

"The Application of Grace"

Galatians 5-6

Part 3

Introduction: In our last two studies of Galatians, we look at two thoughts from the Apostle Paul. First of all, in Galatians 5:1-12 we looked at how we are to avoid legalism. Paul gave us several reasons as to why we are to avoid legalism.

1. Legalism takes away God's power from our lives. 5:2
2. Legalism makes us debtor to the entire Law. 5:3
3. Legalism causes us to fall from grace. 5:4
4. Legalism takes us from a life of faith. 5:5-6
5. Legalism is NOT from God. 5:7-9
6. Legalism removes the offense of the cross. 5:10-11
7. Legalism calls for a firm stand. 5:12

Paul then went on in the next three verses and addressed the subject of license.

Notice Galatians 5:13

Our liberty is not a license to sin but it is the freedom to do what we were unable to do as unbelievers. Now we are able to love and to serve one another with pure motives.

Notice Galatians 5:13-15

This brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

➤ **Walking in the Spirit**

➤ **Part 1**

Paul has just told us to avoid legalism and license and now he is going to give to us the KEY to living the life that God desires and in the verses to follow we find the ONLY WAY to holy living. This is the most detailed and the greatest passage in the bible for Christian living.

Notice Galatians 5:16

The first thing that we see as we step into this verse is a command. The command is to walk in the Spirit. Some prefer the translation, "WALK BY THE SPIRIT" and the reason this is preferred is because it places more emphasis on the Spirit and His power than it does on the believer. Either way we are commanded here to walk in or by the Spirit. There are several points to consider in this command.

First of all, the fact that it is a command tells us that to walk in the Spirit helps us to know that this does just automatically happen in the believer's life. This is something that we briefly considered before. When we were first saved, we believed that sin was somehow behind us but it does not take long to discover that is not the case. Therefore, the natural reaction in the believer's life is to try in his or her own power to overcome the sinful tendencies. But this then leads down a path of frustration and defeat. You do well for a while and then you fall. Then you start over again and the same thing repeats and it becomes a cycle that is very frustrating. The reason for the failures is because we are trying in our own power to conquer sin and we do not have the power. This is where the command comes in. In order to overcome sin, we need the power of the Holy Spirit and therefore we **MUST** walk in Him. But what does this mean? To walk in the Spirit is to live dependent upon the power of the Spirit that lives within us. This power comes as we walk by faith in what the Bible says about us as believers. The power of the Spirit then flows through us to enable us to resist the sin.

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*

²¹ *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

2 Peter 1:2-4

² *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

³ *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

⁴ *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Let us get back to the command. We are told to WALK in the Spirit. If we consider what it is to walk, we can understand this much better. To walk is to move one step at a time. When we were toddlers, it took time to learn how to walk. We would stumble and we would fall until we became stable and learned how to better maneuver on our feet. The same is also true of walking in the Spirit. When we are first born again, we must learn how to walk in the Spirit. We go through life and early on we stumble and we fall.

Romans 7:15-19

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

We have all been at this same place in our new life in Christ. It is a struggle. But as we study the Word of God, we learn better how to become dependent upon the Spirit. So, this is a growing process.

Illustration:

When we drive the car, we go down the highway at 55 mph giving no thought to the stop sign ahead because you trust that the brake peddle at your feet is going to stop you. You fully depend on the brakes to stop you. That is what it is to walk in the Spirit. It is a life fully depending upon His power to allow you to walk away from temptation.

Notice Galatians 5:16 again.

The next thing we see here is a promise. The promise is that when we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This then is the KEY to a sanctified life or a life of holiness. It is not keeping the Law that will restrain the flesh, it is not keeping a set of rules made by a church that will restrain the flesh, but it is the Holy Spirit who will give us power over the flesh. It is walking by faith in God's promises and then we are given power by the Spirit. This is grace. This is the grace that believers fall from when they live in a life of legalism. This verse is very clear that there is only one way to conquer the flesh and that is by walking in the Spirit. People attempt many ways to overcome the flesh but they are all powerless because these methods are carried out in our own power. Notice the statement made by an unknown writer.

"Walking means we take one step at a time, moment by moment, for there is not one moment when our flesh is not seeking to carry out its sinful desires! This is why it is so critical to be careful to not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit, for in so not we short-circuit His power in our lives! But walking is not just fighting off the negative (the lusts of the

flesh), but it is also growing in the positive (growing more like Christ). Paul explains how the Spirit does this in Second Corinthians writing " But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Paul is saying that as we behold the Lord's glory (and His glory is most clearly seen in His Word) and we walk in obedience (even this obedience enabled by His Spirit) to His revealed will (in His Word), the Holy Spirit does a miraculous internal work on our hearts, changing us into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to the next. That's a simple summary description of how every believer should be living their Christian life! We don't grow in Christ-likeness by seeking to keep a list of rules which we will never be able to keep and which ultimately results in frustration and futility in our Christian walk. Remember that everything that God desires to carry out in and through us begins on the inside, not on the outside, which is where legalism seeks to work. So, walk by the Spirit, not a set of rules you or someone else has made up to make you more holy! Only by the Spirit will you gain victory over sin on a practical, daily basis."

Notice Galatians 5:17

Here in this verse, we see the conflict. The conflict within the believer is the result of two different natures. We are born with a sin nature that we inherit from Adam and here it is referred to as the flesh and when we are born again, we are given the Holy Spirit which is the Divine nature. These two natures are always in conflict to control the believer. When we are saved, we are given the Holy Spirit but the flesh/Adamic nature still remains with us. The difference after salvation is that the flesh has now been stripped of his power.

Romans 6:6

⁶ *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Before we were saved, we had no choice but to submit to the flesh. The flesh controlled our lives at all times.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

³ *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Now we do have a choice in our walk. Since the flesh has been stripped of his power, we can now surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We must understand that the flesh will always be opposed to Divine nature. You and I cannot do one thing to change the sin nature in us. Let us notice a Biblical picture of this Truth.

Esther 3:1-6

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

² *And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.*

³ *Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?*

⁴ *Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.*

⁵ *And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.*

⁶ *And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.*

Haman is a picture of the sin nature and here we see that he despises those who are followers of God. This is exactly how the sin nature views the Divine nature as well as anything that we desire to do that would bring about growth in our lives.

This then raises a question. Why did Good not remove the sin nature when we were saved? Notice the words of Wiilliam MacDonald.

"God could have removed the fleshly nature from believers at the time of their conversion, but He did not choose to do so. Why? He wanted to keep them continually reminded of their own weakness; to keep them continually dependent on Christ, their Priest and

Advocate; and to cause them to praise unceasingly the One who saved such worms. Instead of removing the old nature, God gave us His own Holy Spirit to indwell us. God's Spirit and our flesh are perpetually at war, and will continue to be at war until we are taken home to heaven. The believer's part in the conflict is to yield to the Spirit."

Conclusion:

Notice Galatians 5:18

When we are led by the Spirit we will never be under bondage as someone who is under the Law. Now it is true that God has written His Law in our hearts. But when we are Spirit led it is a delight to walk in obedience to His Word.

Psalm 40:

⁸ *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*