offers security. That His promises are true. That He is truly at work within us. Many times we only go to God when life gets tough, when temptation hits, when we feel like we need Him. Walking by the Spirit means that we recognize that there isn't a moment in the day that we can depend on ourselves. Walking by the Spirit means we lean and trust in God for everything in our lives, not just when we think we need the extra help. Galatians 5:16 Hebrews 10:22

2. Recognize that God is the One Fighting

In 1 Samuel 17 the army of Israel was going up against the Philistines in battle. The Philistines presented their all-star warrior, Goliath, to fight against the Israelites. The

Israelites stood in fear of Goliath who continually taunted them. The greatest underdog story in history then happens as David comes and takes down Goliath with just a sling and a stone. Out of David's victory, the Israelites were able to fight against the Philistines and ultimately win the battle. This story foreshadows what would one day happen on the cross. In the face of death and of sin we were helpless. There was no chance. Then came Christ who defeated sin and death upon the cross, in a triumphant victory. It was out of Christ's victory that we then could have victory. In this culture of self-centeredness it's easy to take on everything yourself. We must realize that we are not fighting for victory, but from the victory that Christ has already won. One of the first steps of walking by the Spirit is recognizing that God is the one who is doing all of the work for us. He is the one fighting. We must remember as we walk by the Spirit that we are nothing apart from God, and that He is doing the work. He is changing the desires of our heart. He is changing us to look more like His Son. Draw near to God; ask Him to do what only He can do. 1 Samuel 17:45-52 Philippians 2:12-13 Exodus 14:14

3. Recognize that Our Job is to Abide

In John 15 we see one of the most important chapters in regards to living the Christian life out. Our walk with God begins is by abiding in Jesus. He is the vine, and we are the branches. When we abide in Him, we produce fruit. Not that we had any warrant on our own, or that we were able to produce fruit, but solely that we were attached to the vine. Christ is the one who lives through us today. Walking by the Spirit means that you abide in Christ, and let Him live through you. John 15:1-8 Galatians 2:20 1 John 2:28

Application:

1. Pray that God would create the desire within you to walk by the Spirit.
2. Pray that God would remind you of the Holy Spirit's power within you.
3. Make it a priority to start your day off with a quiet time, where you ask God to help you walk by the Spirit each day.